

Montana House Conservation Hotlist Week 2: January 9, 2023

Please Oppose:

HB60 - An act providing for an annual fee on electric vehicles registered in the state, Rep. Denley Loge (R-Saint Regis), In First House Committee-Nontabled, Oppose. HB 60 would make electric and plug-in hybrid vehicle ownership more expensive by charging an annual registration fee of \$130 for electric and \$70 for hybrid vehicles weighing less than 6000 lbs and \$190 for vehicles between 6,000 and 10,000 lbs, including electric trucks. Higher weight hybrids will have to pay \$100 each year, and even heavier vehicles may pay up to \$1,100. The goal of a registration fee is to replace gas tax revenue lost because EVs don't pay for gasoline, and are therefore not paying for road and highway maintenance. While EV registration fees are not uncommon, Montana's fees would be higher than many other states. These fees will undercut the financial benefits of switching to more affordable battery-powered vehicles. For more information, contact Ian Lund, MEIC, 406-333-1858 or ilund@meic.org.

HB 85 - Expand MEPA categorical exclusions, Rep. Marty Malone (R-Pray), In First House Committee-Nontabled, Oppose. Exempts from the Montana Environmental Policy Act any leases on state land for commercial development, grazing, or agriculture, that involve the repair, maintenance or replacement of infrastructure. The bill does not say whether the replacement of infrastructure needs to be of a similar size, scale, and impact; what constitutes "de minimis" for water development projects; or outline restrictions on herbicide applications to protect water, pollinators, and wildlife. The primary objection though is its application to commercial development, which appears to be an inadvertent exemption in the bill. For more information contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546 or ahedges@meic.org.

HB 170- Repeal state energy policy, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Libby) HB 170, In First House Committee-Nontabled, Oppose. Seeks to repeal the state's energy policy that was first developed in 1993. The policy was expanded by the 2011 Legislature to include development of coal, oil and gas with no mention of their impacts on the climate. Kids across the state are challenging that change as violating the state's constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment in *Held v. The State of Montana* (also referred to as *Youth v. Gov*). The bill sponsor wants to eliminate the State Energy Policy entirely to undermine the youth's legal case which simply wants the State of Montana to do something about the climate crisis. For more information contact Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546 or 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.

For questions, please contact Molly Bell with Montana Conservation Voters at 406-698-9440

Clark Fork Coalition * Montana Audubon * Montana Conservation Voters * Montana Environmental Information Center
Montana Renewable Energy Association * Montana Wildlife Federation * Northern Plains Resource Council Wild Montana