

Happy New Year Montana Conservation Voters!

Before many have had a chance to put away holiday decorations, the 68th session of the Montana legislature gavelled in at the Capitol in Helena on January 2. This historic new session marks the first legislative supermajority since Montana's Constitution was adopted 50 years ago.

And although it may only be the third week, there are well over 4,500 bills – some introduced, some awaiting introduction. Many of these bills are true threats to what makes Montana the Last Best Place. There are bills that will limit our freedom to access our public lands, bills that hinder our ability to protect Montana's unique landscapes, bills that will degrade our clean air and clean water and bills that will make it harder for working farmers and ranchers to pass on their farms and ranches to their kids.

I strongly believe Montana's brightest days are ahead, but it will take committed Montanans of all stripes standing up and pushing back against all ill-conceived ideas that would deprive future generations of the clean air, clean water and public lands that so many of us often take for granted.

You love Montana for a reason. So before it's too late, it's time to rise up and defend the Montana we know and love - where our quality of life includes the quiet beauty of our state, the grandeur of our mountains and the vastness of our rolling plains.

This legislative session, Team MCV will defend our freedom to access our public lands as well as protect our right to clean air and clean water.

In his draft budget, Governor Greg Gianforte proposed eliminating voter-approved funding for our public lands generated through the sale of recreational marijuana despite a \$2 billion budget surplus. When Montana voters initially approved recreational marijuana in 2020, you voted for a portion of the revenue to support conservation programs. Now dubbed the "Montana Outdoor Fund," the funding is intended to unlock access to our public lands through Habitat Montana, support state parks and trails and protect working lands. And the fund is popular with Montanans — a recent University of Montana poll found that 82% percent want to keep using recreational marijuana revenue to protect our public lands.

Thankfully the Governor's proposed budget is not final and we'll be working with you, our partners and the legislature to stand with Montana voters and restore the Montana Outdoor Fund in the final budget.

Team MCV is also working to protect our Montana Constitution. In 1972, delegates to Montana's Constitutional Convention from across the state and political spectrums enshrined a right to a "clean and healthful environment" in our state Constitution. For 50 years the Montana Constitution has protected our environment and public lands, but now that's under threat.

Powerful interests want to rip up our Constitution, threatening our freedom. In fact, a well known anti-conservation legislator, Representative Steve Gunderson of Libby, has already introduced a constitutional amendment targeting our right to a clean and healthful environment. This threat is real, and Team MCV opposes all irresponsible efforts to strip this provision from the Montana Constitution.

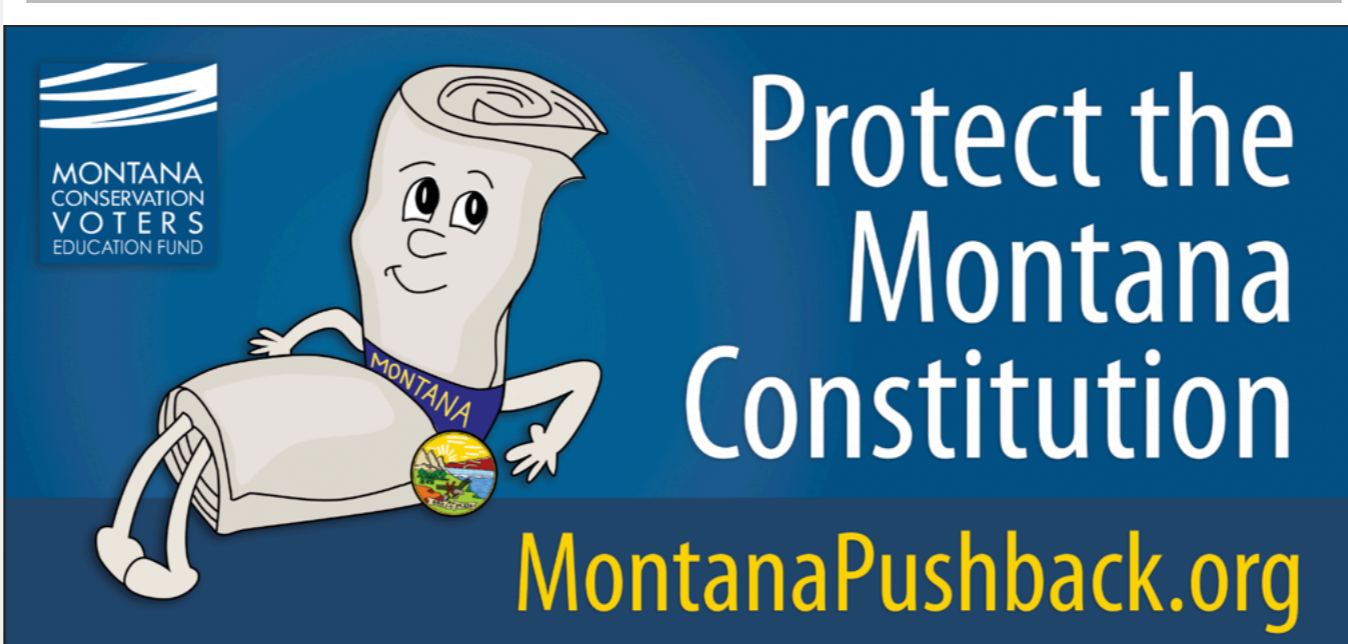
So what's next? Stay engaged, stay vigilant and visit [MontanaPushback.org](http://MontanaPushback.org) to stay informed and take action this legislative session.

