

MINUTES OF THE MEETING
NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
50TH LEGISLATIVE SESSION

The meeting of the Natural Resources Committee was called to order by Chairman Tom Jones on January 7, 1987, at 1:00 p.m. in Room 312 of the State Capitol.

ROLL CALL: All committee members were present, with the exception of Rep. Miles who was excused by the Chairman.

HOUSE BILL No. 56: Hearing commenced on House Bill No. 56. Representative Asay, District #27, sponsor of the bill, stated the purpose of HB 56 is to give the Coal Board broader instructions as to the use of the impact fund which they presently administer. He said the bill does not attempt to enlarge the sum, but to expand their activities. With the downturn in coal mining and the loss of many jobs, Rep. Asay emphasized the importance of retraining and finding the jobs for unemployed coal miners, and said he would like the Coal Board to be able to enhance these services. Rep. Asay added that a very important impact is the ongoing research on the affects of underground water. A great deal of time has been spent gathering this information which covers premining, during or after mining. This information has not been catalogued to be readily available in usable form, but is very important.

PROPONENTS: Gary Fritz of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation commended Rep. Asay on HB 56, stating that much data has been collected on water resources in coal mining areas and that this data should be compiled into one area to disseminate to those people regulating and interested in coal mined areas.

Sue Mohr of the Department of Labor and Industry stated she was asked to prepare a memo on services offered by her department (Exhibit 1). She said that unemployed workers may need retraining or job seeking skills to obtain further employment, and she said her department can assist these people.

Murdo Campbell, Administrative Officer of the Montana Coal Board explained that the bill would direct the Coal Board to focus on three areas that are the result of coal development, or the lack of development. The two major areas that have been funded are highway 384 and highway 314, with funds for planning, engineering and right-of-way totalling \$240,000 and \$195,000, respectively. Mr. Campbell also reviewed several watering monitoring projects the board has funded over the past several years.

The only area that he felt the board would be expanding, its role under the bill, is the retraining of unemployed miners, and the board would be receptive to assisting with this goal.

Russ Brown of the Northern Plains Resource Council spoke in support of HB 56 and expressed concerns that coal board monies had been reduced over the last several sessions. He wants to insure the board does not lose all its money this legislative session.

No further proponents spoke in favor of this bill.

There were no opponents for HB 56.

Representative Kadas asked Mr. Campbell if the only thing HB 56 is adding to his current authority is new job services and the coordinating of job training for coal miners.

Mr. Campbell stated that this was true.

Representative Raney asked if a move to eliminate coal board monies would be faced later in this session and if this had been anticipated.

Representative Asay replied that there might be, judging from cases in the past.

Representative Meyers asked what type of retraining would surface miners require.

Sue Mohr stated it was primarily up to the laid-off worker what kind of training they need. The first line of retraining is to give them basic skills to obtain employment. If it appears there aren't any jobs in the mining field, they have the option to learn another skill by attending a vo-tech or through an on-the-job training contract, where the employer gets half the wages for a 6-8 week period while the employee is learning a new skill.

Representative Meyers asked if surface miners required any specific skills.

Sue Mohr replied she did not know specifically what type of training a surface miner required, but interpreted HB 56 to include any type of job training skills that they may require, if they cannot obtain a job in the coal mining field.

Representative Asay stated that a great deal of skill is involved in the mining of coal. They run numerous pieces of equipment and have very definite skills.

Representative Simon asked Sue Mohr if it was not true that the department of labor already does have a number of programs to take care of these unemployed workers.

Sue Mohr stated that there are dislocated worker projects operating and many of the Job Service offices are involved, as outlined in her memo (Exhibit 1).

Representative Simon asked Sue Mohr what additional services might be provided to displaced workers as a result of HB 56, that currently would not be available to the department.

Sue Mohr replied that if a specific discretionary grant was awarded to only deal with coal miners in that particular area, the department could award a grant to continue the program.

Representative Kadas questioned Rep. Asay as to the reason for having a July 1 effective date.

Representative Asay stated that there was no significance to the July 1 date, but felt there was no need to put it off.

Representative Harper asked Mr. Campbell whether the priority designation for highways 384 and 314 will exclude other highways from consideration for funding.

Mr. Campbell stated that those two highways are designated or in the area to be considered. The coal board must award 50% of their funds to designated areas. The coal board's funds, however, will be limited next year as far as construction is concerned.

Representative Harper then asked if highways 384 and 314 are getting all the money or can other highways be considered for this money also.

Mr. Campbell stated that these are the two highways that have been designated, and are actually coal impacted through people travelling to and from the mines and some coal hauling.

