Please Support:
SB 201, Revise requirements to hold a mining permit, Sen Duane Ankney (R-Colstrip), Senate Floor, 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, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406-443-2520 or Cody Ferguson with NPRC 509-845-9309, cody@northernplains.org

HJ 38, Interim study of bonding and decommissioning for energy resources, Rep. Daniel Zolnikov (R-Billings), Senate Floor, Support. HJ 38 calls for a study of existing laws related to bonding, decommissioning, and reclamation for power plants in Montana of all fuel types. Contact Brian Fadie, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.443.2520, bfadie@meic.org.

Please Oppose:
SB 93, Require decommissioning and bonding for certain solar, Sen. Tom Richmond (R-Billings) Hearing S-Conference 4/15 10am. Oppose. SB 93 only requires solar power plants to post decommissioning bonds, not coal or gas power plants. Last session a bill passed that only targeted wind energy with this requirement. Now this bill only targets solar. Yet coal and gas power plants, which create far more pollution, do not have this requirement. SB 93 does not actually accomplish the intended goal of seeing power plants decommissioned and the sites reclaimed. Coal and gas plants must be included. Contact Brian Fadie, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.443.2520, bfadie@meic.org

SB 299, Generally revise laws related to sage grouse conservation, Sen. Mike Lang (R-Malta), S-Conference, Oppose. SB 299 is the first major legislative attempt 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, 406.254-1593, whitney@mtvoter.org

HB 597, Generally revise utility regulation, Rep. Daniel Zolnikov (R-Billings), Senate Floor 4/15. Oppose. HB 597 was entirely struck in committee and replaced with a new bill that never had a hearing. In its current form the bill writes a blank check to utilities by removing PSC oversight of a host of costs. It creates the potential for a pay-to-play system at the PSC where everyday people and businesses couldn't even get a hearing because they couldn't afford the fees. The bill also creates massive loopholes in the competitive solicitation requirement, defeating the purpose and exposing ratepayers to overpriced energy. Contact Brian Fadie, Montana Environmental Information Center, 406.443.2520, bfadie@meic.org

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