

48th LEGISLATIVE SESSION

MINUTES OF NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE MONTANA STATE SENATE

January 10, 1983

The organizational meeting of the Natural Resources Committee was called to order by Senator Harold Dover, Chairman, on Monday, January 10, 1983 at 1:00 pm in Room 405, State Capitol.

ROLL CALL: Roll was called with all members of the Committee present: Senators Dorothy Eck, Mike Halligan, Thomas F. Keating, Gary P. Lee, Dave Manning, John Mohar, James N. Shaw, Pete Story, Larry J. Tveit, Fred Van Valkenburg, Mark Etchart, V. Ch; and Harold L. Dover, Ch.

INTRODUCTIONS: Chairman Dover introduced Pat Hatfield, Committee Secretary, noting she has prior legislative staff experience, and is located in the office at 312 B.

Chairman Dover also introduced Howard Johnson, Environmental Quality Council staff, noting that the Council was formed by the legislature in 1971 through the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), to have oversight of Montana's environment. The EQC does not have regulatory powers, it serves in an advisory capacity to the executive branch and legislature. Four members are Senators, four are Representatives, four members are of the public, and one non-voting member represents the Governor. This session, the Council decided to have the EQC staff review and draft proposed legislation which will affect our state's natural resources.

Mr. Johnson further reviewed his duties for the members, stating he would be attending the meetings, and would also be available for individual assistance in research, drafting of bills and amendments, and assistance to the secretary of the committee as well as Senators. The committee will not have a representative from the legislative council and Mr. Johnson is to serve in that capacity.

Chairman Dover introduced Deborah Schmidt, Executive Director of the Environmental Quality Council, most of the members having met her through her experience with the legislative council. Mrs. Schmidt spoke briefly to the committee pointing out her duties, and handing out a brochure on the EQC which is attached as EXHIBIT '1'. The offices of the EQC are located in Rm 432 behind the House Gallery.

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Chairman Dover introduced Byron Ophus, Legislative Intern to Seantors Dover and McCallum. Byron is from Northern Montana College at Havre.

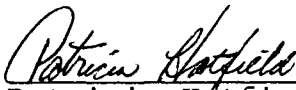
ANNOUNCEMENTS: Chairman Dover announced several meetings in which members may be interested, as well as a joint meeting with the House Natural Resources Committee on Monday, January 17, from 12 - 2:30 pm in the Judiciary Room, 325, to hear a presentation by the Council of State Governments on public land use.

Other meetings would be to hear the Environmental Quality Control and Dept. of Natural Resources presentation on surplus water at 7pm Tuesday, Jan. 11 in the House Chambers. Thursday, Jan. 13 at 1:30 pm there will be a WETA meeting at Jorgensons to hear John Crowell of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business to come before the committee the meeting was duly adjourned at 1:30 pm.



SENATOR HAROLD L. DOVER, CHAIRMAN
Senate Natural Resources Committee



Patricia Hatfield
Committee Secretary

ROLL CALL

SENATE NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

48th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1983

Date 1-10-83

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
ECK, Dorothy (D)	✓		
HALLIGAN, Mike (D)	✓		
KEATING, Thomas F. (R)	✓	✓ late	ex
LEE, Gary P. (R)	✓		
MANNING, Dave (D)	✓	✓ late	
MOHAR, John (D)	✓		
SHAW, James N. (R)	✓		
STORY, Pete (R)	✓		
TVEIT, Larry J. (R)	✓		
VAN VALKENBURG, Fred (D)	✓		
ETCHART, Mark (R) Vice Chairman	✓		
DOVER, Harold L. (R) Chairman	✓		

The Montana Environmental Quality Council (EQC) is a unique agency existing in the legislative branch of state government. Created by the 1971 Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), the EQC co-ordinates and monitors state policies and initiatives that affect the quality of the human environment.

