

HOUSE FISH AND GAME COMMITTEE

February 1, 1979

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Staigmilller at 12:30 p.m. with all members present.

HOUSE BILL NO. 173

ART WHITNEY, Department of Fish and Game, introduced the bill for Representative Lien, Chief Sponsor. The purpose of this legislation is to enable the Department of Fish and Game to enforce an annual limit on paddlefish whenever greater catch restrictions for this species becomes necessary. The present paddlefish limit of one per day gives as much protection as limits can feasibly provide under the authority we now have. As numbers of fishermen increase we will eventually have to impose further restrictions on the paddlefish harvest. If we do not have the authority to limit an angler's annual catch at that time, such restrictions would have to be made by shortening what is already a fairly short season (2-3 months). (complete testimony attached)

Proponents and Opponents were called for. Seeing none, questions were asked by the committee. Mr. Whitney gave some statistics on the number of paddlefish caught during the past years.

HOUSE BILL NO. 164

REPRESENTATIVE DAN HARRINGTON explained that he had introduced this bill by the request of sportsmen in his area. This bill will provide for investment of Fish and Game moneys and to use the interest income generated thereby for acquisition, development, and maintenance of Game Ranges. I have been asked to amend the bill to include fishing accesses. I would agree with this being incorporated into the bill.

PROPOSERS:

GENE ALLEN, Administrator of the Wildlife Division of the Department of Fish and Game, spoke in behalf of the Department in favor of the bill.

We support sportsmen who are voicing their interests through their legislators with this bill. (complete testimony attached)

JOHN WILSON, Montana Council of Trout Unlimited, stated that it has long been the policy of the Fish and Game Department to use moneys received from licenses. It only makes good sense that we use the interest that is raised from these moneys. The money comes from the sportsmen, it is only right that the money be used to better their opportunities as sportsmen. We urge a Do Pass recommendation.

GARY STUKER, Montana Wildlife Federation, stated that due to the need for moneys to maintain lands for access and for recreation sites, we recommend a Do Pass.

OPPOSERS:

DAVE LEWIS, State Department of Administration, stated the investments program is part of the Department of Administration. I oppose this bill

because it would lead to a fragmenting of the investments pool. There are 107 other agencies that would feel that they should receive their interest also. This would cause a decrease in the general fund moneys.

MIKE KOEHNKE, Office of Budget and Planning, stated that the Department of Livestock had a similar bill that passed last session. As stated earlier if all the departments did this there would be a large amount of money taken out of the general fund. I am in strong opposition to this bill and the problems that it could create.

JOHN FITZPATRICK, Office of Budget and Planning, explained that if this money was removed from the general fund then such things as tax relief would become difficult to administer. This fund is where the money comes from for this relief and other benefits to the public.

REPRESENTATIVE HARRINGTON closed by stating that he understood that we were trying to cut taxes and by using this interest money that could take away from the general fund moneys used for this but, the sportsmen are the one paying for the license and it only seems fair that they should benefit from the interest earned on these moneys.

Questions were asked by the committee and the hearing on House Bill No. 164 was closed.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

HOUSE BILL NO. 153

Representative Daily moved, DO NOT PASS. The motion was passed 14 to 3. OPPOSED: Representatives Johnson, Ellis, and Metcalf.

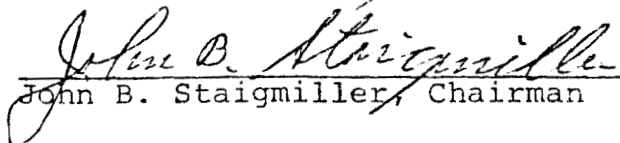
HOUSE BILL NO. 173

Representative Hirsch moved, DO PASS. The motion was carried unanimously.

HOUSE BILL NO. 164

Representative Johnston moved, DO NOT PASS. The motion was passed with Representative Daily opposed.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:35 p.m.


John B. Staigmilller, Chairman

Judy J. Mook, Secretary