Please Support:

**SB 24**, Increase optional light motor vehicle registration fee for parks and recreation, Sen. Terry Gauthier (R-Helena). In First House-Out of Committee, Support. This bill would increase funding for trails and outdoor recreation by increasing the voluntary motor vehicle registration donation from six to nine dollars to generate an additional estimated $1.8 million for trails, State Parks, and fishing access sites. Contact Noah Marion, Montana Wilderness Association, 406.624.9622, nmarion@wildmontana.org.

**SB 173**, Revise laws related to electric vehicle charging stations, Sen. Terry Gauthier (R-Helena), S-Highways and Transportation, Support. SB 173 enacts a $25 fine and allows for towing of a non-electric vehicle if parked in an electric vehicle charging station parking spot. A charging station is a significant investment for a business owner, often designed to help attract customers. This bill creates a deterrence to the blocking of that investment and the adoption of electric vehicles. Contact Brian Fadie, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406-210-7591, bfdie@meic.org.

**SB 189**, Establish a carbon tax and distribute revenue, Sen. Barrett (D-Missoula), S-Energy, Support. SB 189 would establish a tax on greenhouse gas emissions from electric generation facilities. The bill also directs the Montana Board of Environmental Review to adopt rules governing emission reporting, a carbon offset program, and carbon fees to fund the state program. The bill also institutes a $10 carbon tax less any carbon offsets that are authorized by rule. Sources can reduce their carbon emissions obligations by 50% using carbon offsets. Contact Malcolm Gilbert, MEIC, 406-443-2520, mgilbert@meic.org.

**SB 201**, Revise requirements to hold a mining permit, Sen. Duane Ankney (R-Colstrip) S-Natural Resources, Support. SB 201 would require companies that hold a coal mining permit under federal law to post a bond to cover worker pensions if the company is in bankruptcy or reorganization. Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC 406-443-2520 or Cody Ferguson with NPRC 509-845-9309, cody@northernplains.org.

**SB 245**, Establish commercial property assessed clean energy program, Sen. Mary McNally (D-Billings) S- Energy and Telecommunications, Support. Montana businesses and organizations often face high utility bills due to old or inefficient structures in need of efficiency upgrades but the upfront cost of these upgrades can pose a financial challenge. SB 245 offers a Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) program to overcome this financing gap, generating economic development and jobs and saving money in the long run. Using C-PACE, property owners can make energy and water efficiency upgrades to their properties using 100% upfront financing from private capital lenders who opt-in to the program. CPACE financing uses the same system we use to finance streetlights, sidewalks, parks – as an assessment on the annual property tax bill. The program allows finance terms for up to 20 years, so property owners are cash flow positive from the start. This program is voluntary – counties, capital lenders and contractors can choose whether or not they wish...
to participate. The program administrator will be the Montana Facility Finance Authority. Contact Cody Ferguson, NPRC, 509.845.9309, cody@northernplains.org.


Please Oppose:

SB 48, Revise variances to water quality standard, Sen. Tom Richmond (R-Billings), S-Natural Resources-Nontabled, Oppose. SB 48 would allow DEQ to write rules and grant variances to polluters that are not complying with water quality standards. Although the bill was drastically amended in Senate Natural Resources, it’s still missing important side-boards that would guarantee the public has meaningful input into the rules or the issuance of the variances by DEQ. Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC 406.461.9546. ahedges@meic.org or Andrew Gorder, Clark Fork Coalition. andrew@clarkfork.org. 542-0539 ext. 202

SB 199, Prohibit PSC from altering certain contract lengths, Sen. Tom Richmond (R-Billings), S-3rd Reading 2/25/2019, Oppose. This is another bait-and-switch NorthWestern Energy bill that would allow NorthWestern to overcharge its electricity customers for its ownership of the Colstrip plant. The bill is stated to be about contract lengths with small scale renewable developers but is really a ploy to force the Public Service Commission to pass along NorthWestern’s imprudent costs of the Colstrip plant to NorthWestern’s customers. Contact Brian Fadie, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.210.7591, bfadie@meic.org.