Representative Addy stated that it appears that they are not receiving any more money because there is no fiscal impact with this bill.

Representative Addy also stated that it appears that we are taking funds that were previously dedicated to the department of highways and splitting it between highways, labor, and natural resources.

Representative Asay stated that those funds are not addressed in this bill. The coal money is still going there and this bill uses funds intended to take care of coal impacted problems only.

Representative Raney commended Rep. Asay on his determination to look after these coal workers, but asked why railroad workers losing their jobs as a result of the downturn in coal activity had not been included also.

Representative Asay stated that he did not envision this the same as if you are a coal miner. This bill specifically aids the unemployed coal workers in these impacted areas, although there are many other people being affected by this in the same areas that are local business people that are being laidoff.

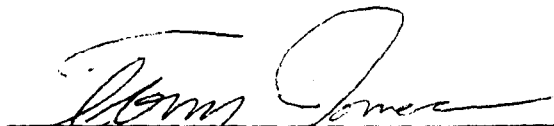
Representative Raney had questions regarding the water project information and the money necessary to compile this information.

Representative Asay replied that this information must be gathered and possibly could be computerized. He stated that the individuals and universities involved with gathering this data do not have the authority or the financial capability for compilation of this data. Rep. Asay feels, however, that this does need to be accomplished in the future to benefit by this additional information.

Representative Asay closed by stating that he does not want to pump more monies into any specific department, particularly natural resources, but wants a particular service provided.

The hearing was then closed on HB 56.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:20 p.m.



REP. TOM JONES, CHAIRMAN

DAILY ROLL CALL

NATURAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

50th LEGISLATIVE SESSION -- 1987

Date Jan. 7, 1987

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
TOM JONES, CHAIRMAN	X		
CLYDE SMITH, VICE CHAIRMAN	X		
KELLY ADDY	X		
TOM ASAY	X		
JOHN COBB	X		
BEN COHEN	X		
ED GRADY	X		
JOHN HARP	X		
HAL HARPER	X		
MIKE KADAS	X		
AL MEYERS	X		
JOAN MILES			X
MARY LOU PETERSON	X		
BOB RANEY	X		
RANDE ROTH	X		
ANGELA RUSSELL	X		
BRUCE SIMON	X		
BILL STRIZICH	X		
STAFF: EQC HUGH ZACKHEIM			

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY
EMPLOYMENT POLICY DIVISION

56 ASAY



TED SCHWINDEN, GOVERNOR

P O BOX 1728

STATE OF MONTANA

(406) 444-4500

January 6, 1987

HELENA, MONTANA 59624

TO: Representative Tom Asay
Capitol Station

FROM: Sue Mohr, Administrator
Employment Policy Division

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sue Mohr", written over the typed name in the "FROM" field.

Impact of HB 56 re: Department of Labor.

The Department currently has the following services already available to persons laid off due to curtailment or discontinuance of coal mining in Montana:

1. Unemployment Insurance benefits.
2. Labor exchange services such as job search for individuals seeking work and recruitment and selection for employers seeking qualified workers.
3. Job seeking skills such as resume-writing, interviewing and placement.

Numbers 1 and 2 are provided through Montana's twenty six Job Service Offices.

Number 3 is primarily provided by the five Project Challenge: Work Again Offices and funded by JTPA Title III Dislocated Worker funds and matching state funds (Build Montana General Funds plus Unemployment Insurance funds).

In addition, the U S Secretary of Labor retains some Dislocated Worker funds to award at his discretion. For example \$500,000 was awarded in 1986 to specifically find jobs for laid off copper workers in Butte, Great Falls and Anaconda. These funds required a two to one match.

It appears that future discretionary grants will not require matching funds. However, successful programs are rarely funded for more than one year. Should a program be funded, and be successful, the Board may choose to award a grant to continue a program past the first year.

The Department will assist any interested individuals or businesses in applying for a discretionary grant should they develop a program to help laid-off coal workers re-train and find employment.

VISITOR'S REGISTER

Animal Resources

COMMITTEE

BILL(S) 56

DATE Jan 7, 1987

SPONSOR(S) LEAY

NAME	REPRESENTING	BILL NO.	SUP-PORT	OP-POSE
<i>M. Campbell</i>	<i>Mt. Coal Board</i>	<i>56</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>Ann Turkus</i>	<i>State Library</i>	<i>56</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
<i>L. Zashenko</i>	<i>DNRC</i>	<i>56</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	

IF YOU CARE TO WRITE COMMENTS, ASK SECRETARY FOR VISITOR'S STATEMENT. IF YOU HAVE WRITTEN COMMENTS, PLEASE GIVE A COPY TO THE SECRETARY.