

Montana House Conservation Hotlist Week 3: January 18, 2021

Please Support:

HB 17, Allow alternative energy system tax credit to be refunded, Rep. Hamilton (D-Bozeman) Hearing, House Taxation, Executive Action, Support. HB17 amends the Alternative Energy System Tax Credit to make the tax credits refundable rather than have them carry forward year-to-year. These changes will benefit low income individuals in Montana by changing the existing language to ensure that taxpayers who invest in alternative energy and rely on these tax credits receive more immediate monetary benefits if the refund exceeds the individual's tax liability. *Contact Conor Ploeger, Montana Environmental Information Center, 775-997-8059 or cploeger@meic.org*

HB 35, HB 36, and HB 98, Representative Stewart Peregoy (D-Crow Agency) House Judiciary, Hearing on 1/21/2021, Support. This suite of bills would address the missing indigenous persons crisis that we face as a state. HB 35 and HB 36 permanently establishes a Missing Indigenous Persons review commission and response team training grant program under the department of justice. HB 98 extends the Montana Missing Indigenous Persons Task Force and the looping in native communities network grant program to 2023. The disproportionate threat to indigenous people's health and safety must be addressed before we can meaningfully tackle conservation issues. *Contact Makenna Sellers, Northern Plains Resource Council, at 406-850-4491 or makenna@northernplains.org.*

HB 99, Revise laws related to utility preapproval, Rep. Hayman (D-Bozeman), House Energy, Hearing to be scheduled, Support. Endorsed by the Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee, this bill would eliminate utility pre-approval. Unlike most utilities, NorthWestern can ask the Montana Public Service Commission to approve the purchase of an electricity generating resource (such as did with the hydroelectric system or gas plants) and pass all of the costs and risks on to customers instead of allowing its shareholders to bear the initial risk. This creates a disincentive for the utility to do its due diligence on whether a generating resource is a sound investment. Instead, the utility can shift the burden to the PSC who has a short review timeframe and insufficient resources leaving customers to bear the risk of a potentially uneconomic investment. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or ahedges@meic.org*

HB 163 - Revise Fish and Wildlife Commission members, Rep. Fielder (R-Thompson Falls), House Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Hearing on 1/19/2021, Support. This bill would add two seats to the Montana Fish and Wildlife Commission and make them align with the seven existing Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks regions. It would give better representation for hunters, anglers and all outdoor enthusiasts throughout the state by corresponding with the well-established regions. *Contact Nick Gevock, MWF, at 406-533-9432 or ngevock@mtwf.org*

HB 128 - Create renewable energy trust fund, Rep. Reksten (R-Polson), House Taxation, Hearing on 1/19/21, Support. HB 128 would establish a renewable energy trust fund using money from existing taxes on renewable energy. The trust fund can eventually be used to help fund programs that are losing funding due to the decline in coal tax trust fund revenues. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or ahedges@meic.org*

HB 147 - Establish the Montana hunters and angler's community fund, Rep. Tom France (D-Missoula), House Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Hearing on 1/19/2021, Support. This bill would establish a voluntary fund that hunters and anglers could donate to as a grant program for rural Montana communities. It would help with community projects and build relationships between hunters, anglers and landowners/rural communities. *Contact Marcus Strange, MWF, at 814-571-0203 or mstrange@mtwf.org*

House Conservation Hotlist, 03/25/2013

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 Jake Brown, Montana Conservation Voters at 406-855-7821

** Clark Fork Coalition * Environment Montana * Montana Audubon * Montana Conservation Voters * Montana Environmental Information Center (MEIC) * Montana Public Interest Research Group (MontPIRG) * Montana Wilderness Association * Montana Wildlife Federation * Northern Plains Resource Council * Smart Growth Coalition **