

**Please Oppose:**

**SB 86 - Generally revise obligations and conditions for property impacted by coal, Sen. Duane Ankney (R-Colstrip), Senate Energy, Hearing 3/25, Oppose.** The bill would create a new government program to heavily penalize Colstrip owners who must transition to cleaner energy by requiring them to pay DEQ for all potential residential and commercial property value reductions across the state that could be attributed to the closure or pending closure of Colstrip. It also tries to force the transfer water rights and water infrastructure to the town of Colstrip regardless of water rights law or availability of other options for the town to obtain water. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org)*

**SB 176 - Generally revise laws related to coal, coal tax, and coal-fired unit remediation, Senator Brad Molnar (R-Laurel), Re-referred to Senate Finance and Claims, Oppose.** SB 176 is a hodgepodge of Colstrip related issues that makes the future of the plant even more complicated and weakens bonding requirements for plant cleanup. It forces everyone getting coal trust money to sign a pledge to coal, likely violating free speech. It overrides the ownership contract that allows the owners to make joint decisions regarding financial investments at the plant, instead forcing the owners to invest even if they are no longer using the plant or find it uneconomic. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org)*

**SB 323 - Generally revise Montana Administrative Procedure Act, Sen. Chris Friedel (R-Billings), Senate Finance and Claims, Oppose.** This bill would prohibit state agencies from adopting any rule if it may cost more than \$1 million to businesses. \$1 million is a very low threshold for rules that have widespread impact, impact hunting on private lands, or that require installation of pollution control equipment. Only the legislature would have the authority to adopt such rules, putting the executive branch, that is in charge of adopting rules, at the mercy of the legislative branch. This would increase political pressure and prevent agencies from implementing important programs including those that are required under federal law, such as the clean air act, the clean water act, solid and hazardous waste laws and so much more. SB 323 applies to all government rules including those at the Departments of Public Health and Human Services, Revenue, Business & Labor, Commerce, Fish Wildlife & Parks, Environmental Quality and others. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org)*

**SB 379 - Generally revise coal-fired generation laws, Sen. Steve Fitzpatrick (R-Great Falls), Senate Energy, Oppose.** This bill would cost NorthWestern customers well over \$1 billion to pay for Colstrip and would remove Public Service Commission oversight for all of NorthWestern expenditures in the plant for decades to come regardless of whether those costs are prudently incurred. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org)*

**HB 273 - Eliminate restrictions on nuclear facility development, Rep. Derek Skees (R-Kalispell), Senate Energy, Hearing 3/25, Oppose.** HB 273 will repeal laws pertaining to the Major Facility Siting Act. Under the Act, voters have to approve or reject a proposed nuclear facility and HB 273 will repeal that language. Repealing this language severely weakens the public's say in whether or not Montana pursues nuclear energy, and, instead, forces Montanans to deal with the repercussions whether they want the nuclear facility or not. *Contact Conor Ploeger, MEIC, at 443-2520 or [cploeger@meic.org](mailto:cploeger@meic.org)*

**HB 318 - Clarify definition of bison, Rep. Kenneth Holmlund (R-Miles City), Second Reading, Oppose.** This bill changes the definition of "wild bison" or "wild buffalo" to include "has not been reduced to captivity", "never has been subject to a per capita fee under 15-24-921, and "has never been owned by a person." The changes may mean that even Yellowstone National Park bison held captive for quarantine would be treated as livestock. *Contact Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon, at 406-210-9449 or [aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org)*

## Senate Conservation Hotlist, 03/15/2021

**HB 468 - Allowing hound hunting and chase seasons for black bears**, Rep. Paul Fielder (R-Thompson Falls), Senate Fish and Game, Hearing 3/23, Oppose. HB 468 would allow hound hunting and a chase season for black bears. This bill would result in about a month when black bears are out of hibernation when they're not hunted or harassed. We have a successful black bear hunting season and it's a bill for one small group of people who want a special season. *Contact Nick Gevock, MWF, at 533-9432, [ngevock@mtwf.org](mailto:ngevock@mtwf.org); or Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon, at 406-210-9449 or [aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org)*

**HB 475 - Revise renewable portfolio standard to include hydropower**, Rep. Derek Skees (R-Kalispell), Senate Energy, Hearing 3/25, Oppose. This bill would add nuclear power, a nonrenewable power source, into the definition of what is considered renewable energy under the renewable portfolio standard. The bill would also include pre-2005 hydropower infrastructure in this definition, which was purposefully left out of the renewable portfolio standard to encourage innovation in new energy development. *Contact Whitner Chase, MCV, at 407-235-8203 or [wchase@mtvoters.org](mailto:wchase@mtvoters.org)*

**HB 576 - Repeal the renewable portfolio standard**, Rep. Jerry Schillinger (R-Circle), Senate Energy, Hearing 3/25, Oppose. This bill would repeal the renewable portfolio standard, which has been a significant driver of economic and renewable energy development in Montana since 2005. *Contact Conor Ploeger, MEIC, at 443-2520 or [cploeger@meic.org](mailto:cploeger@meic.org)*

**HB 498 - Clarify jurisdiction of board of oil and gas conservation**, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Libby), Senate Natural Resources, Oppose. HB 498 would make it more difficult for local governments to place reasonable sideboards and conditions on oil and gas development that occurs within a zoning district. Under citizen-initiated zoning, citizens are able to create bottom-up decisions regarding the future of their communities. This could take away the ability for local communities to place reasonable restrictions on oil and gas development, such as water quality protections, best practices for fire prevention, etc. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org)*

**HB 527 - Require draft proposals before initiating a county zoning/planning board**, Rep. Fiona Nave (R-Columbus), Senate Local Government, Hearing 3/24, Oppose. HB 527 had NO proponents and was opposed by the MT Assn of Realtors, Montana Assn of Counties, MEIC, Citizens in Stillwater County. HB 527 would functionally eliminate citizen-initiated zoning (CIZ) districts for the entire state. These CIZ's have been used to protect property rights well over 100 times across the state from Ravalli County (that has 41 CIZ districts) to Richland County and many, many places in between. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org)*

**HB 599 - Generally revise opencut laws**, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Libby), Senate Natural Resources, Oppose. HB599 is a radical re-write of gravel pit laws to cut the public out of the permitting process in most instances. The bill eliminates dozens of requirements for gravel pit operators, prohibits DEQ from: limiting the hours of operation of pits; requiring range or wildlife "fire prevention and control" measures; and consideration of acid mine drainage or sedimentation on adjoining lands or waterways. Finally, it completely excludes notification and involvement of neighboring landowners in most gravel pit permitting process. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org)*

*The Weekly Hotlist is published as an educational service to lawmakers and citizens by the Conservation Working Group, composed of the organizations listed below. Contact Jake Brown, Montana Conservation Voters at 406-855-7821 or Whitner Chase, Montana Conservation Voters at 407-235-8203*

*\* 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 \* Montana Smart Growth Coalition \**