

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Alicia Salisbury at 8:00 a.m. on March 22, 2000 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Committee staff present: Lynne Holt, Legislative Research Department  
Jerry Ann Donaldson, Legislative Research Department  
Bob Nugent, Revisor of Statutes  
Betty Bomar, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Others attending: See attached list

The Chair advised the Committee this is intended to be the Committee's last meeting and a short one. She thanked the Committee for its good discussions and debates on the issues and stated her appreciation for sharing their views and expertise.

**HB 2767 - Transfer of maps of underground mines to control of state geologist.**

The Chair stated that the purpose of the meeting was to take action on **HB 2767**, which had been held in committee as a possible vehicle for workers compensation legislation. She stated the following for the record:

"I was holding the bill in the hopes that the Secretary of Human Resources would be successful in his effort to convene a group of people to resolve issues pertaining to workers compensation benefits, safety and workers compensation as the exclusive remedy. I understand that effort has not been successful; I am sorry. In 1993 we created a Workers Compensation Advisory Council to serve the same purpose as the Employment Security Advisory Council, that is to bring representatives of employers and representatives of employees together to discuss issues of concern to both parties. We have heard repeatedly in this Committee that the Director of Workers Compensation has had difficulty in getting a quorum at those meetings so that they could discuss the really difficult issues. All we have received for the past two years out of the Advisory Council are really technical changes. The real issues are still unaddressed and unresolved. At the request of one party, the meetings convened by the Secretary of Human Resources included the trial bar, and I think that was a mistake. The advisory group was not set up to include representatives of the insurance industry, representatives of the plaintiffs or defense bar, or representatives of health care providers. It was intended to include only the two parties who are directly affected by workplace injuries. If I were going to be here next year, I would pre-file a bill that would dissolve the Workers Compensation Advisory Council, because they have failed to function as was intended. I hope that will change; and if it doesn't, that would be my recommendation to you."

**Senator Ranson moved, seconded by Senator Barone, that HB 2767 be recommended favorably for passage and placed on the consent calendar. The voice vote was in favor of the motion.**

Senator Barone thanked the Chair for her leadership and guidance, and for treating everyone fairly. He stated the comments previously made by the Chair will not go unnoticed, and shares some of the same views and encourages the Advisory Council to deal with some things which need to be dealt with.

The meeting adjourned at 8:15 a.m.

There are no further meetings scheduld.