SB 242, Create state park decal. Sen. Roger Webb (R-Billings), S-Fish & Game, Hearing 2/26/2019, 3pm Rm. 422, Oppose. SB 242 is bad for our parks, trails and fishing access sites and has the potential to blow a nearly $2 million hole in the State Parks budget when resources for our parks are already limited. This bill would eliminate the current six dollar optional light vehicle registration fee and instead establish a vehicle window decal to replace the optional light vehicle registration fee that would cost $35 for the first vehicle and $20 for any subsequent vehicle. Contact Noah Marion, Montana Wilderness Association, 406.624.9622, nmarion@wildmontana.org or Whitney Tawney, Montana Conservation Voters, whitney@mtvoter.org, (406) 254-1593.

SB 278, Revise cost-recovery and transfer laws for certain energy resources, Sen. Tom Richmond (R-Billings), First House-Out of Committee, Oppose. This is a bait and switch bill that would turn utility regulation on its head and result in skyrocketing electricity rates for 350,000 NorthWestern Energy electricity customers. The bill requires the MT Public Service Commission to approve any and all costs that NorthWestern Energy demands for its existing ownership of the Colstrip plant as well as any additional ownership or investments in the plant. Contact Anne Hedges,
SB 299, Generally revise laws related to sage grouse conservation, Sen. Mike Lang (R-Malta). S-Natural Resources, Hearing 2/25/2019 3 pm, Oppose. SB 299 represents the first major legislative attempts to gut the sage-grouse Stewardship Act. This bill would exempt certain current land-uses from provisions of the plan, lower the bar for mitigation plan approval, reduce the mitigation value of conservation easements and add a number of oversight team reporting requirements. The bill requires the program to balance economic incentives with conserving sage-grouse for each independent project, losing focus of the big picture - balancing sage-grouse conservation with the state-wide socioeconomic impact of a potential Endangered Species Listing. Contact Amy Seaman, MT Audubon, 406.210.9449, aseaman@mtaudubon.org or Whitney Tawney, Montana Conservation Voters, whitney@mtvoter.org, (406) 254-1593.

HB 265, Revise laws related to approval of FWP easements, Rep. Kerry White (R-Bozeman); Referred to S-Fish & Game Committee, Oppose. HB 265 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); H-Transmitted to Senate, Oppose. HB 279 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.

SJ 6, Resolution delisting grizzly bears from Endangered Species Act, Sen. Mike Cuffe (R - Eureka). S - Fish and Game; In First House-Out of Committee, Oppose. SJ 6 calls for the delisting from the federal Endangered Species Act of grizzly bears throughout all of Montana. Grizzly bear recovery has come a long way, but several recovery areas within Montana are well below the targeted population for recovery, and some have no confirmed grizzly bears. It calls on Congress to bypass the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and make the boundary of Montana a distinct grizzly population regardless of science about connectivity of bear populations. SJ 6 is premature and sends
the message that Montana isn’t ready for long-term grizzly conservation and management. Contact Nick Gevock, Montana Wildlife Federation, 406.533.9432, ngevock@mtwf.org.

HJ 4, Resolution to congress to streamline/take control of the exportation of coal, Rep. Read (R-Ronan) Second House Committee-Nontabled, Oppose. HJ 4 would send a message from the Montana legislature to the federal government to act against the state of Washington for denying a permit to the Millennium Bulk Terminal Port Facility. The Millennium Terminal would allow for a massive increase of coal exports from Montana which would mean hundreds of additional coal trains travelling through Montana cities and towns bringing traffic, noise, and increased danger of derailment all while undermining vital work to move away from energy sources that amplify climate change. Contact Cody Ferguson, NPRC, 509.845.9309; or Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406.443.2520.