

Montana Senate Conservation Hotlist Week 11: March 13th, 2017

Please Support:

HB 228, Provide funding for sage grouse stewardship, Rep. Jim Keane (D-Butte), Hearing, Senate Natural Resources, 3/13/17 at 3pm, Rm. 303, Support. This bill sets up a funding cycle for the Sage-grouse Stewardship account that will move \$2 million annually from the General Fund into the stewardship account starting in FY 2017 and continuing to FY 2021. This \$2 million will function as both operating funds for the Montana Sage Grouse Oversight Team, with approximately \$400,000 available, and as funding to produce credits and provide grants through the conservation program. Contact Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon, 210.9449, aseaman@mtadubon.org.

SB 190, Establish monitoring and reporting requirements for greenhouse gas emissions, Sen. Mike Phillips (D-Bozeman), Senate Natural Resources, Pending Executive Action, Support. This bill creates a Montana solution for addressing climate change in the absence of action at the federal level. By identifying major sources of greenhouse emissions and establishing fees for those emissions, businesses would have an incentive to reduce emissions and lower their impact on climate change. The Department of Environmental Quality would also report to EQC on a plan to address the causes and effects of climate change in Montana including the impacts on our "economy, environment, and public health." Contact Neal Ullman, Montana Conservation Voters, 431.0171, neal@mtvoters.org.

SB 215, Major facility siting act for water bottling plants, Sen. Bob Keenan (R-Bigfork), Senate Natural Resources, Pending Executive Action, Support. This bill would require large-scale water bottling plants that extracts over 100 acre-feet of groundwater each year to receive a permit from the Montana Department of Environmental Quality under the Major Facility Siting Act. The bill requires DEQ to review, analyze, and determine if the impacts of a very large water bottling facility could or should be mitigated or avoided and to allow the public an opportunity to participate in the process. Contact Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center, 461.9546, ahedges@meic.org.

Please Oppose:

SB 235, Allow extension of coal lease on state lands, Sen. Tom Richmond (R-Billings), Senate Natural Resources, Pending Executive Action, Oppose. This bill would allow the Montana Land Board to extend the date for coal leases beyond their traditional 10-year term if the Board finds that it would be in the "best interest of the state." The bill does not provide for any public process, including notice and an opportunity to comment or an Environmental Impact Statement, if the Board voted to extend the lease. The State may also forego potential revenue from negotiating a new lease. Contact Derf Johnson, Montana Environmental Information Center, 581.4634, djohnson@meic.org.

The Weekly Hotlist is published as an educational service to lawmakers and citizens by the Conservation Working Group, comprised of the organizations listed below. Contact Neal Ullman, Montana Conservation Voters at 254-1593 ext 3.

Clark Fork Coalition * Montana Audubon * Montana Conservation Voters * Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC) * Montana Public Interest Research Group (MontPIRG) * Montana Smart Growth Coalition * Montana Trout Unlimited * Northern Plains Resource Council*

Montana Senate Conservation Hotlist Week 10: March 6th, 2017

HB 205, Revise tax laws related to vehicles, Rep. Alan Redfield (R-Livingston), Senate Highways and Transportation, Pending Executive Action, Oppose. This imposes new registration fees on electric and hybrid vehicles. This bill charges an annual fee of \$95 to all electric vehicle owners and \$30 to all "hybrid" owners even though not all hybrids are created equal. Hybrids include trucks such as the Chevy Silverado that gets a combined 20 MPG as well as the Ford C-MAX which gets a combined 39 MPG. Hybrid vehicles consume gasoline, meaning these drivers currently pay the gasoline tax and would be double-charged. In addition, the tax on selling propane as vehicle fuel would increase taxes on 45 businesses licensed as dealers which are primarily located in Eastern & Central Montana according the Department of Transportation. Contact Neal Ullman, Montana Conservation Voters, 431.0171, neal@mtvoters.org.