

SJR 14 INTRODUCED BY GAGE  
REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF COUNTY CONSOLIDATION

3/18 INTRODUCED  
3/18 REFERRED TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
3/24 HEARING  
3/25 COMMITTEE REPORT--BILL PASSED AS AMENDED  
4/01 2ND READING PASSED 28 21  
4/02 3RD READING PASSED 30 20

TRANSMITTED TO HOUSE  
4/04 REFERRED TO LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
4/08 HEARING  
4/08 COMMITTEE REPORT--BILL CONCURRED AS AMENDED  
4/10 2ND READING CONCURRED AS AMENDED 58 34  
4/13 3RD READING CONCURRED 66 31

RETURNED TO SENATE WITH AMENDMENTS  
4/16 2ND READING AMENDMENTS NOT CONCURRED 35 8  
4/16 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTED  
4/22 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE DISSOLVED

HOUSE  
4/16 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTED  
4/22 CONFERENCE COMMITTEE DISSOLVED

SENATE  
4/22 FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTED  
4/23 FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT  
4/23 2ND READING FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE  
REPORT ADOPT MOTION FAILED 20 24  
4/23 2ND READING FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE  
REPORT REJECTED 30 15

HOUSE  
4/22 FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE APPOINTED  
4/23 FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT  
4/23 2ND READING FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE  
REPORT ADOPTED 64 16  
4/23 3RD READING FREE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE  
REPORT ADOPTED 71 28

DIED IN PROCESS

1 *Senate* JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14  
 2 INTRODUCED BY *[Signature]*  
 3

4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF  
 5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN  
 6 INTERIM STUDY OF COUNTY CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION;  
 7 AUTHORIZING THE INTERIM COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A PLAN FOR  
 8 REDUCING THE NUMBER OF COUNTIES TO 28 OR FEWER; SPECIFYING  
 9 FACTORS TO BE CONSIDERED IN CONSOLIDATING AND REORGANIZING  
 10 COUNTIES; AND PROVIDING FOR APPROVAL OF THE PLAN BY THE  
 11 ELECTORS OF THE AFFECTED COUNTIES.  
 12

13 WHEREAS, the citizens and taxpayers of Montana are  
 14 supporting more county governments than are needed for  
 15 efficient management of local affairs; and

16 WHEREAS, 28 Montana counties were formed between 1910  
 17 and 1925 without benefit of a comprehensive plan; and

18 WHEREAS, the Legislature is uniquely qualified to  
 19 address the question of county consolidation and  
 20 reorganization from a statewide perspective and to determine  
 21 what factors should be considered in developing a statewide  
 22 plan for consolidation and reorganization; and

23 WHEREAS, a study of factors relevant to a comprehensive  
 24 plan for county consolidation and reorganization undertaken  
 25 in the 1988-89 biennium will yield useful information for

1 the legislative redistricting and reapportionment required  
 2 in 1990 by Article V, section 14, of the Montana  
 3 Constitution.  
 4

5 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE  
 6 OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

7 (1) That an appropriate interim subcommittee be  
 8 assigned to:

9 (a) prepare a plan for consolidating and reorganizing  
 10 counties in such a way as to reduce the number to 28 or  
 11 fewer, including a schedule for an orderly transition from  
 12 the existing to the proposed counties, taking into  
 13 consideration the following factors:

- 14 (i) existing county boundaries;
- 15 (ii) existing legislative districts;
- 16 (iii) natural features, such as the Continental Divide,  
 17 major rivers and drainages, and other divides and  
 18 ridgelines;
- 19 (iv) transportation routes;
- 20 (v) population distribution;
- 21 (vi) market areas;
- 22 (vii) natural resources;
- 23 (viii) major industries, institutions, and other social  
 24 and economic resources; and
- 25 (ix) taxable valuation;

**INTRODUCED BILL**  
**SJR-14**



1 (b) meet and, in conjunction with its meeting, hold a  
2 public hearing in each of the following cities:

- 3 (i) Billings;  
4 (ii) Great Falls;  
5 (iii) Helena; and  
6 (iv) Missoula; and

7 (c) hold additional hearings as funds permit in the  
8 following cities:

- 9 (i) Kalispell;  
10 (ii) Helena;  
11 (iii) Lewistown;  
12 (iv) Havre;  
13 (v) Sidney; and  
14 (vi) Miles City.

15 (2) That the committee submit its plan to the 51st  
16 Legislature for review.

