

Please Oppose:

HB 188 – Generally revise electric vehicle laws and fees, Rep. Denley Loge (R-Saint Regis), Senate Finance and Claims, Oppose. This bill would add \$250 onto existing registration fees for vehicles that are electric (and \$400 for trucks using electric batteries). This means that owners of electric vehicles that are 4 years old or newer would pay \$467 every year to register, \$337 every year for electric vehicles between 5-10 years, and \$278 every year for electric vehicles older than 11 years. Those amounts are more than every other state in the US (with Georgia being the closest at \$200). *Contact Conor Ploeger, MEIC, at 443-2520 or cploeger@meic.org*

HB 273 - Eliminate restrictions on nuclear facility development, Rep. Derek Skees (R-Kalispell), Second Reading, 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*

HB 320 - Prohibit sales of federal land transferred to Montana, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Libby) Senate Natural Resources, Hearing 04/12, Oppose. This bill is about making a federal land transfer more palatable, even though this idea has been rejected by a large majority of Montanans and is not a feasible solution to land management concerns. *Contact Nick Gevock, MWF, at 533-9432 or ngevock@mtwf.org*

HB 367 - Revise constitutional language regarding harvest heritage, Rep. Paul Fielder (R-Thompson Falls), Senate Fish and Game, Hearing 4/13, Oppose. This referendum would put it to the voters of Montana to adopt a constitutional right to give preference to hunting, fishing, and trapping by citizens as the primary means of the state's management of wild fish and wildlife populations. However, there are many wildlife management tools available to us, guided by science, that should be utilized on an even playing field with hunting, fishing, and trapping. *Contact Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon, at 406-210-9449 or aseaman@mtaudubon.org*

HB 448 - Increasing the cap on non-residential net metering systems, Rep. Joshua Kassmier (R-Fort Benton), Senate Energy, Oppose. The bill was hijacked by Northwestern Energy and anti-solar interests. The original bill attempted to raise the cap for rooftop solar to help Montana's small businesses, schools, and libraries. HB448 received strong bipartisan support until Northwestern stepped in with its anti-solar agenda. As amended, the bill will ensure Northwestern can force the PSC to discriminate against solar owners and take money out of the pockets of Montanans. It will also take jobs away from Montanan's solar professionals by requiring solar owners to hire non-solar installers, who lack experience with these systems, to conduct operational and maintenance tasks. Montanans want to make their own decisions about solar energy, not have them dictated to them by the utility. *Contact Andrew Valainis, Montana Renewable Energy Association, at 401-965-5170 or andrew@montanarenewables.org*

HB 481 - Protect critical infrastructure, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Libby), Senate Judiciary, Oppose. The bill would severely increase penalties for trespassing on or tampering with energy infrastructure property, despite existing laws that cover trespassing and vandalization. HB 481 would have huge repercussions for farmers and ranchers with energy infrastructure on their land; if, for instance, a rancher backed into an exposed pipeline with a tractor, they could be liable for felony charges and extremely high fines. It could also threaten to bankrupt organizations deemed "guilty by association" for acts of vandalism that they did not cause. The bill intimidates Montanans from using their first amendment rights to peaceful protest with

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vague language and harsh reprimands. *Contact Makenna Sellers, NPRC, at 406-850-4491 or makenna@northernplains.org*

HB 498 - Clarify jurisdiction of board of oil and gas conservation, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Libby), Second Reading 4/12, 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*

HB 576 - Repeal the renewable portfolio standard, Rep. Jerry Schillinger (R-Circle), Senate Energy, 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*

HB 588 - Revise personal staff limits for the executive branch, Rep. Casey Knudsen (R-Malta) Senate State Admin, Oppose. This bill allows 10% of each state agency's personnel to be appointed by the Governor's Agency directors. For agencies of 100+ persons, 10 staff could be appointed, and for larger agencies, 10% of all personnel could be appointed. *Contact Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon, at 406-210-9449 or aseaman@mtaudubon.org*

HB 599 - Generally revise opencut laws, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Libby), Second Reading, 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 processes. *Contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, at 461-9546 or ahedges@meic.org*

HB 637 - Generally revise fish, wildlife, and parks laws, Rep. Seth Berglee (R-Joliet) Senate Fish and Game, Hearing 4/15, Oppose. This bill presents an overhaul of Fish, Wildlife & Parks laws that increases the burden on game wardens by allowing them to enforce laws more broadly on private land, reduces the cost of hound-handler licenses for non-residents, allows hound hunting on private land without licenses, eliminates a limit of D-4 handler license limit, reduces limits to using boats to hunt, increases the amount of money a landowner may receive through block management to \$25,000, allows that wolves may be managed as a furbearer, and takes \$1,000,000 from state special revenue accounts to stock pheasants in the state. Very few good revisions exist in this 27-page bill. *Contact Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon, at 406-210-9449 or aseaman@mtaudubon.org*

HB 648 - Generally revise natural resource laws, Rep. Josh Kassmier (R-Fort Benton), Senate Natural Resources, Hearing 4/12, Oppose. This bill would create a new government program that is responsible for determining the existence of oil and gas deposits in the state and for marketing coal ash. These activities are usually paid for through private dollars, and it is inappropriate to use public money for the research and development activities of long-established industries. *Contact Derf Johnson, MEIC, at 406-581-4634 or djohnson@meic.org*

HB 661 - Revise taxation of stripper oil and gas wells, Rep. Josh Kassmier (R-Fort Benton), Senate Taxation, Hearing 4/13, Oppose. This bill would create an exemption for "stripper wells" producing natural gas in which they would pay virtually no taxes. Stripper wells would fall into this category if the price per MCF for natural gas is below \$4.75. Prices are currently well below this, and not projected to rise above this price through 2029. Further, stripper wells have received tax breaks in at least the previous two sessions. *Contact Derf Johnson, MEIC, at 406-581-4634 or djohnson@meic.org*

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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 **