

December 6, 2008

Chinook Fire Station

Senator Ken Hansen, Representative Russ Bean, Leonard Lundby, Ken Mergenthaler, Sue Mergenthaler, Rodney Dresbach, Kraig Hansen, Debbie Gomke, Tim Gomke, Scott Gallus, Preston Gilmore, Richard Van Auken, Durwin Williams

Senator Hansen explained the charge of the Interim Sub Committee as being three parts: Wildland Interface, Infrastructure and Contracting. Senator Hansen chaired the Contracting portion of the sub committee. Senator Hansen was here today to listen to concerns. One of the items that came out of the sub committee was the funding for the coop program. The trucks have been allocated. The senator explained that anyone having access to the internet can watch the hearings live and encourages people to do so.

42 bills currently, not all have sponsors. Senator Hansen explained that fire will always need to continually educate the legislature. The senator explained that our lobbyist is well respected in Helena.

Bills were reviewed with discussion.

33 – Deals with size of generator plants

34 – Deals with Beatle Kill and concerns that Feds are not stepping up to help with mitigation. This will be a personal property issue. Believe this bill will struggle.

- Extend duration of fire emergency, came out of the tourist industry. If passed there would be one declaration for the summer for the state instead of declarations being made sometimes daily.

109 – For paid fire, expansion of fire fighter eligibility

- Chiefs Duties – believe current laws adequate.

LC265 – VA – pay for state active duty for fire fighting

LC449 – transfer fire pension to DofA

LC472 – building standards wildland interface (lots of players – in hopper – insurance companies). DNRC leaning toward going to Department of Labor. Standards and enforcement big issues, along with who and how paid for.

LC473 – on hold – fire management easement. Groups trying to protect from development

LC474 – fire suppression committee – insurance need to be a player in fire problem.

Insurance company should be driving this and fire safe programs.

LC475 – Insurance companies properly review policy going to be difficult.

LC476 – premium discounts for mitigated properties, insurance going to fight.

LC477 – State land fuel reduction program. Pilot program, Feds not doing, states' attempt.

LC478 – local government

LC479 – include homeowner primary response state policy, homeowners have some responsibility for fire protection in wild land interface

LC480 – DNRC to define wild land interface. Problem – State statute defines – this could bit us in the other bills (Senator Bill 145).

LC481 – Authorize local tax for mitigation. Committee statement of what needs to be done. Up to legislature. Companion bill LC482.

LC482 –

LC483 – direct fire protection, based on acres, DNRC’s formula for accessing, also address equity.

LC484 – tribal participation in DNRC coop will have opposition.

LC485 – Clarifying DNRC initials fire attach authority. Clears up the authority that isn’t clear now.

LC488 –

LC491 –

LC492 – license plates & tax credits for volunteers, don’t know the wording of this bill. EMS is also presenting a bill for tax credits. There are 4 or 5 bills that deal with tax credits. Should work to get into one bill.

LC49 - Grant program for volunteers fire fighters, just don’t want to have strings tied to that makes it impossible to get or meet requirements.

LC495 – leave for State employees to respond to fires. Also talk about adding county.

LC497 – Volunteer fire fighters able to individually tie into county insurance plans. Fire fighter pays premium. Don’t believe MACO will support.

LC500 – Extend fire suppression committee

LC501 – mechanized equipment, ability to use technology vs. tradition means of fighting fire. This would be private contractors having specialized equipment like masticators that could help during a fire.

LC502 – remove allocations with DNRC assessments. DNRC assesses 1/3 of their budget through fire fees.

LC503-statutory authority for emergency fund from 16 million to 21 million

LC763 – property tax credit

LC1200 – presumption of disease by workers comp. Example, 15 yr volunteer fire fighter comes down with a type of cancer that could only have happened during exposure fighting fire.

LC1259 – make fire suppression fund permanent

Change to 7-33-2129. Language to include all forms of debitedness, bonded or secured.

Not in the hopper yet: payment in lieu of. Statute allows for payment in lieu of park land; want to change statute to allow for water supply in lieu of.

Additional information: workers compensation does not cover heart attack. Cost is very high.

Would like to add to Butch’s Latest a weekly bill update and a few reminders.

-If you have legislation please contact John Semple, phone_____, email_____.

-John Semple will be IC on the hill.

-If you haven't ever been to the legislature, you don't know the process; let us help you.
Contact:
-John can provide information about location of meetings and how to get there, how to testify, how to introduce yourself, etc.

Have John have a cheat sheet to hand out:

Committee: _____
Committee Chair: _____

Address the committee by: _____

In addressing the committee, introduce yourself by stating your name, where you are from, title...

Be yourself
State your case
Do not come in with a bone to pick or agenda

Remember there are cameras everywhere. You will be going out live via the internet.

Senator Ken Hansen
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