

MINUTES

MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 52nd LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

COMMITTEE ON BUSINESS & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Call to Order: By REP. BOB BACHINI, Chairman, on January 11, 1991, at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Members Present:

Bob Bachini, Chair (D)
Sheila Rice, Vice-Chair (D)
Joe Barnett (R)
Steve Benedict (R)
Brent Cromley (D)
Tim Dowell (D)
Alvin Ellis, Jr. (R)
Stella Jean Hansen (D)
H.S. "Sonny" Hanson (R)
Tom Kilpatrick (D)
Dick Knox (R)
Don Larson (D)
Scott McCulloch (D)
Bob Pavlovich (D)
John Scott (D)
Don Steppler (D)
Rolph Tunby (R)
Norm Wallin (R)

Staff Present: Paul Verdon, Legislative Council
Jo Lahti, Secretary.

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Discussion: CHAIRMAN BACHINI told the committee REP. FRED THOMAS asked that HB 49 which he sponsored be tabled.

Motion/Vote: REP. PAVLOVICH moved HB 49 be TABLED. The Committee unanimously voted to TABLE HB 49.

REP. BACHINI said it was suggested that this Committee could draw up a committee resolution, related to the possible border crossing fees the government is contemplating charging at the Canadian-United States line. The resolution would urge the U.S. agency not to charge a fee because of the new Free Trade Agreement signed by the U.S. Government and Canada. Mr. Verdon can draft a proposed resolution if the Committee wishes to consider this. If it is approved, it can be presented. Discussion was opened.

REP. LARSON asked for details on the border crossing issue.

REP. BACHINI said he had read in the paper that the government is considering charging fees to cross the border from the U.S. into Canada. He will provide copies of a newspaper article on this for the Committee. Mr. Verdon asked who was imposing the fee. REP. BACHINI answered the Americans. In many countries it is called an "exit fee", usually \$5-10. Entering a country is free, but upon returning there is a charge to get out of the country.

REP. KILPATRICK said when there is free trade between the two countries, imposing a small fee, could stop trade. He isn't sure we are going to be able to stop the government from making this charge anyway. It's not money in our pocket. He suggested keeping free trade open. He made a MOTION that the committee draw up a resolution objecting to any such charge.

REP. LARSON supported REP. KILPATRICK'S opinion, but he felt more information was needed.

REP. STELLA JEAN HANSEN opposed a fee because she and her son have a clothing store and probably one-third of their trade is Canadian. Canadians do a great deal of trade in Montana cities. Montanans have a history of shooting themselves in the foot when it comes to business. Let's not be that stupid again.

REP. ELLIS said he lives in a border community, and agrees with REP. HANSEN. Many people come across the border for a couple days to shop and spend big bucks, and maybe \$5 isn't a deterrent, but many come across the border for a day.

REP. DOWELL, Kalispell, said when a Canadian comes to Kalispell to shop or for recreation, the last memory they would have when returning home would be forking over an exit fee. The memory of their trip would be marred by that last little dig. He would support the resolution.

REP. BACHINI mentioned Havre has many Canadians who come down for the day and it's amazing the money they spend in Havre. They buy baskets of groceries because they are cheaper. He doesn't think they should be deterred from coming down. It is very healthy for that community. Developing a resolution is a suggestion -- that is why it is open for discussion.

REP. ELLIS lives in Red Lodge which is on the other side of the State but Canadians patronize their ski area. This type of fee won't raise a lot of money. It will just turn them off.

It was mentioned it would be a constant problem for people who live on the border like Eureka. It is another imposition.

REP. KILPATRICK reminded he had a motion pending to draw up a resolution, and wanted to get it started.

REP. BACHINI stated if it is the Committee's wish, he will give the newspaper article to Mr. Verdon to begin a draft of the Committee's resolution. The Committee agreed.

HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 49

Presentation and Opening Statement by Sponsor:

REP. THOMAS had requested REP. BACHINI to TABLE HB 49.

Proponents' Testimony: None

Opponents' testimony: None

Questions From Committee Members: None

Closing by Sponsor: The sponsor was not present.

EXECUTIVE ACTION ON HOUSE BILL 49

Motion: REP. PAVLOVICH had moved HB 49 BE TABLED, and the motion carried unanimously.


Discussion: None

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 9:20 a.m.



REP. BOB BACHINI, CHAIRMAN



JO LAHTI, Secretary

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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

ROLL CALL

DATE Jan. 11, 1991

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