Thanks as always for your support!



Yours in conservation,

Whitney Tawney  
Executive Director  
Montana Conservation Voters



## MontanaPushback RELAUNCHED

Make your voice heard this legislative session. There are less than 90 days every other year to make the difference. The MCV Education Fund will update [MontanaPushback.org](http://MontanaPushback.org) weekly to keep you informed and provide action opportunities for emails, phone calls and in-person visits to the Legislature. Visit [MontanaPushback.org](http://MontanaPushback.org) today to tell your legislators about the importance of protecting the Montana Constitution and please spread the word with your networks.



## THE RALLY FOR PUBLIC LANDS IS BACK

Once again, Montana lawmakers are threatening our public lands. And once again, it's our duty to unite and show our legislators that we won't tolerate ANY attacks on our lands, waters, wildlife and outdoor way of life that we love.

Join Team MCV and our partners to deliver that message loud and clear – and in person – at the 2023 Rally for Public Lands on February 23. [RSVP HERE](#) to let us know if you plan on attending. You'll also have the option to save a spot on a bus to and from Helena from Billings, Bozeman, Missoula, and Kalispell. You can also RSVP and share the event on Instagram [HERE](#).

## DC UPDATE

ICYMI... Last week U.S. Congressmen Ryan Zinke and Matt Rosendale approved a House rules package that included a new rule that waives the requirement for the Congressional Budget Office to calculate taxpayers' costs for any legislation that would remove federal management of our public lands and make it easier to sell them off. This move is out of step with [the 85% of Montanans](#) who value our public lands for the positive impacts they have on our quality of life in Big Sky Country. Read our full statement [HERE](#).

## WE'RE HIRING!

MCV is looking for our next dynamic Development Director to help take our work to the next level. Do you enjoy a fast-paced environment working with donors at all levels to make a lasting impact? Learn more [HERE](#).

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**January 19** - Lobby Day at the Capitol (RSVP to Molly at [molly@mtvoters.org](mailto:molly@mtvoters.org) today!)

**January 20** - Climate Rally at the Capitol (Learn more and RSVP [HERE](#)!)

**February 23** - Rally for Public Lands at the Capitol (Learn more and RSVP [HERE](#)!)

**February 24** - Lobby Day at the Capitol

**March 3** - Annual Member Celebration at the Holter Museum in Helena (Get your tickets [HERE](#)!)

**March 15** - Lobby Day at the Capitol

**October 13** - MCV's Annual Gala at the Depot in Livingston

## WONDERING WHAT A LOBBY DAY IS?

Lobby Days are your one-stop-shop for learning about the session and engaging with your legislators.

Each day starts with refreshments and lessons on how to testify in person and meet with your elected. Then, Team MCV and our partner organizations will walk you through current policies being considered at the session. In the afternoon, you'll join legislative committee meetings and get your chance to testify and/or catch your legislators in the hallway for conversations!

**Directly talking to your legislators is one of the most effective things you can do to protect our clean air, clean water and public lands. We hope you can join us!**



## SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL MEMBER CELEBRATION ON MARCH 3

In the midst of a bustling session, Team MCV is excited for our **2023 Annual Member Celebration in Helena on Friday, March 3 from 6 to 8 PM**. We'll be back at the [Holter Museum](#) with a delicious spread from [Savor & Graze](#), music by local talent Katie Roberts and exciting raffle prizes from [Fairmont Hot Springs](#), [Slumtowntown Snowboards](#) and more. Get your tickets [HERE](#) today!

Coming from out of town? The Best Western Premier Helena Great Northern Hotel is offering special room rates to Team MCV for the evening of the Member Celebration. Book your room [online](#) or call the hotel directly at (406) 457-5500 and tell them you're with Montana Conservation Voters. There are limited rooms available and the offer is only on until February 1, so make your reservation today!

We can't wait to see you in Helena!

## Member of the Month!

Mikal Begnoche

Bozeman, MT

### Why are you an MCV member?

I am a member because I want to see candidates who support my values of conservation and renewable energy succeed.

### What is your top conservation issue and why?

That's difficult to answer. I probably feel most passionate about supporting renewable energy and protecting our precious public lands.

### What is your favorite outdoor spot in MT?

None of your damn business!

## CONNECT WITH US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

We're on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#) — all @mtvoters! Follow us and share with your friends!



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