

HOUSE FISH AND GAME COMMITTEE

January 30, 1979

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Staigmiller at 12:30 p.m. with all members present except Representative Ellis.

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6

REPRESENTATIVE BILL HAND, Chief Sponsor, introduced the bill. He stated that this was a resolution requesting that lands under study for wilderness designation be returned to multiple-use management, and requesting that lands presently designated as wilderness be reevaluated for possible return to multiple use, and to refrain from further designating wilderness areas without the approval of the state affected. I am not trying to repeal the law I am just making a request so I want everyone to understand that.

Some of the problems with the study of the wilderness areas today are the fears of the people. Some of these people fear their jobs and the loss of these sacred areas. On the other side people fear the destruction of these lands and the game depletion.

PROPOSERS:

BOB HELDING, Montana Wood Products Association, showed a map of the U.S. Forest Service lands that were designated a wilderness area, Rare II areas, which are areas being studied for determination of becoming wilderness, and lands under study by the Bureau of Land Management, that may become wilderness areas.

The University of Montana conducted a study and determined that 51% of peoples income is derived from the wild. The counties receive 25% of this revenue. He then stated that this was down 17% since 1930 and it will keep going down as long as our forest lands are designated wilderness.

TAD DALE, Montana Mining Association, stated that because the mineral wealth of Montana is geologically located in the mountainous or western area of the state, he opposed any further wilderness withdrawals in high mineral potential areas.

ROBERT MOUNTAIN, Beaverhead Chamber of Commerce, stated they feel the people of Montana through the legislative process should have some input on the final disposition of our national resources.

JOE CROSSWHITE, WETA-Operating Engineers, stated that he felt growing trees were like growing wheat. They have to be harvested or they will go to waste. The bugs will take over and the trees will suffer.

GERALD NEILS, Montana Logging Association, submitted an article from the Missoulian concerning the population boom and the need for the timber to build more homes. He also submitted a chart of lumber production. (article and charts are attached)

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PETER JACKSON, Weta-Mont., explained a situation where a Montanan had requested a California legislator to try and get a particular area made into a wilderness area. Through Congress this was done. I feel the people should have the final say on what will happen to our lands.

FRANK DUNKLE, Montana Mining Association, stated there is enough wilderness. These areas need management and by making them wilderness they can not be managed. We need this acreage.

AL KINGTON, Wickes for Ind., stated that within two hours everyone in this room could visit four wilderness areas. I don't see a need for anymore, maybe even less.

DON ALLEN, Montana Petroleum Association, stated we should consider the cost of energy that we have to go outside of our state for because we are unable to explore these wilderness areas and see if we can use our own resources.

Because of the time limit, Bill Asher, Agricultural Preservation Association and Mike Stephen, Montana Association of Counties, were unable to speak but written testimony is attached.

OPPONENTS:

REBECCA R. WILLIAMS, stated her support of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the subsequent actions of the various federal government agencies and Congress in implementing the Act. (complete testimony attached)

CONNIE KRAUTTER, Miles City, has attached testimony compiled by her and several other people from the Miles City area.

ARNOLD RIEDER, stated that he was interested in the future of wildlife. He lives in the Elkhorn Ridge area. He watches these elk herds and feels the future of the elk is on Elkhorn Ridge. If this area had roads going through it, before long there would be no more elk. I feel that our water shed would also be jeopardized if this area was opened. Many streams are fed from this mountain.

He concluded by stating that there were grazing privileges on the wilderness areas and there never has been a single head of cattle lost in the area.

JOHN WILSON, Montana Council of Trout Unlimited. (prepared testimony attached)

DICK BOURKE, Montana Small Business Association, compared the tourism to the wood production, tourism 2% and wood production 3%. We need these wilderness areas.

T. H. BIRCH, Committee for Western Montana Wildlands, stated that this group was formed because of Rare II and we oppose HJR 6.

THURMAN TROSPER, Montana Wilderness Association, stated the wilderness act requires local hearings and the involvement of the Governor and Local Governments affected. The process already places the burden of proof on wilderness proponents since designation requires an act of Congress, whereas the decision to develop wildland is made routinely at the lowest level of the Federal Land Management Agency. (attached testimony)

WILLA HALL, League of Women Voters, stated that they oppose this resolution, which we feel seeks to eliminate wilderness entirely from our federal land classification system. (prepared testimony attached)

NEL ROSETTA, Last Chance Audobon Society, stated that some areas are nothing but rocks. I don't feel we should submit all our lands to commercial use.

