

## Montana House Conservation Hotlist Week 4: January 25, 2021

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### Please Support:

**HB 35, HB 36, and HB 98, Representative Stewart Peregoy (D-Crow Agency) House Judiciary, Executive Action, 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, Second Reading, 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](mailto:ngevock@mtwf.org)*

**HB 147 - Establish the Montana hunters and angler's community fund, Rep. Tom France (D-Missoula), House Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Executive Action, 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](mailto:mstrange@mtwf.org)*

**HB 182 - Revising laws related to utility deadband mechanisms, Rep. Laurie Bishop (D-Livingston), House Energy, Hearing on 1/27, Support.** HB 182 would change the amount of money NorthWestern Energy could collect from customers when it fails to accurately project its expenses. The bill would amend a grossly unfair law that allows NorthWestern to collect 90% of the costs above its projected costs from customers and only requires the company's shareholders to pay 10%, thus eliminating the impetus for the utility to make accurate projections. HB 182 would allow the Public Service Commission to determine how much an electric utility must absorb for cost overruns instead of passing those costs onto customers. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or ahedges@meic.org*

**Please Oppose:**

**HB 170 - Revise laws to include renewable hydrogen,** Rep. Tom Welch (R-Dillon), House Taxation, Hearing 1/26/, Oppose. HB 170 would dramatically lower the tax rate for any facility that uses "green hydrogen." Green hydrogen means that the hydrogen was formed using renewable energy technology. However, HB 170 gives the extremely low property tax rate of 1.5% of market value to any gas-fired power plant that uses as little as 8% hydrogen meaning that a plant that burns 92% gas would qualify for the 1.5% tax rate. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or 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 Jake Brown, Montana Conservation Voters at 406-855-7821*

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