

## Montana House Conservation Hotlist: Week of January 27, 2025

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### PLEASE SUPPORT:

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
HB 202	✓	
HB 224	✓	
HB 229	✓	
HB 271	✓	
HB 272	✓	
HB 290	✓	
HJ 8	✓	
HB 30		X
HB 176		X
HB 216		X
HB 222		X
HB 285		X
HB 291		X
HB 295		X
HR 2		X

**HB 202—Generally revise laws related to unlawful use of aircraft for hunting,** Rep. Courtenay Sprunger (R-Kalispell), Awaiting E.A., House Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Support. This bill extends the waiting period to hunt after using an aircraft, and ensures that drones are also covered under the prohibition. The bill protects fair chase by tightening restrictions on the use of aircraft and drones to locate game. Contact: Matt Leow, MT Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, 406-370-3183, [matt@tenaciouscampaigns.com](mailto:matt@tenaciouscampaigns.com).

**HB 224—Prohibiting judges from seeking, accepting, or using political party endorsement,** Rep. Ed Stafman (D-Bozeman), Hearing, House State Administration, 1/20, 10am, Support. Judges are meant to make decisions based on the law, not political affiliation or pressure. By prohibiting contributions or endorsements from political parties, this bill helps ensure that judges remain impartial and are not perceived as aligned with a specific political agenda. Contact: Kearstyn Cook, MCV, 406-426-2422, [kearstyn@mtvoters.org](mailto:kearstyn@mtvoters.org), or Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org).

**HB 229—Generally revise Montana Environmental Policy Act to implement court decision,** Rep. Debo Powers (D-Whitefish), Awaiting E.A., House Natural Resources, Support. This bill would eliminate statutory language in MEPA that was found to be unconstitutional in that it prevented the Montana DEQ from considering climate impacts as part of its MEPA analyses, in violation of our right to a clean and healthful environment. By removing the language, the legislature will make clear that it is DEQ's responsibility and duty to fully consider the climate change impacts of its actions. Contact: Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546, [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org), or Natalie Wright, MCV, 406-426-2645, [natalie@mtvoters.org](mailto:natalie@mtvoters.org).

**HB 271—Provide that there is a limited executive privilege to the public records act,** Rep. Ed Stafman (D-Bozeman), Hearing, House State Administration, 1/29, 10am, Support. This bill would clarify that the

Governor of Montana maintains a very limited executive privilege, related primarily to legal advice. HB 271 would both confirm that the governor is subject to Montana's right to know laws, and assure that the public has continued access to documents and information generated by the governor's office. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org).

**HB 272—Provide that legislative bill drafting files are public records,** Rep. Ed Stafman (D-Bozeman), Hearing, House State Administration, 1/29, 10am, Support. This bill would clarify that Montana legislators have a very limited legislative privilege, and that records generated by legislative services are not privileged information. HB 272 would both confirm that the Montana Legislature is subject to Montana's right to know laws, and assure that the public has continued access to documents and information generated by Legislative Services, such as "junque files," as it has done for the past fifty years. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org).

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*For questions, please contact Kearstyn Cook with MCV at 406-426-2422 or Natalie Wright with MCV at 406-426-2645.*

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**HB 290—Regulate sales of certain products containing PFAS, Rep. Ed Stafman (D-Bozeman), Hearing, House Business and Labor, 1/30, 8am, Support.** This bill prohibits the sale of firefighting foam and firefighting gear that contains PFAS, as well as prohibiting the sale of juvenile products, menstrual products, and cosmetics that contain PFAS. Synthetic perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are known health hazards that cause cancer and other diseases. They are “forever chemicals” that do not biodegrade for thousands of years. Allowing PFAS in firefighting foam means over a million gallons of hazardous forever chemicals containing fluids are dumped directly into the environment each year and that firefighters are exposed to PFAS in massive volumes in volatile states. Alaska has already banned PFAS in firefighting foam. Contact: Ben Catton, MEIC, 307-920-1843, [bcatton@meic.org](mailto:bcatton@meic.org)

**HJ 8—Requesting an Interim Study of Electric Vehicle Fees and Taxation, Rep. Becky Edwards (D-Bozeman), Hearing, House Transportation, 1/29, 3pm, Support.** This study resolution would establish a subcommittee in the legislative interim composed of both legislators and stakeholders to examine the fairness of current vehicle fee and taxation methods for both electric and internal combustion engine light passenger vehicles. The study would examine how the legislature could design a taxation system for high-efficiency light vehicles of all fuel types that is equitable and nondiscriminatory and will adequately address the existing road infrastructure funding deficit over time. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, [nfitzmaurice@meic.org](mailto:nfitzmaurice@meic.org), or Natalie Wright, MCV, 406-426-2645, [natalie@mtvoters.org](mailto:natalie@mtvoters.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), Re-scheduled for 2nd Reading, 1/27, 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 undermines the judiciary’s role in safeguarding constitutional rights and shifts the balance of power too far toward the legislature. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org), or Kearstyn Cook, MCV, 406-426-2422, [kearstyn@mtvoters.org](mailto:kearstyn@mtvoters.org).

