

Montana Conservation Community
Legislative Hotlist, Senate
Week 13: Mar. 30 – Apr. 4, 2009

Please Support:

HB 52, Fund hydrogeologic study, Rep. McNutt (R-Sidney). This bill funds up to seven hydrogeologic studies in high growth counties such as Ravalli and Gallatin. These studies would provide much needed information on surface and groundwater interactions, and better facilitate local and state government on how, where and when water should be used. Natural Resources, 03/30/2009, 3pm, Rm 422. Contact Brianna Randall, Clark Fork Coalition, 370.5289.

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. Pending 2nd reading. Contact Matt Leow, Northern Plains Resource Council, 396.1766, or matt@northernplains.org.

HB 190, Clarify bridge access law, Rep. Van Dyk (D-Billings). This bill provides a mechanism and funding for legal livestock fences at public right-of-ways on county bridges, so long as they allow public access. This measure aims to secure Montanan's constitutional right to access streams and rivers while respecting landowners' need to erect fences to manage livestock and protect private land, solving years of contentious debate between user groups. Pending 2nd reading. Contact Mark Aagenes, Montana Trout Unlimited, 554.9265, or mark@montanatu.org.

HB 420, Allow local government to adopt energy conservation building codes, Rep. Reinhart (D-Missoula). The bill allows local governments to establish voluntary incentive-based energy conservation standards for new green construction. It increases the energy efficiency of housing for long-term residents and businesses, while supporting local efforts for energy efficiency and economic independence. Pending 2nd reading. Contact Tyler Evilsizer, S.A.V.E., 202.1723.

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 with a stakeholders' group to develop best management practices for wind facilities that are willing to minimize their impacts on wildlife, wildlife habitat, and cultural and historic resources. Using the recommendations of the stakeholders group, FWP will report to the 2011 Legislature about how this program can be implemented. Pending 2nd reading. Contact Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon, 431.9157, or jellis@mtaudubon.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 support, continued

HB 645, Appropriate federal stimulus money, Rep. Sesso (D-Butte). This bill has been amended to designate \$35 million for energy efficiency improvements in K-12 school facilities. This is one of the best ways that we can utilize stimulus money to create jobs and provide ongoing financial benefits in the form of reduced energy bills for schools. Finance and Claims, 03/31/2009, 8am, Rm 317. Contact Matt Leow, Northern Plains Resource Council, 396.1766, or matt@northernplains.org.

Please Oppose:

HB 483, Revising laws governing board of environmental review related to energy projects, Rep. Jones (R-Conrad). This bill violates citizens' rights to protect private property and public health. 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 corporations over citizens. Pending 3rd reading. Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, 461.9546, or ahedges@meic.org.

HB 529, Reduce the required MEPA review on energy projects that include school trust land, Rep. Jones (R- Conrad). This bill ensures that any environmental review under MEPA on an energy development project that included school trust land would only look at the impacts of the project on school trust land – impacts to adjacent properties could not be considered, even if those impacts were significant. As an example, the Judith Gap wind farm covers 84 acres, with only 11 acres of school trust land. An environmental review of this project would only look at the impact of the 11 acres of school trust land. Pending 2nd reading. Contact Janet Ellis, Montana Audubon, 431.9157, or jellis@mtaudubon.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

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