17 (3) That within 30 days thereafter, the committee's  
18 plan, as revised by the Legislature, be distributed to the  
19 governing body of each affected county for submission to the  
20 county electorate as provided in Title 7, chapter 2.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if House Bill No. 744,  
22 including the appropriation for a county boundary commission  
23 and the requirement that the commission prepare a plan for  
24 county consolidation and reorganization, is passed and  
25 approved, this act is void.

-End-

APPROVED BY COMM.  
ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14  
2 INTRODUCED BY GAGE  
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10 COUNTIES; AND PROVIDING FOR APPROVAL OF THE PLAN BY THE  
11 ELECTORS OF THE AFFECTED COUNTIES.  
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15 efficient management of local affairs; and

16 WHEREAS, 28 Montana counties were formed between 1910  
17 and 1925 without benefit of a comprehensive plan; and

18 WHEREAS, the Legislature is uniquely qualified to  
19 address the question of county consolidation and  
20 reorganization from a statewide perspective and to determine  
21 what factors should be considered in developing a statewide  
22 plan for consolidation and reorganization; and

23 WHEREAS, a study of factors relevant to a comprehensive  
24 plan for county consolidation and reorganization undertaken  
25 in the 1988-89 biennium will yield useful information for

1 the legislative redistricting and reapportionment required  
2 in 1990 by Article V, section 14, of the Montana  
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17 major rivers and drainages, and other divides and  
18 ridgelines;
- 19 (iv) transportation routes;
- 20 (v) population distribution;
- 21 (vi) market areas;
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- 23 (viii) major industries, institutions, and other social  
24 and economic resources; and
- 25 (ix) taxable valuation;



1 (b) meet and, in conjunction with its meeting, hold a  
2 public hearing in each of the following cities:

3 (i) Billings;

4 (ii) Great Falls;

5 (iii) Helena; and

6 (iv) Missoula; and

7 (c) hold additional hearings as funds permit in the  
8 following cities:

9 (i) Kalispell;

10 (ii) Helena BOZEMAN;

11 (iii) Lewistown;

12 (iv) Havre;

13 (v) Sidney; and

14 (vi) Miles City.

15 (2) That the committee submit its plan to the 51st  
16 Legislature for review.

17 ~~{3}--That--within--30--days--thereafter,--the--committee's~~  
18 ~~plan,--as--revised--by--the--Legislature,--be--distributed--to--the~~  
19 ~~governing--body--of--each--affected--county--for--submission--to--the~~  
20 ~~county--electorate--as--provided--in--Title--7,--chapter--2.~~

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if House Bill No. 744,  
22 including the appropriation for a county boundary commission  
23 and the requirement that the commission prepare a plan for  
24 county consolidation and reorganization, is passed and  
25 approved, this act is void.

-End-

## 1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14

2 INTRODUCED BY GAGE

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5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN  
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7 AUTHORIZING THE INTERIM COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A PLAN FOR  
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17 and 1925 without benefit of a comprehensive plan; and

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20 reorganization from a statewide perspective and to determine  
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22 plan for consolidation and reorganization; and

23 WHEREAS, a study of factors relevant to a comprehensive  
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14 (i) existing county boundaries;

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16 (iii) natural features, such as the Continental Divide,  
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18 ridgelines;

19 (iv) transportation routes;

20 (v) population distribution;

21 (vi) market areas;

22 (vii) natural resources;

23 (viii) major industries, institutions, and other social  
24 and economic resources; and

25 (ix) taxable valuation;

1 (b) meet and, in conjunction with its meeting, hold a  
2 public hearing in each of the following cities:

- 3 (i) Billings;  
4 (ii) Great Falls;  
5 (iii) Helena; and  
6 (iv) Missoula; and

7 (c) hold additional hearings as funds permit in the  
8 following cities:

- 9 (i) Kalispell;  
10 (ii) Helena BOZEMAN;  
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15 (2) That the committee submit its plan to the 51st  
16 Legislature for review.

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20 ~~county--electorate--as--provided--in--Title--7,--chapter--2.~~

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if House Bill No. 744,  
22 including the appropriation for a county boundary commission  
23 and the requirement that the commission prepare a plan for  
24 county consolidation and reorganization, is passed and  
25 approved, this act is void.

