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DAN MCGEE  
DOUG MOOD  
BRAD NEWMAN  
PAUL SLITER

# Montana Legislative Council

PO BOX 201706  
Helena, Montana 59620-1706  
(406) 444-3064  
FAX (406) 444-3036

## MINUTES

**January 31, 2001**

**Room 335, State Capitol  
Helena, Montana**

Please Note: These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed. Committee tapes are on file in the offices of the Legislative Services Division. **Exhibits for this meeting are available upon request. Legislative Council policy requires a charge of 15 cents a page for copies of documents.**

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sen. Tom Beck, Chairman  
Sen. Vicki Cocchiarella  
Sen. Mack Cole  
Sen. Steve Doherty  
Sen. Mike Taylor  
Rep. George Golie  
Rep. Dan McGee  
Rep. Doug Mood  
Rep. Brad Newman  
Rep. Paul Sliter

### **COMMITTEE MEMBERS EXCUSED**

Rep. Kim Gillan, Vice Chairman  
Sen. B.F. "Chris" Christiaens

## **STAFF PRESENT**

Lois Menzies, Executive Director, LSD  
Dave Bohyer, Director, Office of Research and Policy Analysis, LSD  
Hank Trenk, Director, Office of Legislative Information Technology, LSD  
Karen Berger, Fiscal Services Manager, LSD

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

- Adopted minutes from January 16, 2001, meeting
- Approved recommendations of Subcommittee on River Governance

## **CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE**

Chairman Beck called the meeting to order at 5 p.m. All members were present except Sen. Christiaens and Rep. Gillan who were excused.

## **ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Attachment #1, Minutes from Legislative Council meeting, January 16, 2001

Sen. Cole moved that the minutes from the January 16, 2001, meeting be adopted. The motion passed unanimously.

## **REVIEW OF LEGISLATIVE SERVICES DIVISION AND INTERIM COMMITTEES AND ACTIVITIES PROPOSED FY 2002-03 BUDGET**

Attachment #2, Legislative Services Division Budget Review

Ms. Menzies reviewed the Legislative Services Division's present law adjustments and new proposals for FY2002-03. She noted that the House and Senate majority leaders had asked the legislative agency directors about possible budget reductions in the branch budget because of the state's revenue shortfall. Leadership and the directors agreed to maintain the present law adjustments, remove all branch new proposals, and apply 4 percent vacancy savings with creation of a \$200,000 personal services contingency fund.

Some members expressed interest in pursuing funding for certain new proposals. Sen. Cocchiarella said that the internet broadcasting and chamber automation proposals had merit. Sen. Taylor said that he would rather not postpone the chamber automation pilot project but would like to seek ways to reduce the cost. Sen. Cole expressed interest in payment of dues and funding participation in interstate organizations. Sen. Beck said that there may be a proposal to fund Montana's participation in the Pacific NorthWest Economic Region (PNWER).

## **UPDATE ON RIVER GOVERNANCE COUNCIL**

Attachment #3, River Governance Issues, Results of Ballot on Subcommittee

Recommendations, January 2001

Ms. Menzies reported that the Legislative Council's Subcommittee on River Governance (Sen. Taylor (chair), Rep. Gillan, Sen. Cocchiarella, and Rep. Mood) appointed at the January 16, 2001 meeting met and made several recommendations. These recommendations were included in a ballot that was submitted to Council members. Ms. Menzies recapped the results of the ballot.

Rep. McGee asked how much it would cost to fund Montana's participation on the River Governance Council for the next biennium. Ms. Menzies estimated that it would cost about \$28,000.

Sen. Doherty said that he does not believe that members should have to reside within the Columbia River basin; he said that the issues before the River Governance Council impact all Montanans.

Sen. Cocchiarella said that she supported the residency requirement. She noted that a legislator who lives in the basin represents constituents who are impacted by the issues on a day-to-day basis. The legislator is likely to have a better understanding of local issues and can more easily participate in local meetings. This will improve the legislator's effectiveness on the Council.

Sen. Taylor said that he agreed with the residency requirement. Sen. Beck said that, at a minimum, members should be from Western Montana.

Sen. Cocchiarella moved that the subcommittee recommendations be adopted with the following adjustment to recommendation #4 regarding residency: "Members must reside within the Columbia River basin. However, if the issues before the River Governance Council broaden, more broad-based representation may be needed." The motion passed unanimously.

Rep. McGee suggested that the Senate and House majority and minority leaders submit the names of their nominees to Chairman Beck by transmittal. The Legislative Council will then appoint the membership.

### **REQUEST TO PROVIDE LINKS FROM LEGISLATIVE BRANCH HOME PAGE TO LEGISLATORS' WEB SITES**

Attachment #4, Example of Legislative Branch home page linking to legislators' home pages

Ms. Menzies explained that Sen. Taylor had asked the Legislative Services Division to provide a link on the Legislative Branch home page to his web site. She said that to accomplish this task it may be necessary to amend the state's ethics law to provide that state facilities could be used for this purpose. In addition, Ms. Menzies said that the Legislative Services Division wanted to ensure that users were aware that the Division was not in any way associated with the content of a legislator's web site.

Mr. Trenk showed members an example of one way that a link from the Legislative Branch home page could be created. This example is similar to how Iowa provides these connections. It provides two notices to the user that he or she is leaving the Legislative Branch home page and

that the content and opinions expressed in the linked pages are those of the web site owner.

Sen. Taylor said that providing a connection from the Legislative Branch home page would be the next step in connecting constituents. He noted that it is time for us "to move into the 21st Century". He also stated that other states are providing this service.

Sen. Cocchiarella asked about the cost of providing and maintaining the links. Mr. Trenk said that the cost would be minimal and not require much staff resources.

Rep. Newman said that he has serious concerns about the ethics of providing a connection from a state home page to a purely political web site. He said this issue deserves more consideration.

Chairman Beck asked Legislative Services Division staff to investigate the legal aspects of providing the legislator links and to check with other states as to whether they have experienced any difficulties in providing this service.

### **UPDATE ON INTERIM STUDY REQUESTS**

Dave Bohyer stated that there were 11 introduced bills or resolutions requiring or requesting interim studies. In addition, there were 8 in the drafting process. He noted that staff is tracking the requests on a regular basis. Following the session, legislators will be requested to prioritize the studies. Periodic updates will be provided to the Council.

### **NEXT MEETING AND ADJOURNMENT**

The next meeting of the Legislative Council will be scheduled after the general bill transmittal deadline.

The meeting adjourned at 6:20 p.m.