Please Support:

**HB 22, Revise electricity supply resource contract length**, Rep. Laurie Bishop (D-Livingston), House Floor, Scheduled for 3rd Reading 2/25/2019, 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, MEIC, 406.210.7591, bfadie@meic.org.

**HB 118, Create grant program to remove lead from school water supplies**, Rep. Julie Dooling (R-Helena), H-Natural Resources, Hearing 2/25/2019 3pm, Support. HB 118 creates a grant program to help Montana schools and preschools test for lead in drinking water and remediate any problems found. Lead is a potent neurotoxin and even very low levels of exposure can impact how children learn, grow and behave. Despite the risks, most schools and preschools in Montana do not currently test for lead in school drinking water. Recent voluntary tests in Missoula and Great Falls schools uncovered lead levels more than fifteen times the physician-recommended lead standard and these cases are likely just the tip of the iceberg. This bill will help all Montana schools ensure their water is safe. Contact Skye Borden, Environment Montana, 603.703.1060, sborden@environmentmontana.org.

**HB 314, Require certain utilities to file general rate cases**, Rep. Tom Woods (D - Bozeman); House Floor, 3rd Reading 2/25/2019, 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 ensure 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, MEIC, 406.210.7591, bfadie@meic.org.

**HB 437, Require utilities to bear the burden of proof in rate cases**, Rep. Tom Woods (D-Bozeman): Out of Committee, Support. Currently, when a utility files a rate case it often does not actually justify its expenditures and proposed rates in the filing. Instead, the utility makes the PSC and intervenors comb through the filing to find the information and prove unjustified costs. This makes the utility justify its costs and proposed changes in the initial filing. Contact Brian Fadie, MEIC, 406-210-7591, bfadie@meic.org.

**HB 464, Create a hazardous materials spill response task force**, Rep. Jasmine Krotkov (D-Great Falls, H-Natural Resources, Hearing 2/27/2019, Support. This bill would establish a task force to determine a more efficient and effective method to respond to hazardous materials spills. Contact Julian Adler, MontPIRG, 406.544.3633, julian@mtpirg.org.

Please Oppose:

HB 332, Require county approval to relocate bison, Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R-Fort Benton), H- Natural Resources, H-Scheduled for 2nd Reading, 2/25/2019, Oppose. This bill would require approval by a board of county commissioners prior to wild bison or wild buffalo were released into a county. This erodes FWP authority over wildlife, and the bill is written so that prohibiting bison in a county could be enforced by a county growth policy. This would be the only instance when a growth policy has regulatory power. Contact Amy Seaman, MT Audubon, 406.210.9449, aseaman@mtaudubon.org.

HB 403, Generally revise coal tax laws, Rep. Barry Usher (R-Billings), H- Taxation, Oppose. HB 403 would indefinitely extend a temporary tax exemption for underground coal mines and cost state and local governments $3.4 million a year. Contact Anne Hedges, Montana Environmental Information Center, 461-9546, ahedges@meic.org.

HB 476, Provide low-interest loans for coal-fired generation, Rep. Jim Keane (D-Butte), In First House, Out of Committee, Oppose. HB 476 would authorize the Montana Board of Investments to offer low interest loans to NorthWestern Energy to pay for a coal unloading facility so the Colstrip plant can get coal from other coal mine’s instead of the Rosebud mine or buy an increased share of the Colstrip plant. Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, 461-9546, ahedges@meic.org.

HB 487, Revise RPS to include hydropower, Rep. Derek Skees (R-Kalispell), Scheduled for House 3rd Reading, 2/25/2019 Oppose. This bill would completely undermine Montana's Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) goal of incentivizing new renewable energy by allowing 100+ year old hydroelectric dams to count toward the standard. Contact Brian Fadie, MEIC, 406.443.2520. bfadie@meic.org.

HB 625, Eliminate numeric nutrient standards for water quality laws, Rep. Bill Mercer (R-Billings), Out of Committee, Oppose. HB 625 would eliminate the numeric nutrient standards under Montana’s water quality act. Nutrients are one of the leading causes of water quality impairment in Montana’s rivers, streams and lakes. Because of the impacts associated with nutrients, the EPA developed nutrient water quality criteria. Montana is obligated to combat nutrient pollution through nutrient standards, and any attempt to repeal the standards is not in conformity with the U.S. Clean Water Act. Contact Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406.581.4634, 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 Alex Rich, Montana Conservation Voters at 406.254.1593 ext. 2.