-End-

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 5 REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN  
 6 INTERIM STUDY OF COUNTY CONSOLIDATION AND REORGANIZATION;  
 7 AUTHORIZING THE INTERIM COMMITTEE TO PREPARE A PLAN FOR  
 8 REDUCING THE NUMBER OF COUNTIES TO 28 OR FEWER AND A PLAN  
 9 FOR CONSOLIDATING SERVICES; SPECIFYING FACTORS TO BE  
 10 CONSIDERED IN CONSOLIDATING AND REORGANIZING COUNTIES; ~~AND~~  
 11 ~~PROVIDING FOR APPROVAL OF THE PLAN BY THE ELECTORS OF THE~~  
 12 ~~AFFECTED COUNTIES AND SERVICES TO BE CONSOLIDATED WITHIN~~  
 13 DISTRICTS.

14  
 15 WHEREAS, the citizens and taxpayers of Montana are  
 16 supporting more county governments than are needed for  
 17 efficient management of local affairs; and

18 WHEREAS, 28 Montana counties were formed between 1910  
 19 and 1925 without benefit of a comprehensive plan; and

20 WHEREAS, the Legislature is uniquely qualified to  
 21 address the question of county consolidation and  
 22 reorganization from a statewide perspective and to determine  
 23 what factors should be considered in developing a statewide  
 24 plan for consolidation and reorganization; and

25 WHEREAS, a study of factors relevant to a comprehensive

1 plan for county consolidation and reorganization undertaken  
 2 in the 1988-89 biennium will yield useful information for  
 3 the legislative redistricting and reapportionment required  
 4 in 1990 by Article V, section 14, of the Montana  
 5 Constitution; AND

6 WHEREAS, IF THE VOTERS REJECT COUNTY CONSOLIDATION AND  
 7 REORGANIZATION, AN ALTERNATIVE PLAN WILL BE NEEDED TO REDUCE  
 8 THE EXPENSE OF COUNTY GOVERNMENT BY CONSOLIDATING SERVICES.

9  
 10 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE  
 11 OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

12 (1) That an appropriate interim subcommittee be  
 13 assigned to PREPARE THE FOLLOWING TWO PLANS:

14 (a) prepare a plan for consolidating and reorganizing  
 15 counties in such a way as to reduce the number to 28 or  
 16 fewer, including a schedule for an orderly transition from  
 17 the existing to the proposed counties, taking into  
 18 consideration the following factors:

- 19 (i) existing county boundaries;
- 20 (ii) existing legislative districts;
- 21 (iii) natural features, such as the Continental Divide,  
 22 major rivers and drainages, and other divides and  
 23 ridgelines;
- 24 (iv) transportation routes;
- 25 (v) population distribution;





1 (vi) market areas;  
 2 (vii) natural resources;  
 3 (viii) major industries, institutions, and other social  
 4 and economic resources; and  
 5 (ix) taxable valuation; AND  
 6 (b) A PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATING SERVICES WITHIN THE  
 7 FOLLOWING DISTRICTS OR WITHIN SIMILAR DISTRICTS EACH OF  
 8 WHICH COMPRISES AT LEAST TWO ADJOINING COUNTIES:  
 9 (I) DISTRICT 1: LEWIS AND CLARK, BROADWATER, AND  
 10 JEFFERSON COUNTIES;  
 11 (II) DISTRICT 2: SILVER BOW, BEAVERHEAD, AND MADISON  
 12 COUNTIES;  
 13 (III) DISTRICT 3: DEER LODGE, GRANITE, AND POWELL  
 14 COUNTIES;  
 15 (IV) DISTRICT 4: MISSOULA, MINERAL, AND RAVALLI  
 16 COUNTIES;  
 17 (V) DISTRICT 5: FLATHEAD, LAKE, SANDERS, AND LINCOLN  
 18 COUNTIES;  
 19 (VI) DISTRICT 6: TOOLE, GLACIER, TETON, AND PONDERA  
 20 COUNTIES;  
 21 (VII) DISTRICT 7: HILL, LIBERTY, AND BLAINE COUNTIES;  
 22 (VIII) DISTRICT 8: CASCADE AND CHOUTEAU COUNTIES;  
 23 (IX) DISTRICT 9: FERGUS, JUDITH BASIN, WHEATLAND, AND  
 24 PETROLEUM COUNTIES;  
 25 (X) DISTRICT 10: GALLATIN, MEAGHER, PARK, AND SWEET