**HB 176—Require unlimited wolf hunting quota when population is at or above 550 wolves, Rep. Shannon Maness (R-Dillon), Passed as Amended in House Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Oppose.** This bill was amended to set an unlimited statewide quota on wolves while the population estimate remains greater than or equal to 550 wolves. It also removes commission authority to regulate trapping/snaring and set quotas by hunting district until that number is reached, meaning that wolves could be targeted in areas with low populations and impacting local businesses. Contact: Peter Dudley, MT Audubon, 406-443-3949, [peter@mtaudubon.org](mailto:peter@mtaudubon.org).

**HB 216—Allow FW Commission to issue deer and elk hunting licenses to private landowners within the Flathead Indian Reservation, Rep. Tracy Sharp (R-Polson), Hearing, House Fish, Wildlife & Parks, 1/28, 3pm, Oppose.** This bill requires the FWP Commission to adopt rules to issue licenses for deer and elk to non-member private landowners within the Flathead Reservation. The State of Montana does not have authority to issue licenses on tribal land. HB 216 would likely lead to litigation for treaty violations and threaten the long standing cooperative agreements that allow non-members to hunt and fish on CSKT Land today. Contact: Peter Dudley, MT Audubon, 406-443-3949, [peter@mtaudubon.org](mailto:peter@mtaudubon.org), or Matt Leow, MT Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, 406-370-3183, [matt@tenaciouscampaigns.com](mailto:matt@tenaciouscampaigns.com).

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### PLEASE OPPOSE:

**HB 222—Creating open wolf hunting season until the population is at or below a certain number, Rep. Lukas Schubert (R-Kalispell), Passed as Amended in House Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Oppose.** This bill creates an open season on wolves, restricts the commission's authority to set a season, and restricts the commission's ability to close the season if wolves are "threatened with undue depletion" while the population remains above 650. This bill was amended to exclude the months of May and June to avoid killing denning and whelping wolves. Contact: Peter Dudley, MT Audubon, 406-443-3949, [peter@mtaudubon.org](mailto:peter@mtaudubon.org).

**HB 285—Generally revise the Montana Environmental Policy Act, Rep. Brandon Ler (R-Savage), House Natural Resources, Awaiting Hearing, Oppose.** This bill would repeal language that recognizes that MEPA implements the right to a clean and healthful environment pursuant to the Montana Constitution. It would also repeal language that says that MEPA is supposed to prevent harm, removes language requiring consideration of long-term productivity of the land and consideration of long term impacts from projects, and eliminates language that empowers MEPA to help protect against the decline of Montana's environment. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org), Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546, [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org), or Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, [caroline@northernplains.org](mailto:caroline@northernplains.org).

**HB 291—Revise laws related to air quality, Rep. Greg Oblander (R-Billings), House Natural Resources, Awaiting Hearing, Oppose.** This bill would prevent the state from implementing any air pollution standard or regulation unless the federal government requires it or adopts a regulation. Current law restricts the state from adopting regulations more stringent than federal unless it is necessary to protect public health and the technology is available to do so. This bill simply prohibits such a state action. HB 291 attempts to prevent the state from regulating greenhouse gases as the federal government currently has no air pollution emission limits on greenhouse gases. Montana's constitutional right to a clean and healthful environment requires the state to protect present and future generations even when the federal government fails to do so. Contact: Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546, [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org), or Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, [caroline@northernplains.org](mailto:caroline@northernplains.org).

**HB 295—Revise laws related to judicial transparency and elections, Rep. Paul Fielder (R-Thompson Falls), House Judiciary, Awaiting Hearing, Oppose.** This bill would allow for both Montana District Court and Montana Supreme Court judges to identify a party when they are running for a judicial position. If they don't identify a party, candidates must list "undisclosed" on their affiliation. This unnecessary bill would inject an extreme amount of partisanship into our judicial system, which by its very nature should only apply the facts and the law, and not include partisan considerations. HB 295 is an extreme threat to the independent judiciary, the rule of law, and the ability for Montana citizens to pursue justice in our court system. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org), or Kearstyn Cook, MCV, 406-426-2422, [kearstyn@mtvoters.org](mailto:kearstyn@mtvoters.org).

**HR 2—Resolution supporting the exploration development, processing and refining of critical minerals, Rep. Randyn Gregg (R-White Sulphur Springs), Hearing, House Natural Resources, 1/27, 3pm, Oppose.** This resolution would encourage the development and refining of critical minerals without acknowledging the serious environmental and social consequences associated with critical minerals mining. If we are going to increase development of critical minerals in Montana and the United States, then it's necessary to update our antiquated laws and require stronger consultation processes with Native American Tribes. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org).

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