BILL CUNNINGHAM, stated that Section 3D1 of the Wilderness Act states that there will be local postings and hearings before any area can be designated wilderness. We should look at these areas on a personal bases. I believe this resolution would interfere with a case by case process.

Other opponents to the bill that were unable to speak because of lack of time were as follows: Don Merritt, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association (prepared testimony attached), Charlotte Easter (prepared testimony attached), Bob Oset, Wilderness Ranger (prepared testimony attached), Mark Dewant, Montana Wildlife Federation (prepared testimony attached), Doris Milner (prepared testimony attached), and J. R. Sargent, Corwin Springs.

REPRESENTATIVE HAND closed stating that wildlife and waters are controlled best when managed, this can not be done in wilderness areas. I urge the committees support on HJR 6.

Questions were asked by the committee members and the hearing on House Joint Resolution No. 6 was closed.

HOUSE BILL NO. 145

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN SCULLY, Chief Sponsor, stated that this bill would change the Department of Fish and Game's name to the Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Parks. I feel this should be changed to include the parks because they are a part of the Department.

I would propose that an amendment be added to the bill explaining that this change be a gradual one. There is not reason why letterhead and other materials need to be changed until the supply is depleted. I will prepare such an amendment for the committee.

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KEN HOOVESTAL, Montana Snowmobilers Association, commended the Parks Division for the excellent manner in which they have administered our facility development funds. They have been responsive to our needs and frugal in expending our monies. They constantly display a real concern for the requirements of the people of Montana. (attached prepared statement)

BILL KIRKPATRICK, Champion International Corporation, stated that the Department deals in other areas besides fish and game in Montana. We feel the name should reflect the duties of that Department. We are in full support of this bill and recommend a Do Pass.

ROBERT F. WAMBACH, Director of the Department of Fish and Game, stated that it seems reasonable to argue that a name should accurately describe the thing that is being labeled; and the proposed new name does a much better job than our current name. The cost of administering this change would be only about \$200, because we would make the change a gradual one. (prepared testimony attached)

MIKE STEPEHN, stated the increasing leisure time Montana's find themselves with has brought about increasing demands for park type recreation. The Department has an increasing function to supply park oriented recreation. Over the years this increased emphasis on parks has brought about a larger staff in the present Montana Fish and Game Department. The name change should reflect the total function of this Department and include parks.

REPRESENTATIVE ANN MARY DUSSAULT, commended the Department in a job they do well. She explained a situation that her and her family had with the Department in selling some property to the Department for a park. She recommended a Do Pass recommendation.

Other proponents submitting written testimony were: Don Mizner, Montana Recreation and Parks Association, Thomas J. Cash, Community Development and Planning, William E. Leary, Canyon Ferry Recreation Association and Peter Jackson.

OPPONENTS:

DON MERRITT, Montana Outfitters and Guides Association, stated that they see no need for the change. Hunting and fishing licenses bring in the revenue and are what most people are interested in. We recommend a Do Not Pass.

REPRESENTATIVE SCULLY closed by stating he was open to any questions the committee may have.

At this time Vice-Chairman Hirsch took the chair.

HOUSE BILL NO. 153

REPRESENTATIVE JOHN B. STAIGMILLER, Chief Sponsor, stated that he was recommending that the committee Do Not Pass this bill. The purpose of this bill was to save the antlers of the game in the wild. I am requesting this bill be killed because since the introduction of the bill I have learned that when antlers are in velvet they have to be refrigerated within four hours after being removed, therefore I do not think this bill has any real significance.

PROPOSERS:

L. R. SARGENT, Corwin Springs, explained that there was a game farm located close to his ranch and the owner of that game farm was cutting these antlers off of the elk and selling them for about 600 dollars per rack. I don't think this is right, so I am in support of this bill.

OPPOSERS:

WELCH BROGEN, Cirinaban Game Farm, stated this proposed legislation is in conflict with operations conducted in Canada, Alaska, California, and other states. Montana is premature in this legislation.

DON MERRITT, stated that some elk are still in velvet on September 15, opening day of hunting session, which would cause hunters to be in violation of the law. I recommend amending the bill to exclude this time.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.


John B. Staigmilller, Chairman

Judy J. Mook, Secretary