1 GRASS COUNTIES;  
 2 (XI) DISTRICT 11: YELLOWSTONE, BIG HORN, CARBON,  
 3 STILLWATER, GOLDEN VALLEY, AND MUSSELSHELL COUNTIES;  
 4 (XII) DISTRICT 12: CUSTER, ROSEBUD, TREASURE, POWDER  
 5 RIVER, FALLON, AND CARTER COUNTIES;  
 6 (XIII) DISTRICT 13: DAWSON, RICHLAND, MCCONE, GARFIELD,  
 7 PRAIRIE, AND WIBAUX COUNTIES;  
 8 (XIV) DISTRICT 14: PHILLIPS, VALLEY, ROOSEVELT,  
 9 SHERIDAN, AND DANIELS COUNTIES.  
 10 (2) THAT THE PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES  
 11 PROVIDE FOR:  
 12 (A) CONSOLIDATION OF THE FOLLOWING OFFICES IN EACH  
 13 DISTRICT:  
 14 (I) SHERIFF;  
 15 (II) CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT;  
 16 (III) COUNTY ATTORNEY;  
 17 (IV) COUNTY SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS;  
 18 (V) COUNTY SURVEYOR;  
 19 (VI) COUNTY TREASURER;  
 20 (VII) CORONER;  
 21 (VIII) PUBLIC ADMINISTRATOR;  
 22 (IX) COUNTY CLERK AND RECORDER;  
 23 (X) COUNTY COMMISSIONERS;  
 24 (B) REVISION OF ANY JUDICIAL DISTRICTS DEFINED IN  
 25 3-5-101 THAT DO NOT FALL WHOLLY WITHIN A DISTRICT DEFINED

1 UNDER THIS SECTION, WITH APPROPRIATE ADJUSTMENTS IN THE  
2 NUMBER OF JUDGES ASSIGNED TO EACH JUDICIAL DISTRICT UNDER  
3 3-5-102; AND

4 (C) CONSOLIDATION OF THE OFFICES OF SCHOOL  
5 SUPERINTENDENTS FOR CONTIGUOUS SECOND- AND THIRD-CLASS  
6 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

7 (3) THAT THE PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES  
8 DESIGNATE ONE COUNTY SEAT AS THE CENTRAL LOCATION FOR EACH  
9 OFFICE LISTED ABOVE AND PROVIDE FOR A BRANCH OFFICE STAFFED  
10 BY ONE OR MORE DEPUTIES IN EACH OF THE OTHER COUNTIES IN THE  
11 DISTRICT.

12 (4) THAT THE PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES  
13 PROVIDE THAT WHILE A DISTRICT COURT MAY BE HELD IN EACH  
14 COUNTY WITHIN A DISTRICT, EACH DISTRICT IS SERVED BY ONLY  
15 ONE CLERK OF THE DISTRICT COURT.

16 (5) THAT THE PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATION OF SERVICES MAY  
17 NOT PROPOSE TO:

18 (A) ALTER COUNTY BOUNDARIES;

19 (B) RELOCATE A COUNTY SEAT; OR

20 (C) CONSOLIDATE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

21 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT THE SUBCOMMITTEE:

22 (1) meet and, in conjunction with its meeting, hold a  
23 public hearing in each of the following cities:

24 {i}{j}{A} Billings;

25 {i}{j}{B} BUTTE;

1 {i}{j}{k}{l}{m}{n}{O} Great Falls;

2 {i}{j}{k}{l}{IV}{j}{D} Helena; and

3 {iv}{v}{j}{E} Missoula; and

4 {e}{j}{2} hold additional hearings as funds permit in the  
5 following cities:

6 {i}{j}{A} Kalispell;

7 {i}{j}{B} Helena BOZEMAN;

8 {i}{j}{k}{l}{C} Lewistown;

9 {iv}{j}{D} Havre;

10 {v}{j}{E} Sidney; and

11 {vi}{j}{F} Miles City.

12 ~~{2}~~ BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT  
13 THE SUBCOMMITTEE submit its plan PLANS to the 51st  
14 Legislature for review.

15 ~~{3}~~ BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, THAT  
16 THE SUBCOMMITTEE submit its plan PLANS to the 51st  
17 Legislature for review.  
18 ~~plan, as revised by the legislature, be distributed to the~~  
19 ~~governing body of each affected county for submission to the~~  
20 ~~county electorate as provided in Title 7, chapter 2.~~

19 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if House Bill No. 744,  
20 including the appropriation for a county boundary commission  
21 and the requirement that the commission prepare a plan for  
22 county consolidation and reorganization, is passed and  
23 approved, this act is void.

