Please Support:

HB 22, Revise electricity supply resource contract length, Rep. Laurie Bishop (D-Livingston), H-Energy, Technology and Federal Relations; Hearing 2/13/2019 3 pm Rm. 472; Support. HB 22 returns contract lengths for independent wind and solar "Qualifying Facilities" (QF's) to 25 years, the same length they were before a harmful 2017 Public Service Commission ruling. QF's are the largest driver of new wind and solar projects in Montana. 25 years is a standard contract length for power plants. NorthWestern itself has asked for and received guaranteed revenue recovery for its own power plants at lengths of 25, 30, 34, and 50 years. Contact Brian Fadie, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.210.7591, bfadie@meic.org.

HB 271 Revise laws related to siting pipeline, Rep. Bridget Smith (D-Wolf Point) H- Natural Resources Committee; Support. Requires that new pipelines, such as the Keystone XL Pipeline, be located within the footprint of existing pipeline infrastructure and that the pipeline avoid sensitive areas such as state parks, federal Wilderness areas, and tribally recognized cultural sites. It also requires installation of shut-off valves to protect freshwater resources, and a more thorough analysis of a proposed pipeline’s impacts to Montana heritage properties. The bill also requires that the pipeline be constructed within seven years of permit approval. Contact Derf Johnson, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.581.4634, djohnson@meic.org.

HB 292, Extend Funding to Coal Board, Rep. Barry Usher (R - Billings), In First House; Support. HB 292 would extend the increased share of revenue going to the coal board to 2023. The money could be used by local governments to deal with the impacts caused by increased or decreased coal production. Contact Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.461.9546. ahedges@meic.org.

HB 314, Require certain utilities to file general rate cases, Rep. Tom Woods (D - Bozeman); House Energy, Technology and Federal Relations, Support. Allows the Montana Public Service Commission (PSC) to initiate a “rate case” every three years. The bill does not require a rate case every three years, but it grants the PSC the option to do so. Rate cases are important because they make sure the rates utility customer pay are not higher than necessary. NorthWestern Energy is currently undergoing a rate case, however it’s previous rate case was 10 years ago. Contact Brian Fadie, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.210.7591, bfadie@meic.org.

Please Oppose:

HB 148, Require 2/3 of legislature to enact a new tax or fee or a tax or fee increase, Rep. Forrest Mandeville (R-Columbus), Hearing 2/14/2019 8 am. Rm 505; Oppose. If passed, the bill would require a 2/3 supermajority vote in each chamber to enact a new tax or fee or tax or fee increase. This bill would strip future legislatures of the ability to responsibly manage state finances and cripple our
ability to meet pressing revenue needs, including adjusting items like hunting and fishing licenses, natural resource permit applications, and other state special revenue sources critical for agencies to accomplish their statutory obligations. Contact Clayton Elliot, Trout Unlimited, 406.543.0054, clayton@montanatu.org.

HB 161, Establish requirements for fish and wildlife decision making processes, Rep. Brad Tschida (R-Missoula); House Fish, Wildlife & Parks; Oppose. This bill seeks to limit public input in decisions on fish and wildlife management. It would narrow the people the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission to only landowners and take the public out of wildlife. It seeks to remove social science and people's opinions. Contact Nick Gevock, Montana Wildlife Federation, 406.533.9432, ngevock@mtwf.org.

HB 265, Revise laws related to approval of FWP easements, Rep. Kerry White (R-Bozeman); House Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Oppose. This bill would add an unnecessary layer of government to conservation easements for fish and wildlife habitat conservation and public hunting access. It would require state Land Board approval for conservation easements under the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Habitat Montana program. It would nullify a 2018 state Supreme Court ruling that found easements were not intended to go through the Land Board, and are final, once approved by the state Fish and Wildlife Commission. Contact Nick Gevock, Montana Wildlife Federation, 406.533.9432, ngevock@mtwf.org.

HB 279, Allow for wolf trapper expense reimbursement, Rep. Bob Brown (R-Thompson Falls); House Fish, Wildlife and Parks; Oppose. This bill would allow an Idaho-based group to pay trappers for wolves killed. It amounts to a bounty on wolves, and would violate Montana’s long standing tradition of not paying people for the killing of game animals. Montana has a healthy ethical, fair chase hunting and trapping heritage and that includes gray wolves and bounties are unnecessary to meet our wildlife management objectives. Contact Nick Gevock, Montana Wildlife Federation, 406.533.9432, ngevock@mtwf.org.

HB 415, Prohibit the state from implementing any federal greenhouse gas regulations, Rep. Joe Read (R-Ronan), House Energy, Technology and Federal Relations, Hearing 2/13/2019 3 pm Rm. 472; Oppose. Would prohibit the state from implementing any federal regulation limiting greenhouse gas pollution. The bill also prohibits any state employee from participating in any national discussion of greenhouse gas regulatory programs meaning Montana's opinion will not be considered when the federal government crafts a regulation on climate change. Contact Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.461.9546. ahedges@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 Alex Rich, Montana Conservation Voters at 406.254.1593 ext. 2.