

MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND IRRIGATION  
MONTANA STATE SENATE

January 23, 1985

The Agriculture, Livestock and Irrigation Committee meeting was called to order on the above date, in Room 415 of the State Capitol Building, at 1:00 p.m., by Chairman Boylan.

ROLL CALL: All members present.

SENATE BILL 157: Senator Ray Lybeck, District 4, introduced the bill. He told committee members there is a problem in his area, western Montana, and it has increased with the subdivision ranchettes. People buy animals and, when winter comes, they cannot afford to feed them because of the cost of hay and feed. With this bill, if they do not take care of these animals, they may forfeit them. The counties have been responsible for charges stemming from abuse and this will transfer charges to the owner of the animal.

PROPONENTS: Les Graham, Department of Livestock, testified that the law says the sheriff is responsible and the livestock inspectors end up getting involved. In some situations, inspectors have been called back four or five times in the Helena valley. Prior to issuing a citation, the Department calls a veterinarian. The veterinarian usually donates his time but, if there is a bill for medication, etc., the county or state has to pick it up. Forfeiture is important as some animals don't get the care they need because people can't afford to do it. This would benefit the animals, which are the ones doing the suffering.

OPPONENTS: None.

Committee questions were called for. Senator Galt questioned whether the bill would affect killing beef on his ranch. Mr. Graham pointed out language covering butchering was already in the law. The bill covers neglect. The Department has never been called by the public in regard to butchering. Cat and dog problems would go to the sheriff. John MacMaster, Legislative Researcher, pointed out it cannot be done without justification.

Senator Hammond asked what the county would do with these animals. Mr. Graham replied that animals on the highway are put into corrals and the Department feeds them until the owner is located. Once it took four days to find the owner. Luckily this person reimbursed the Department, but this does not usually happen. Starving animals go to a veterinary clinic. However, people still own them, get them back and it happens all over again. Mr. Graham would like the judge able to take the animal away and sell it. Unfortunately, some animals are beyond sale and have to be destroyed.

Senator Bengtson inquired if there was anything in the bill on the amount of compensation. Mr. Graham told her it is open to the judge's order and would cover any animal. Dogs and cats would go to local humane societies. The Livestock Department works with local humane societies and the sheriff.

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Senator Aklestad had trouble with authorities going in, especially if it was a first offense. Mr. Graham answered that it is at the discretion of the court.

DISPOSITION OF SB 157: Senator Galt moved SB 157 DO PASS.  
Motion carried.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

  
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SENATOR PAUL BOYLAN, Chairman

ROLL CALL

AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK & IRRIGATION COMMITTEE

49th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1985

Date 1-23-85

SENATE  
SEAT  
#

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NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
1 SENATOR GARY AKLESTAD	✓		
27 SENATOR ESTHER BENGSTON	✓		
35 SENATOR JACK GALT	✓		
34 SENATOR H. W. (SWEDE) HAMMOND	✓		
10 SENATOR ALLEN KOLSTAD	✓		
38 SENATOR LEO LANE	✓		
48 SENATOR RAY LYBECK	✓		
31 SENATOR ELMER SEVERSON	✓		
39 SENATOR BOB WILLIAMS	✓		
29 SENATOR MAX CONOVER, V. CHMN.	✓		
50 SENATOR PAUL BOYLAN, CHAIRMAN	✓		

Each day attach to minutes.

DATE JAN. 23, 1985

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE

SB 157

## VISITORS' REGISTER

[illegible]

(Please leave prepared statement with Secretary)

# STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

January 23 1935

MR. PRESIDENT

We, your committee on Agriculture, Livestock & Irrigation

having had under consideration SENATE BILL No. 157

first reading copy ( white )  
color

Respectfully report as follows: That SENATE BILL No. 157

DO PASS

~~DO NOT PASS~~

Chairman.