While other laws deal individually with important elements of the environment, MEPA is the one state law that specifically recognizes and addresses the complex interrelationship between man and the state's natural resources. Similarly, the EQC is the staff office responsible for reviewing the various individual programs and activities of state agencies for the purpose of promoting a unified effort toward the enhancement of the natural, economic, and social environment.

Through insuring the implementation of the policies outlined in MEPA, EQC's purpose is to encourage the creation and maintenance of conditions under which man and nature can co-exist in productive harmony while recognizing the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future Montanans.

The EQC does not have regulatory powers. It serves exclusively in an advisory capacity making proposals and recommendations to the Executive Branch and Legislature to ensure that the broad environmental policies of the state are carried out.

Thirteen Montana citizens make up the EQC. Four are State Senators; four are State Representatives; four are members of the public; and one, a non-voting member, represents the Governor.

The EQC is designed to be non-partisan. The House and Senate members are chosen by the majority and minority leaders of each house. The leaders of each house also choose two public members. Council members serve terms of two years, concurrent with the state legislative sessions. Members may serve no more than three consecutive terms.

SENATE MEMBERS

- Harold L. Dover
(R-Lewistown)
- Dorothy Eck
(D-Bozeman)
- Mike Halligan
(D-Missoula)
- Gary P. Lee
(R-Fort Shaw)

HOUSE MEMBERS

- Dennis Iverson, Ch.
(R-Whitlash)
- Dave Brown, Vice-Ch.
(D-Butte)
- Gay Holliday
(D-Roundup)
- L. Dean Switzer
(R-Richey)

PUBLIC MEMBERS

- Dennis G. Natche
Redstone
- Leslie Pengelly
Missoula
- Glen T. Rugg
Plevna
- Frank S. Stock
Polson

GOVERNOR'S REPRESENTATIVE

- John North
Helena

The EQC staff, under the direction of its executive director, is responsible for assisting the council members in the fulfillment of their duties. Staff responsibilities include preparation of research reports, organization and attendance of public meetings and hearings, drafting of proposed legislation, and the completion of studies ordered by the Legislature.

The EQC staff acts as an independent non-political, impartial source of information on environmental matters to the Legislature and the public. According to a policy adopted by the Council, the executive director and staff will conduct studies, bring information on natural resource issues, and make recommendations to the Council. The Council will then act on those recommendations, studies, and information and will carry that action to the Legislature.

- Executive Director Deborah B. Schmidt
- Environmental Scientist .. Howard E. Johnson
- Environmental Researcher John E. Carter
- Administrative Assistant Ellen C. Engstedt

The foremost duties of the EQC as spelled out by MEPA are:

- research and analyze environmental trends in Montana;
- monitor environmental actions and policies of state agencies;
- recommend ways to improve the state's natural, social, and economic environments;
- assist the Legislature with environmental legislation;
- prepare an annual report on the state of Montana's environment.

Additionally, other projects are assigned to the EQC from time to time by the Legislature. For example, the 1981 Legislature directed the EQC to study

the most effective means of mitigating impacts of large-scale hard-rock mineral development in the state. This study is being undertaken jointly with members of the Legislature's Revenue Oversight Committee. EQC is presently also working with the Legislative Joint Subcommittee on Business to study how environmental regulations affect economic development and the business climate in Montana. The 1981 Legislature also directed EQC to monitor how the state is administering the alternative renewable energy grant and loan program. These studies will result in recommendations to be submitted to the 1983 Legislature.

Finally, the EQC members initiate and carry out, with their staff, other projects such as:

- a review of the Environmental Impact Statement process;
- a conference on ground water, sponsored jointly with the Legislature's Water Resources Oversight Committee, for the purpose of developing a ground water strategy;
- a review of the use of pesticides and administration of state pesticide programs;
- oversight of environmental problems associated with increased oil and gas development;
- monitoring the development of small-scale hydroelectric facilities following a study conducted by the National Conference of State Legislatures and EQC;
- monitoring water development in Montana;
- monitoring hazardous wastes, noxious weeds, pipelines, power lines, utility corridor siting, and other topics.