

MISSION OBJECTIVES

- To attend Montana-Alberta Bilateral Advisory Council meeting in Helena, Montana
- To foster closer relations and cooperation in areas relevant to Alberta's interests
- To discuss specific bilateral issues and opportunities to advance joint initiatives

PROGRAM AND RESULT HIGHLIGHTS

Date	Program
Thu, May 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Depart Alberta for Helena ▪ Attend Montana-Alberta Bilateral Advisory Council reception
Fri, May 12	<p>Montana-Alberta Bilateral Advisory Council meeting</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alberta chair: Hon. Gary Mar, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations ▪ Montana chair: Hon. John Bohlinger, Lieutenant Governor <p>Agriculture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Montana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ provided an overview of its agriculture priorities. The industry is Montana's most important, comprising mainly livestock and wheat. ➢ has a strong interest in developing its agriculture industry. ➢ stated that decisions vis-à-vis beef industry are based on science. ▪ Alberta <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ stated that animal health was at the top of its priorities. As a result of the BSE crisis, Alberta plants have enhanced slaughter capacity. ➢ conveyed its concern about R-CALF and its protectionist moves. ➢ will work together with industry to ensure the safety of Alberta's beef supply. ➢ reiterated that keeping borders open is good for Montana and Alberta industry and producers. ➢ supported marketing choice for wheat and barley. ➢ highlighted opportunity for cooperation on biofuels. <p>Transportation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Montana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ expressed interest in working with Alberta on addressing the lack of competition in Montana's rail transportation. ➢ outlined its transportation regional development economic development study. ➢ stressed the need for both federal governments' focus on north-south

highways.

- Alberta
 - discussed the results of Montana's study into expanding the transportation corridor.
 - shared Montana's concerns about the lack of rail competition.

Environment

- Montana
 - expressed interest in a more active role in Crown of the Continent (a partnership of federal, state and provincial bodies), which covers Flathead River Basin (British Columbia), Glacier and Waterton Parks (Alberta and Montana). Suggested the need for a memorandum of understanding.
- Alberta
 - agreed the partnership is a good example of how partnerships may be developed.

St. Mary and Milk Rivers

- Montana
 - expressed admiration for Alberta's irrigation system.
 - suggested that Montana's approach is complicated by the need to repair its infrastructure.
 - would like to revisit regulations governing river flows.
- Alberta
 - believes the rivers' regulations are fair and reasonable, backed by water use information and data, and water infrastructure investment.
 - suggested that local Albertans and Montanans near the border get together to address the issue.

Note: the International Joint Commission was in the process of holding public meetings and completing its report at the time of this meeting.

Disaster and Emergency Services

- Montana
 - expressed interest in revitalizing relations in emergency management.
 - invited Alberta to Montana governor's emergency preparedness summit on May 22.
- Alberta
 - recommended Montana and Alberta continue to collaborate on measures such as development of new plans, cross-border exercise on chemical, biological, chemical and nuclear response and radio responder system.
 - Recommended the re-initiation of the Alberta-Montana Emergency Management/Disaster Services Memorandum of Understanding and discussions include British Columbia and Saskatchewan.

Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative

Delegates were briefed and updated by a Seattle-based U.S. passport official. Legislation effective January 2007 allows time for the U.S. government to approve acceptable documents other than passports.

	<p><i>Concerns to date have centred around a passport's cost and portability. There has been discussion of day passes for short-term travellers although U.S. legislation has not clarified this option.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Montana <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ stated that 24% of Americans have passports. ▪ Alberta <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ suggested Montana and Alberta request a delay in the enactment of legislation to ensure all citizens have time to apply for the necessary documents. <p>Next Steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Alberta suggested that Alberta and Montana continue their dialogue and not limit it to annual meetings. ▪ Alberta's Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development expressed interest in working with Montana on bio-fuels, and will assign staff to work with Montana counterparts. ▪ Both sides agreed to explore the rail competition issue. ▪ Alberta's Minister of Municipal Affairs stated his willingness to move forward with a memorandum of understanding on emergency management. ▪ Both sides will send a letter to Canadian and U.S. groups expressing their wish to see a delay in the implementation of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative regulations. <p>Depart Helena for Alberta</p>
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In addition to Montana and Alberta delegations, the meeting was attended by the Calgary-based U.S. Consul General and the Denver-based Canadian Consul General. The latter reported that, since the consulate opened, he has spent significant time in Montana, focusing on energy security and economic investment.

BACKGROUND

- More information about Alberta-Montana ties is available at www.iir.gov.ab.ca/international_relations/alberta_us_relations.asp
- Alberta and Montana formed the Montana-Alberta Boundary Advisory Committee in 1985 to discuss areas of common interest. The first meeting was held in 1986. In 2000, former Montana Governor Mark Racicot and Premier Klein signed an agreement to formalize the council, and changed the name from Boundary Advisory Committee to Bilateral Advisory Committee (current name).

OFFICIAL DELEGATION

- Honourable Gary Mar, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations
- Honourable Rob Renner, Minister of Municipal Affairs
- Honourable Doug Horner, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development
- Honourable Barry McFarland, Associate Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation
- George Groeneveld, Highwood MLA
- Leonard Mitzel, Cypress-Medicine Hat MLA
- Jason Krips, Executive Assistant to the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development