

## Happy May, Montana Conservation Voters!

It feels like a very exciting time right now for a lot of reasons. The balsam roots are in super bloom, and summer feels right around the corner. A lot has happened and we have plenty to look forward to.

First, the legislative session is over. It was a mixed-bag, to say the least, with a few wins and plenty of disappointments. There is, of course, a lot more to say, which is why MCV is excited and proud of the upcoming release of our 2023 Legislative Scorecard early next week.

The Scorecard is a detailed report to the people of Montana celebrating our leaders who fought for conservation and holding accountable those who did not. During the 87 working days of the 68th session of the Montana Legislature, the Big Sky State was under attack like never before with blatant attempts to shut the people out of the process, dirty our clean air and water and defund our public lands.



Photo: MCV member Nick Nichols

Thankfully YOU showed up and refused to be silenced. Folks from every corner of the state testified during hearings, sent emails, made phone calls, signed petitions and posted and shared on social media. Montanans traveled to Helena to rally in-person, on multiple occasions, for our land, water, air, constitution and democracy. And it made a difference.

In the Legislative Scorecard (and this newsletter), you'll see how Montanans built a bipartisan coalition to pass a historic and popular public lands funding bill only to have the Governor inexplicably veto it. You'll see how your legislators voted on public lands, clean air, and democracy. Which key bills were defeated and which bills are now law. And, of course, our Scorecard is a report card of who earned a spot on the Honor Roll and who ended up in the Hall of Shame. Head to [mtvoters.org/scorecard](http://mtvoters.org/scorecard) next week for the full report to know who to thank and who to hold accountable.

I'm also excited to announce Team MCV is hitting the road to meet you in your communities across the state! Join us for our upcoming pint nights to hear firsthand about the legislative session and more. We'll be in Whitefish May 30 at Bonsai, Missoula June 5 at Gild Brewing and Billings August 10. We'll be featuring special guests at every stop and will soon have pint nights scheduled in Bozeman and Helena too!

Whether it's in-person or through email or social media, Team MCV loves to hear from you. So please stay in touch and engaged - together, we can protect Montana as the Last Best Place!



Yours in conservation,

Whitney Tawney  
Executive Director  
Montana Conservation Voters

## NEWS FROM THE STATE CAPITOL



### The 68th Session of the Montana Legislature, by the Numbers

- 87 working days
- 1,698 bills introduced
- 802 bills passed
- 2,342 MCV emails to legislators & Governor
- 624 MCV calls to legislators & Governor

## Can SB 442 Be Saved?

If you're confused about how the fight over SB 442, the popular marijuana funding bill, ended, you're not alone. Governor Gianforte's 11:59th-hour veto left officials and the public uncertain if his use of questionable tactics to block the Legislature's right to vote to override his veto would succeed.

Thank you to all of you who called, wrote, and signed petitions telling the Governor to support SB 442 and to let the Legislature vote on the veto override. At this current impasse, it's helpful to take a look into how we ended up here and what it says about how to go forward.

Public land funding from recreational marijuana revenue was under serious threat from many quarters from the start of the session. Senator Mike Lang's amended SB 442 emerged as a smart solution. The bill kept money in the existing public lands and habitat programs while also improving habitat enhancement through the revised Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. This would have provided approximately \$28M annually for public land and access expansion, wildlife habitat improvement on public and private lands, studying nongame wildlife, improvements of state parks and trails, veterans programs, county roads maintenance, and the HEART fund (addiction services). It was the "win-win" everyone looks for.



When SB 442 finally found its way to Governor Gianforte's desk, he chose to ignore thousands of Montanans by vetoing the bill. This surprising move occurred the same day that the Senate adjourned, casting the future of the bill in doubt. While we don't know if the rules will allow a legislative veto override as only one body of the legislature had finished, we do know that we couldn't have gotten to this point without the *immense* support from all of you, our conservation partners, and the broad coalition of groups this bill brought to the table.

This process highlights how much can be accomplished with collaboration and bipartisanship and reinforced the idea that all Montanans want elected officials who care about clean air, clean water, public lands, and fish and wildlife. No matter the fate of SB 442, it was a win for conservation and common sense, and it shows us the way forward for future attacks on this funding, public lands, and our democracy.

## Two Truths and a Lie: Helena Edition

Which of the following things really happened during the legislative session?

