

Montana House Conservation Hotlist: Week of January 6, 2025

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
HB 73	✓	
HB 30		X
HB 55		X
HB 57		X

PLEASE SUPPORT:

HB 73—Repeal law authorizing killing of eagles or predatory hawks and owls, Rep. Jamie Islay (D-Livingston), Hearing, House Agriculture, 1/7, 3pm, Support. This bill repeals language that allows poultry and livestock owners to shoot predatory eagles, hawks, and owls, bringing Montana statute in line with Federal law. Contact: Matt Leow, MT Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, 406-370-3183, matt@tenaciouscampaigns.com, or Peter Dudley, MT Audubon, 406-443-3949, peter@mtaudubon.org.

PLEASE OPPOSE:

HB 30—Require the Supreme Court to apply a burden of proof for challenge to constitutionality of legislative act, Rep. Lee Deming (R-Laurel), Hearing, House Judiciary, 1/10, 8am, Oppose. This bill attempts to force the Supreme Court to uphold a state legislative act unless the challenger can demonstrate that the act is unconstitutional “beyond a reasonable doubt”—a very high standard that deviates from the long-standing review process courts apply in deciding whether laws violate constitutional rights and principals. It would undermine the judiciary’s role in safeguarding constitutional rights and shift the balance of power too far toward the legislature. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, djohnson@meic.org, or Kearstyn Cook, MCV, 406-426-2422, kearstyn@mtvoters.org.

HB 55—Revising public utility resource planning laws, Rep. Gary Parry (R-Colstrip), Hearing, House Energy, Technology and Federal Relations, 1/10, 3pm, Oppose. This bill weakens public participation and oversight in Montana’s utilities’ electric and gas planning. HB 55 cuts down the public comment period duration and limits public meetings. HB 55 provides for an independent evaluator to oversee competitive solicitations for energy resources by the utility, which would be acceptable if not for the transparency and public participation reductions. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, nfitzmaurice@meic.org, or Makenna Sellers, MREA, 406-850-4491, makenna@montanarenewables.org.

HB 57—Designate quail as upland game bird species, Rep. Paul Fielder (R-Thompson Falls), Hearing, House Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1/9, 3pm, Oppose. California Quail and Gambel’s Quail have been designated feral species for years, and FWP has prohibited the “possession, sale, purchase, exchange, or transport of live birds” in Montana up until 2024. This bill would effectively protect two non-native species by setting bag limits, ending open season, and allowing them to be farmed and released all over the state. An established California Quail population already exists in the Bitterroot, suggesting the birds could outcompete native bird species throughout Montana. Contact: Peter Dudley, MT Audubon, 406-443-3949, peter@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 Kearstyn Cook with MCV at 406-426-2422 or Natalie Wright with MCV at 406-426-2645.

Montana Backcountry Hunters and Anglers * Montana Audubon * Montana Conservation Voters * Montana Environmental Information Center * Montana Renewable Energy Association * MontPIRG * Northern Plains Resource Council * Wild Montana