

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 49

2 INTRODUCED BY J. SOOKTIS, D. BAUM, T. CROWE, J. DARLING, C. FITZPATRICK, S. FYANT, J. REAVIS,
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5 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
6 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY OF UNITED STATES HIGHWAY 212 IN MONTANA; AND
7 REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.
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9 WHEREAS, United States Highway 212 proceeds eastward from Yellowstone National Park, passing
10 through the Crow and Northern Cheyenne Indian reservations, and across southeastern Montana into
11 Wyoming, South Dakota, and Minnesota; and

12 WHEREAS, U.S. Highway 212 in Montana is a roadway of incredible paradoxes, providing some of the
13 most beautiful scenery to thousands of motorists every year along the Beartooth Highway section between
14 Cooke City and Red Lodge and some of the most treacherous, isolated, and fatal conditions to many other
15 motorists on the section of road east of Billings; and

16 WHEREAS, much of the section of U.S. Highway 212 east of Billings is plagued by poor road surface
17 conditions, limited winter maintenance services, lack of cellular phone service, and limited emergency service
18 options; and

19 WHEREAS, U.S. Highway 212 had the highest fatality rate from 2013 to 2022 of any rural roadway in
20 the state, and Bighorn County, which ranks 16th in county population in the state and is primarily served by
21 U.S. Highway 212, had more roadway fatalities from 2013 to 2022 than any other county except Yellowstone,
22 Flathead, and Missoula counties; and

23 WHEREAS, motorists involved in collisions or experiencing mechanical breakdowns on U.S. Highway
24 212 east of Billings often find themselves stranded and without assistance; and

25 WHEREAS, a greater understanding of the ongoing problems on U.S. Highway 212 east of Billings
26 could not only help decrease fatalities on that roadway but also serve as a foundation for developing safer rural
27 roadways in other parts of the state.
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1 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
2 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

3 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
4 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

5 (1) investigate the conditions, problems, and services for motorists on U.S. Highway 212 east of
6 Billings in order to develop solutions for decreasing the high number of fatalities and the dangerous conditions
7 and situations on the roadway;

8 (2) use various datasets, including information from the Montana Department of Transportation,
9 and information from local governments, communities, and individuals who live and work along U.S. Highway
10 212 east of Billings; and

11 (3) examine solutions that have been used to alleviate deaths and dangerous conditions and
12 situations on other rural roadways in Montana and in other states.

13 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
14 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

15 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
16 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,
18 comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

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