

Montana State Hail Board
Tuesday December 3, 2025
Colter Room at the Spring Hill Suites
Great Falls Montana

The meeting was called to order at 10:00am by Chairman Bing VonBergen

Introductions – Those in attendance were:

Bing VonBergen – Board Chair, Moccasin
Vince Mattson – Board member, Chester
Jim Schillinger – Board member, Circle
Christy Clark – Director, Montana Department of Agriculture
Ashley Perez – Proxy for Troy Downing, Commissioner of Securities & Insurance
Walt Anseth – Montana Department of Agriculture
Andy Fjeseth – Bureau Chief, Montana Department of Agriculture
Cody Pearce- Montana Department of Agriculture, Accounting
Dani Jones – Montana Department of Agriculture
Solomon Frazier- Taylor Walker Consulting Actuaries

Members of the Public:

Shane Thompson with RCIS

Public Comment:

Chair Bing VonBergen called for public comment and there was none.

Minutes:

Minutes were presented from the March 19, 2024, meeting. Vince Mattson motioned to accept the minutes as with the changes requested, Jim Schillinger 2nd the motion, motion passed.

New Business:

Financials - Presented by Walt Anseth- He shared that the use of ARPA funds for “backfill” on loss payments went through hearings during the past legislature. The ARPA funds can also cover reinsurance, and the funds have to be spent by 12/31/2024. The hail program has seen funds come back from the current reinsurance company, total of seven thousand dollars. When the income increases, then there is more money to invest. Cody Pearce shared that when there is more money in a program, then more money will be taken out of the program. Which is divided across personal, rent, and overhead costs. The expenses have gone down because the ARPA money is paying the losses. The Hail program covers Dani, and the adjusters pay and travel. Indirect covers accounting, director, legal position, IT staff, and building rent. The MyCrop system was also a direct fund.

Delinquencies: Currently there are three delinquent policies. At the last meeting there was four delinquent policies, one has since paid the balance. One of the delinquents will be wrote off

due to statute and will still be able to collect funds with the state's bad debt system but cannot send any more delinquent letter.

2024 Year Review: Walt shared with the board that Spring Wheat was the leader in acres with 117,476. Winter Wheat at 96,665 acres, Barley at 13,956 acres, Peas and Lentils at 44,902 acres, and Durum at 14,856 acres. Total crop acres covered by state hail 308,635 acres. A total of 262 policies were issued in 2024, for a total of \$2,237,837 in premiums. There were 72 loss claims with 57,803 acres damaged and \$2,178,299 paid out for the losses. State Hail has to insure crops as requested, cannot turn a producer down just because of their loss history. There were 5 new producers to sign up for State Hail.

108 Year Summary: The 108-year summary was reviewed, 205,231 policies issued, \$200,775,860 in premiums, 87,297,646 total acres insured with an average acres/policy 425 acres. The number of losses paid 45,536, with the loss amount of \$156,137,709, with a loss ratio of 76.27%.

If the refund was going to come back to MT State hail program, Walt suggested a 10% refund across the board on paid premiums. Dani will check with the MyCrop programmers to see what would be needed to complete a refund in the computer program.

Actuarial Report: Solomon Frazier with Taylor Walker Consulting, LLC shared the 2024 actuarial analysis for the Montana State Hail Insurance Program. Copy on file.

Reinsurance – Walt Anseth reported that 2014 was the first year for reinsurance, “Stop Loss”, Ben Tiller got the program into a cost shred. Walt has been working with the reinsurance company for the proposed split. Walt suggested to stay with a 50/50 split, he will check into a 40/60. Walt will share the numbers and information at the Spring 2025 meeting. Chairman Bing VonBergen suggested that giving out a refund might increase policies. This will be discussed at the spring 2025 meeting.

Premium Rate Review: Spreadsheets by county and by crop were handed out to the board members. Walt said that he doesn't need a lot of changes for the next year. The changes from the past years have stabilized the current rates. Will review the rates at the Spring 2025 meeting.

Other Business:

Appeals – No appeals for the 2024 year.

Adjusters – Dani Jones gave an update of the adjusters for the 2024 year. Clayton Gernaat in Conrad, Cary Jones in Joliet, Michael Metcalfe in Moccasin, Jamie Beasley in Roundup, and Roger Merritt in Miles City. Gabby Drishinski was the new adjuster for the 2024 season, she is based around the Grass Range area. Dani will continue to do outreach for new adjusters.

Appointments- Reappointment paperwork for Bing and Vince has been received in the office. Dani Jones will work with the Lt. Governor's office to make sure everything was completed.

Public Comment:

Chair Bing VonBergen called for public comment. No public comment.

Adjourn:

Vince Mattson moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:24 am.

Dani Jones, Hail Insurance Technician

Date

Walt Anseth, Section Supervisor

Date