

Montana House Conservation Hotlist: Week of February 17, 2025

PLEASE SUPPORT:

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
HB 436	✓	
HB 440	✓	
HB 477	✓	
HJ 8	✓	
HJ 15	✓	
HJ 16	✓	
HB 258		X
HB 295		X
HB 322		X
HB 389		X
HB 466		X
HB 490		X
HB 506		X
HJ 12		X

HB 436—Require trappers to post notice signs near trails on public lands, Rep. Bob Carter (D-Missoula), Hearing, House Fish, Wildlife, & Parks, 2/18, 3pm, Support. HB 436 would require trappers to post a notice sign at the trailhead of public trails if traps or snares are placed anywhere within 1,000 ft. of the trailhead or 100 ft. of any point of the trail. This bill is a low-cost protective measure for other trail users and pets. Contact: Peter Dudley, MT Audubon, 406-443-3949, peter@mtaudubon.org.

HB 440—Provide tax incentives to put Montana-produced food first, Rep. Jane Weber (D-Great Falls), Hearing, House Taxation, 2/18, 9am, Support. HB 440 provides for a tax incentive for Montana retailers to stock Montana foods on their shelves, providing a subtraction from individual income and corporate income taxes for the income from Montana-produced food. Contact: Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 901-651-5930, caroline@northernplains.org.

HB 477—Phase out polystyrene single use food containers, Rep. Marilyn Marler (D-Missoula), Awaiting Hearing, House Natural Resources, Support. HB 477 would phase out the use of styrofoam containers through statewide uniform regulation. Styrofoam poisons our ecosystems and wildlife, and it chokes our municipal waste systems. Its continued, unfettered use threatens our right to a clean and healthful environment. Contact: Ben Catton, MEIC, 307-920-1843, bcatton@meic.org.

HJ 8—Requesting an interim study of electric vehicle fees and taxation, Rep. Becky Edwards (D-Bozeman), Passed House Transportation, Support. HJ 8 would have a legislative interim committee examine the fairness of current vehicle fee and taxation methods for both electric and internal combustion engine light passenger vehicles. Findings from this study resolution would be presented to the next legislature. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, nfitzmaurice@meic.org, or Natalie Wright, MCV, 406-426-2645, natalie@mtvoters.org.

HJ 15—Resolution supporting increased transmission capacity in Montana, Sen. Greg Kmetz (R-Miles City), Hearing, House Energy, Technology, & Federal Relations, 2/17, 3pm, Support. HJ 15 starts the conversation about Montana’s urgent need to increase electric transmission capacity, recognizing that affordable and reliable electricity is contingent on access to adequate transmission infrastructure. This resolution tells important utility stakeholders and government officials that the legislature supports transmission development. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, nfitzmaurice@meic.org.

HJ 16—Resolution on renewable energy, Rep. George Nikolakakos (R-Great Falls), Hearing, House Energy, Technology, & Federal Relations, 2/19, 3pm, Support. HJ 16 establishes the economic argument for renewable energy development in Montana and is a statement from the legislature supporting the responsible development of our renewable energy resources. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, nfitzmaurice@meic.org, or Makenna Sellers, MREA, 406-850-4491, makenna@montanarenewables.org.

PLEASE OPPOSE:

HB 258—Requiring the extension of wolf hunting season, Rep. Paul Fielder (R-Thompson Falls), Awaiting E.A., House Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Oppose. HB 258 requires the commission to extend the wolf hunting season to end in concurrence with spring bear season, typically June 15. Although this bill maintains commission authority to close hunting districts to wolf hunting, HB 258 would take away management tools from the commission in an attempt to drive down the state’s wolf population. Contact: Peter Dudley, MT Audubon, 406-443-3949, peter@mtaudubon.org.

HB 295—Revise laws related to judicial transparency and elections, Rep. Paul Fielder (R-Thompson Falls), Passed House Judiciary, Oppose. HB 295 would allow Montana judges and justices 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 bill would inject an extreme amount of partisanship into our judiciary, which should only apply the facts and the law, not partisan considerations. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, djohnson@meic.org, or Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, caroline@northernplains.org.

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PLEASE OPPOSE:

HB 322—Reduce the number of associate judges on the Supreme Court, Rep. Lukas Schubert (R-Kalispell), Passed House Judiciary, Oppose. HB 322 would reduce the number of associate justices on the Montana Supreme Court from 7 to 5. The Montana Supreme Court is already at capacity in its resources and ability to judiciously issue opinions. Reducing the number of associate justices will cost Montanans in terms of delayed justice and longer litigation timelines. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, djohnson@meic.org, or Kearstyn Cook, MCV, 406-426-2422, kearstyn@mtvoters.org.

HB 389—Provide for setbacks for wind turbine generators, Rep. Brandon Ler (R-Savage), Awaiting E.A., House Energy, Technology, & Federal Relations, Oppose. HB 389 would kill Montana wind power generation through untenable setbacks (up to 1.5 miles)—which is 4 to 12 times more restrictive than typical wind regulations. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, nfitzmaurice@meic.org, or Makenna Sellers, MREA, 406-850-4491, makenna@montanarenewables.org.

HB 466—Provide categorical exclusions from MEPA, Rep. John Fitzpatrick (R-Anaconda), Hearing, House Natural Resources Committee, 2/17, 3pm, Oppose. HB 466 provides for a categorical exclusion under MEPA and gives DEQ the authority to determine when a categorical exclusion from MEPA is acceptable. This means that DEQ (or other state agencies) would have broad authority in determining whether or not a proposed action requires environmental review. Contact: Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, caroline@northernplains.org, or Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, djohnson@meic.org.

HB 490—Revise Civil Liability Laws for utilities causing wildfires, Rep. Amy Regier (R-Kalispell), Hearing, House Judiciary, 2/19, 3pm, Oppose. HB 490 would shield utilities from liability when they cause wildfires. This bill puts the burden on the PSC to review utility wildfire plans without providing sufficient time or expertise for it to do so. HB 490 doesn't require the utility to have a wildfire mitigation plan in order to avoid liability for its inadequate operations that start wildfires, it doesn't require utilities to follow wildfire mitigation plans to avoid liability, and it contains about a dozen provisions that prevent homes, businesses and communities from holding utilities responsible when they start wildfires due to poor operations. HB 490 doesn't require a utility to prevent wildfires by mitigating its climate impacts. Contact: Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546, ahedges@meic.org.

HB 506—Constitutional amendment revising selection of supreme court justices, Rep. Brad Barker (R-Red Lodge), Hearing, House Judiciary, 2/20, 8am, Oppose. HB 506 would adopt an appointment process for Supreme Court justices whereby the president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, the minority leaders of each house, and two current or former attorneys send a list of names to the governor for selection. The selected individual is subject to Senate confirmation. An appointment process would eliminate the ability for Montanans to directly elect their Supreme Court justices and to continue holding them accountable through subsequent elections. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, djohnson@meic.org, or Kearstyn Cook, MCV, 406-426-2422, kearstyn@mtvoters.org.

HJ 12—Resolution regarding electric vehicles, Rep. Randyn Gregg (R-White Sulphur Springs), Passed House Energy, Technology, & Federal Relations, Oppose. HJ 12 would thank the U.S. President for taking actions to eliminate EPA vehicle tailpipe pollution standards that are mischaracterized as an "Electric Vehicle mandate," further mischaracterizing the current state, performance, and suitability of EV technology in Montana. The standards were projected to result in nearly \$100 billion in annual net benefits to society. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, nfitzmaurice@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 Kearstyn Cook with MCV at 406-426-2422 or Natalie Wright with MCV at 406-426-2645.

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