

## Montana House Conservation Hotlist Week 6: February 6, 2023

---

### PLEASE SUPPORT:

**HB 243-Revise hunter education laws**, Rep. Marilyn Marler (D-Missoula), Hearing Scheduled in House Appropriations Committee for 2.6, Support. Requires an in-person field day to teach hands-on firearm safety and other important outdoor skills. For more information contact Amy Seaman, MT Audubon, 406-210-9449 or [aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org).

**HB 383-Establish the Montana hunters and anglers community fund**, Rep. Tom France (D-Missoula), Hearing scheduled in House Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Committee for 2.9, 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. For more information contact Amy Seaman, MT Audubon, 406-210-9449 or [aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.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 MCV at 406-698-9440 or Jocelyn Leroux with MCV at 406-794-0016*

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

## Montana House Conservation Hotlist Week 6: February 6, 2023

---

### PLEASE OPPOSE:

**HB 220- Create select committee on energy planning and acquisition, Rep. Josh Kassmier (R-Fort Benton), Referred to House, Energy, Technology and Federal Relations Committee, Oppose.** HB 220 is an attempt by NorthWestern Energy (NWE) to undermine a 2019 law and the recent rules adopted by the Public Service Commission (PSC) both of which greatly improve the resource planning process and the process for the utility to acquire more energy generation resources (a.k.a. power plants). NWE vehemently opposed the 2019 law and the new PSC rules. This bill would establish a partisan committee to review existing law and the newly adopted PSC rules and recommend changes. This committee would be designed to serve the interests of investor-owned utilities. The utilities spent the last two years trying to prevent the PSC from fully implementing the law, but in December 2022, the PSC unanimously voted to approve rules that establish a transparent and competitive bidding process the utility must go through before constructing new generation resources and passing the costs onto customers. While the investor-owned utility's primary interest is to make money for its shareholders, the current law and rules help ensure that the utility keeps the lights on with affordable resources. For more information contact Ian Lund, MEIC, 406-333-1858 or [ilund@meic.org](mailto:ilund@meic.org).

**HB 261- Revise e-bike laws, Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Libby), Passed out of Transportation Committee 2.6 and is moving to the House floor, Oppose.** HB 261 attempts to define bikes that use electric motors for propulsion as non-motorized and force the use of these on all state and locally managed trail systems. This "open unless closed" approach opens the floodgates for new motorized use on trails that have been reserved for non motorized uses like traditional bikes, horse, and pedestrian travel. Additionally, this would put the state's definition at odds with the US Forest Service definition, causing jurisdictional challenges (Many trails start on local, private, and state land and travel to USFS land) and a need for increased expenditures for signage and enforcement of this new use. HB 261 would also put federal grant funding for non motorized trails at risk. For more information please contact Noah Marion, Wild Montana, at 406-624-9622 or [nmarion@wildmontana.org](mailto:nmarion@wildmontana.org) and Amy Seaman, Montana Audubon, 406-210-9449 or [aseaman@mtaudubon.org](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org).

**HB 369- Require Referendum to adopt growth policy, Rep. Marty Malone (R-Pray), Hearing Scheduled in House Local Government Committee for 2.9, Oppose.** HB 369 would require that the local governing body adopt a resolution of intention to adopt, adopt with revisions, or reject proposed growth policies. Growth policies are an important tool for communities to identify where and how different types of development should occur, and should involve an engaged public and informed process. However, requiring that the entire electorate body vote to also approve or amend the plan would create too much bureaucracy. There is already a process to allow a referendum to appeal a growth policy which is appropriate. For more information contact Ann Schwend, MEIC, (406) 443-5250 x 106 or [aschwend@meic.org](mailto:aschwend@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 MCV at 406-698-9440 or Jocelyn Leroux with MCV at 406-794-0016*

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