

Montana Conservation Community
Legislative Hotlist, Senate
Week 10: Mar. 9 – Mar. 14, 2009

Please Support:

HB 27, Revise universal system benefit laws, Rep. Wiseman (D-Bozeman). This bill, unanimously recommended by the interim Energy and Telecommunications Committee, eliminates the sunset provision of the universal system benefit program (USBP), and gives a legislative interim committee direction to review the program regularly for oversight. Energy and Telecommunications, 03/10/2009, 3pm, Rm 317. Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, 461.9546, ahedges@meic.org.

HB 98, Revise energy performance contracting for state buildings, Rep. Barrett (D-Missoula). This bill allows the state, including the university system, to enter into energy performance contracts as a means to provide capital for energy efficiency improvements in buildings. Private companies implement energy savings technology improvements, and the state pays back with money saved in energy costs. Energy and Telecommunications, 03/12/2009, 3pm, Rm 317. Contact Matt Leow, Northern Plains Resource Council, 396.1766, matt@northernplains.org.

HB 584, Siting process for wind energy, Rep. Art Noonan (D-Butte). This bill requires MT Dept. of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP) to conduct an interim study on a voluntary wind generation certification program for those wind facilities that are willing to minimize their impacts on wildlife, wildlife habitat, and cultural and historic resources. FWP is directed to establish a stakeholders group to make recommendations on how this program should be implemented. Using the recommendations of the stakeholders group, FWP will report to the 2011 Legislature about how this program can be implemented. Energy and Telecommunications, 03/12/2009, 3pm, Rm 317. Contact Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon, 431.9157, or jellis@mtaudubon.org.

SB 343, Regulation of zebra mussel and other invasive species, Sen. Jackson (R-Kalispell). This bill creates a framework for state agencies to work together to prevent and manage invasive species, focusing on thwarting the spread of aquatic non-natives like the zebra mussel. Finance and Claims, pending committee vote. Contact Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon, 431.9157, jellis@mtaudubon.org.

Please Oppose:

HB 140, Increase sustained yield for forest health, Rep. Vincent (R-Libby). This bill gives the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation the authority to harvest more timber each year than determined sustainable. It allows the DNRC to exceed the annual sustained yield for timber harvest on state school trust lands by 10%, as long timber is harvested through the contract timber harvest program. 2nd reading, 03/09/2009. Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, 461.9546, or ahedges@meic.org.

Alternative Energy Resource Organization * Clark Fork Coalition * Climate Solutions* Montana Audubon * Montana Conservation Voters * Montana Environmental Information Center * MontPIRG* Montana Sierra Club* Montana Smart Growth Coalition * Montana Trout Unlimited * National Center for Appropriate Technology * Natural Resource Defense Council * Northern Plains Resource Council

Please Oppose, Continued

HB 278, Weaken coal mine reclamation, Rep. McChesney (D-Miles City). This bill revises the coal reclamation laws to allow for the release of the bond before reclamation is completed. Water management and other support facilities, including soil stockpiles encompassing up to 20% of a strip mined area, could remain disturbed and avoid reclamation. Natural Resources, 03/09/2009, 3pm, Rm 422. Contact Matt Leow, Northern Plains, 396.1766, or matt@northernplains.org.

HB 483, Revising laws governing board of environmental review related to energy projects, Rep. Jones (R-Conrad). This bill undermines the air and water permitting processes and the Major Facility Siting Act. It effectively eliminates the ability of the public to challenge agency decisions on permits for "energy development projects," and creates different standards and sets of rules for citizens and industry to participate, unfairly advantaging development. Energy and Telecommunications, pending hearing date. Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, 461.9546, ahedges@meic.org.

SB 217, Reimburse livestock producers for tests for disease transmitted by wildlife, Sen. Barrett (R-Dillon). This bill requires Fish Wildlife and Parks to reimburse livestock producers for required disease testing. It also includes an \$18 million fiscal note which would wipe out FWP budget. FW&P, 03/13/2009, 8am, Rm 317. Contact Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon, 431.9157 or jellis@mtaudubon.org.

SB 402, Clarify property rights for which just compensation is due when taken, Sen. Peterson (R-Buffero). This bill liberally defines "regulatory takings" under Montana law. The immediate result is to overturn two Montana Supreme Court cases, requiring the state to pay two game farm owners that were regulated under a citizens' initiative I-143. The settlement would cost the state more than \$1 million. Finance and Claims, 03/11/2009, 8am, Rm 317. Contact Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon, 431.9157 or jellis@mtaudubon.org.

SB 433, Revise opencut mining laws, Sen. Gebhardt (R-Roundup). As written, this bill prevents local governments from adopting meaningful zoning regulations for gravel pits. Finance and Claims, 03/10/2009, 8am, Rm 317. Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, 461.9546, or ahedges@meic.org.

This hotlist is compiled by Montana Conservation Voters (contact Sarah Cobler, 581.2284 or sarah@mtvoters.org) as an educational service to lawmakers and citizens, weekly tracking key conservation-related legislative actions

Alternative Energy Resource Organization * Clark Fork Coalition * Climate Solutions* Montana Audubon * Montana Conservation Voters * Montana Environmental Information Center * MontPIRG* Montana Sierra Club* Montana Smart Growth Coalition * Montana Trout Unlimited * National Center for Appropriate Technology * Natural Resource Defense Council * Northern Plains Resource Council