

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

The meeting of the Natural Resources Subcommittee was called to order by Chairman Swift on January 12, 1987 at 8:10 a.m. in Room 317 of the State Capitol.

ROLL CALL: All members were present. Also present were Carl Schweitzer, Senior Fiscal Analyst, from the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst (LFA) and Karen Vollstedt, Budget Analyst, from the Office of Budget & Program Planning (OBPP).

Tape 10A:000

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE:

EXECUTIVE ACTION:

Rep. Devlin made a motion to direct the department to remove 15 percent of general fund from the Executive budget and report back to the committee on where these cuts would be made.

Discussion:

Keith Kelly, Director, Department of Agriculture, said if his department has to sustain a 15 percent budget cut, he reluctantly recommends a merger with another department, thus eliminating not only the Director, but all administrative costs. This would eliminate five positions. He said the department is Constitutionally mandated, so he is suggesting the administration be eliminated and the functions of the department be moved to another agency.

Sen. Smith said the legislature will not eliminate the department Director position.

There was considerable committee discussion on the concept of across-the-board cuts; and Mr. Kelly gave a briefing on the growth of the department since its inception.

Rep. Spaeth said he objects to the across-the-board approach to cutting budgets; however, he said he thinks the committee should look at cutting programs, for instance, Environmental Management.

Rep. Manuel (358) said the statutes require the services of the department. He said he thinks the committee should take a look at funding to determine how much the public is

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contributing for public services, as opposed to earmarked funding. Mr. Kelly said if the committee is looking at programs to cut, perhaps Environmental Management would be a program to look at.

Sen. Boylan (493) said regulatory activity has ruined many Montana industries, especially agricultural industries. He said he thinks regulatory agencies should not also be doing promotional work.

Tape 10B:000

Chairman Swift asked Mr. Kelly if he thinks he has answered Rep. Devlin's motion. He said yes, if further cuts are to be made, he recommends taking programs.

There was a brief dialogue among Rep. Devlin, Mr. Kelly and Mr. Gary Gingery, Administrator, Environmental Management Division, on fees received by the department and what they are used for.

Sen. Smith said the public demanded pesticide regulation; but it used to be that the federal government contributed more.

Sen. Smith asked to be excused from the meeting.

Sen. Devlin amended his motion as follows:

Direct the department to remove 10 percent general fund from the Executive budget, excluding dealer fees and modifications, and report back to the committee.

Sen. Story asked what would happen if the second year of the pesticide program were cut off, thus allowing over a year for a transition period. Mr. John F. Wardell, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), said EPA would be concerned at losing state expertise, but EPA would do the work.

Karen (335) said the Executive budget includes the Agricultural Assistance Program as a modification, so it is not in current level, but handled as a separate issue. Mr. Kelly said the figures do reflect in the Executive budget, but as a modification.

The committee recessed to attempt to locate Sen. Smith prior to the vote. He could not be located.

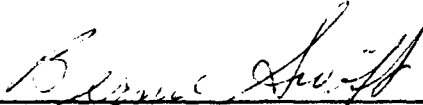
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A roll call vote was taken and the motion PASSED, with Reps. Manuel and Spaeth voting no; Sen. Smith absent.

Rep. Spaeth asked the department to not only look at program cuts, but look at other options also and report back to the committee.

Sen. Story asked the department to look, for instance, at pesticide activity to see if cuts can be made; and look at any other options. He said other options might even include changes in the law.

ADJOURNMENT: There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

  
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BERNIE SWIFT, Chairman





VISITORS' REGISTER

NATURAL RESOURCES

SUB COMMITTEE

BILL NO. Dept. of Agriculture

DATE 1/12/87

SPONSOR \_\_\_\_\_

NAME (please print)	REPRESENTING	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
JOHN F. WARDELL	U.S. EPA	NOT APPLICABLE	
DEAN P. CHAUSSEE	U.S. EPA	"	"
Sandra Luchau	Agriculture		
R. Bjornson	"		
MIKE MURPHY	"		
Keith Kelly	"		
Gavy Ginger	"		

IF YOU CARE TO WRITE COMMENTS, ASK SECRETARY FOR WITNESS STATEMENT FOR  
PLEASE LEAVE PREPARED STATEMENT WITH SECRETARY.