1. The Majority in the Legislature passed and Gov. Gianforte signed a bill that gave power to the people who know best, local communities, letting Montanans make decisions about energy policy and building codes for themselves at the local level.
2. The Legislature broke its own rules to introduce and pass a bill that limited the Montana Department Environmental Quality's ability to assess greenhouse gas emissions.
3. Attempts to amend the Montana constitution, taking away our rights to clean and healthful air and environment, were deeply unpopular among Montanans of all kinds, and vocal opposition killed the plans.

Which is the lie? It's the first, as that's the exact opposite of what SB 208, signed into law by the Governor, does. Truth is stranger than fiction. To find out more details of what happened and how your legislator voted on these bills and others, visit [mtvoters.org/scorecard](http://mtvoters.org/scorecard) when our 2023 Legislative Scorecard is released early next week.

## HB 971: A Loss for Climate and Public Health

This week Montana Conservation Voters released the following statement from Executive Director Whitney Tawney in response to Montana's Governor Greg Gianforte signing into law House Bill 971, a bill to limit the state Department of Environmental Quality's ability to assess the greenhouse gas emissions impacts of power plants and coal mines:

**"Montanans know the climate crisis is real. We see it in our forests, on our farms and ranches and in our rivers every year. Governor Gianforte's plan to ignore the problem and strip the state's ability to consider climate in its decision making is irresponsible and will impact our kids and our health. The Governor's actions also weaken the Montana Environmental Policy Act, a foundational law that has kept Montana the Last Best Place for generations."**

During the 68th session of the Montana Legislature, HB 971 faced vocal opposition from the public, drawing [over 1,000 comments](#), 95-percent of which were opposed to the measure. The legislature also suspended its own rules to rush the bill through at the last minute and limited public testimony in the House even after 60 Montanans showed up to testify against the bill.

This egregious attack on the Montana Environmental Policy Act is an attempt to ignore the rule of law and evade oversight. The bill was introduced well past the deadline for introduction in response to a court decision that the Department of Environmental Quality did not adequately consider the air quality impacts from the Laurel power plant.

According to [a recent poll](#), 58% of Montanans say there is enough evidence that action must be taken to combat climate change. This concern is [spread statewide](#) with over 50% of Montanans from 54 of 56 counties expressing concern about global warming.

## MCV Remembers...Member Albert Borgmann



With great sadness, we announce the passing of our good friend and supporter, Albert Borgmann. Albert was actively involved in the campaign to turn his cherished Rattlesnake Mountains into a national recreation and wilderness area. He had a strong passion for skiing and frequently accompanied his family at Snowbowl. Additionally, he enjoyed engaging in other outdoor activities such as biking, running, and canoeing. Albert's family bonding experiences involved making music together, with him skillfully playing the harmonica and guitar. He led a life that aligned with the principles expressed in his written works, earning him the love and admiration of numerous individuals who will deeply feel his absence. He was a dedicated MCV supporter and a very nice man. He'll be missed.

## Do you ❤️ MCV?

Want to support MCV and kick up your heels? It's not too early to consider sponsoring our 2023 Annual Gala. This lively bash brings more than 200 conservationists to Livingston each year, and we already have a surprise guest we can't wait for you to meet! Mark your calendar for October 13 and contact Renee at [renee@mtvoters.org](mailto:renee@mtvoters.org) for more information about event sponsorship or silent auction ideas!

## SAVE THE DATES

Team MCV is hitting the road and will be in a community near you soon! Join us for a pint and hear about what the heck happened in the 68th Session of the Montana Legislature and more. Plus we'll have hard copies of our legislative scorecard on hand and freshly minted MCV pint glasses for new members (just \$35 a year) or additional donations. We do ask that you are present at the pint night to receive your pint glass.



May 30 - MCV Pint Night at Bonsai in Whitefish 5-8p: [RSVP HERE](#)

June 5 - MCV Pint Night at Gild Brewing in Missoula 5-8p: [RSVP HERE](#)

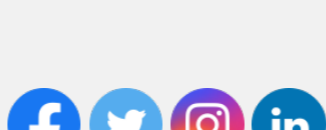
August 10 - MCV Pint Night at Thirsty Street Brewing in Billings 5-8p: [RSVP HERE](#)

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

Stay in touch as we confirm more events around Montana this summer, including pint nights in Bozeman and Helena!

## CHECK US OUT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Do you want an inside peak of Team MCV working Montana's spectacular Capitol building after the session, but like a Wes Anderson film? Of course you do. Don't miss our Instagram reel [HERE](#). And check us out on [Facebook](#), and [Twitter](#) too — all @mtvoters!



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