-End-

STANDING COMMITTEE REPORT

HOUSE

April 8 19 87

Mr. Speaker: We, the committee on LOCAL GOVERNMENT

report SJR 14

do pass  
 do not pass

be concurred in  
 be not concurred in

as amended  
 statement of intent attached

Chairman

Rep. Norm Wallin

Page 3.  
Following: line 3

Insert: "(ii) Butte"  
Renumber: subsequent sections

SW (Rep. Stella Jean Hansen)

THIRD reading copy ( BLUE color )

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE AMENDMENT Page 1 of 3

HOUSE

4-10-87  
DATE  
15:01  
TIME

MR. CHAIRMAN: I MOVE TO AMEND SJR 14

Page 2 of 3

3rd reading copy ( blue ) as follows:  
Color

1. Title, line 8.  
Following: "FEWER"  
Insert: "AND A PLAN FOR CONSOLIDATING SERVICES"
2. Title, line 10.  
Following: "COUNTIES"  
Strike: remainder of line 10 through "COUNTIES" on line 11  
Insert: "AND SERVICES TO BE CONSOLIDATED WITHIN DISTRICTS"
3. Page 2, line 3.  
Following: "Constitution"  
Insert: "; and  
WHEREAS, if the voters reject county consolidation and reorganization, an alternative plan will be needed to reduce the expense of county government by consolidating services"
4. Page 2, line 8.  
Following: "assigned to"  
Insert: "prepare the following two plans"
5. Page 2, line 9.  
Following: "(a)"  
Strike: "prepare"
6. Page 2, line 25.  
Following: "valuation;"  
Insert: "and"
7. Page 3, line 1.  
Following: "(b)"  
Insert: "a plan for consolidating services within the following districts or within similar districts each of which comprises at least 2 adjoining counties:
  - (i) District 1: Lewis and Clark, Broadwater, and Jefferson Counties;
  - (ii) District 2: Silver Bow, Beaverhead, and Madison Counties;
  - (iii) District 3: Deer Lodge, Granite, and Powell Counties;
  - (iv) District 4: Missoula, Mineral, and Ravalli Counties;
  - (v) District 5: Flathead, Lake, Sanders, and Lincoln Counties;

- (vi) District 6: Toole, Glacier, Teton, and Pondera Counties;
- (vii) District 7: Hill, Liberty, and Blaine Counties;
- (viii) District 8: Cascade and Chouteau Counties;
- (ix) District 9: Fergus, Judith Basin, Wheatland, and Petroleum Counties;
- (x) District 10: Gallatin, Meagher, Park, and Sweet Grass Counties;
- (xi) District 11: Yellowstone, Big Horn, Carbon, Stillwater, Golden Valley, and Musselshell Counties;
- (xii) District 12: Custer, Rosebud, Treasure, Powder River, Fallon, and Carter Counties;
- (xiii) District 13: Dawson, Richland, McCone, Garfield, Prairie, and Wibaux Counties;
- (xiv) District 14: Phillips, Valley, Roosevelt, Sheridan, and Daniels Counties.

(2) That the plan for consolidation of services provide for:

(a) consolidation of the following offices in each district:

- (i) sheriff;
- (ii) clerk of the district court;
- (iii) county attorney;
- (iv) county superintendent of schools;
- (v) county surveyor;
- (vi) county treasurer;
- (vii) coroner;
- (viii) public administrator;
- (ix) county clerk and recorder;
- (x) county commissioners;

(b) revision of any judicial districts defined in 3-5-101 that do not fall wholly within a district defined under this section, with appropriate adjustments in the number of judges assigned to each judicial district under 3-5-102; and

(c) consolidation of the offices of school superintendents for contiguous second- and third-class elementary school districts.

(3) That the plan for consolidation of services designate one county seat as the central location for each office listed above and provide for a branch office staffed by one or more deputies in each of the other counties in the district.

ADOPT  
REJECT

continued

continued

(4) That the plan for consolidation of services provide that while a district court may be held in each county within a district, each district is served by only one clerk of the district court.

(5) That the plan for consolidation of services may not propose to:  
(a) alter county boundaries;  
(b) relocate a county seat; or  
(c) consolidate elementary school districts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the subcommittee:  
(1) "

Renumber: subsections (i) through (v) as (a) through (e)

8. Page 3, line 7.

Strike: "(c)"

Insert: "(2)"

Renumber: subsections (i) through (vi) as (a) through (f)

9. Page 3, line 15.

Strike: "(2) That the committee"

Insert: "BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the subcommittee"

Following: "its"

Strike: "plan"

Insert: "plans"