

## Montana House Conservation Hotlist: Week of April 7, 2025

	SUPPORT	OPPOSE
HJ 37	✓	
SB 63	✓	
SB 188	✓	
SB 224	✓	
SB 266	✓	
SB 301	✓	
SB 427	✓	
SJ 11	✓	
SJ 12	✓	
SJ 19	✓	
HB 285		X
HB 838		X
HB 877		X
HB 911		X
SB 221		X
SB 262		X
SB 436		X

### PLEASE SUPPORT:

**HJ 37—Joint Resolution requesting an interim study of perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, Rep. Ed Stafman (D-Bozeman), Hearing, House Business & Labor, 4/8, Support.** HJ 37 would study the presence of PFAS in Montana, including potential sources, sampling and testing methods, and routes of human and ecological exposure. PFAS chemicals persist in our environment indefinitely, build up in our bodies, and cause cancer and other diseases. Contact: Ben Catton, MEIC, 307-920-1843, [bcatton@meic.org](mailto:bcatton@meic.org).

**SB 63—Revise law related to the use of motion-tracking devices while hunting, Sen. Pat Flowers (D-Bozeman), Awaiting E.A., House Fish, Wildlife & Parks, Support.** SB 63 extends the prohibition on motion-tracking technology to cover a calendar day, closing a loophole to protect fair chase hunting in Montana. This bill also prohibits a person from relaying motion-tracking information to another person as an aid to hunting. Contact: Matt Leow, MT Backcountry Hunters & Anglers, 406-370-3183, [matt@tenaciouscampaigns.com](mailto:matt@tenaciouscampaigns.com).

**SB 188—Revising solar energy policy laws, Sen. Chris Pope (D-Bozeman), Passed House Energy (10-4), Support.** SB 188 enables households and businesses to use shares in an electric generating solar system. Participating customers could individually purchase shares of the larger solar array, and each month receive a credit on their power bill equal to the shares of the energy generated. This is enabling legislation only; it requires a rulemaking process through the Public Service Commission. Contact: Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, [caroline@northernplains.org](mailto:caroline@northernplains.org), or Makenna Sellers, MREA, 406-850-4491, [makenna@montanarenewables.org](mailto:makenna@montanarenewables.org).

**SB 224—Create Indigenous Peoples' Day, Sen. Shane Morigeau (D-Missoula), Passed House State Administration (18-1), Support.** SB 224 establishes Indigenous Peoples' Day (the second Monday in October) as a legal holiday in Montana. Contact: Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, [caroline@northernplains.org](mailto:caroline@northernplains.org), Shannon James, MEIC, 406-690-7757, [sjames@meic.org](mailto:sjames@meic.org), or Natalie Wright, MCV, 406-426-2645, [natalie@mtvoters.org](mailto:natalie@mtvoters.org).

**SB 266—Allow for triplex and fourplex housing, Sen. Jeremy Trebas (R-Great Falls), Hearing, House Local Government, 4/8, Support.** SB 266 allows the use of triplex and fourplex housing in cities with populations of 5,000 or more, as well as requires that zoning regulations for duplex, triplex, and fourplex housing are

not more stringent than for single-family residences. This bill increases infill while addressing housing issues and reducing transportation needs caused by sprawl. Contact: Laura Collins, MEIC, 406-443-2520, [lcollins@meic.org](mailto:lcollins@meic.org).

**SB 301—Generally revise utility lines and facilities laws, Sen. Daniel Zolnikov (R-Billings), Awaiting E.A., House Energy, Support.** SB 301 would allow utilities to apply for a certificate of public convenience and necessity for transmission lines through the PSC. It maintains the PSC's ability to protect ratepayers and disallow imprudently incurred costs. Contact: Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546, [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org).

**SB 427—Provide trapping setback distances for certain roads and trails, Sen. Willis Curdy (D-Missoula), Awaiting E.A., House Fish, Wildlife, & Parks, Support.** SB 427 instates statewide minimum setbacks for trapping near marked trailheads, designated campsites, and recreation sites after the FWP commission reduced these setbacks in Region 3. Contact: Peter Dudley, MT Audubon, 406-443-3949, [peter@mtaudubon.org](mailto:peter@mtaudubon.org).

**SJ 11—Interim study on farmer's markets and food systems, Sen. Bruce Gillespie (R-Ethridge), Passed House Agriculture, Support.** SJ 11 would create an interim committee to study the impacts of farmer's markets on Montana's food systems to identify barriers to their success and opportunities to support them. Contact: Ben Catton, MEIC, 307-920-1843, [bcatton@meic.org](mailto:bcatton@meic.org), or Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, [caroline@northernplains.org](mailto:caroline@northernplains.org).

**SJ 12—Interim study on energy transmission, Sen. Gregg Hunter (R-Glasgow), Awaiting Hearing, House Energy, Support.** SJ 12 requests an interim study to examine the impacts from electric transmission line congestion for pathways entering and exiting the state. The study would also study the economic impact of curtailments and interconnection queue interruptions. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, [nfitzmaurice@meic.org](mailto:nfitzmaurice@meic.org), or Makenna Sellers, MREA, 406-850-4491, [makenna@montanarenewables.org](mailto:makenna@montanarenewables.org).

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### PLEASE SUPPORT:

**SJ 19—Joint resolution to study public transportation, Sen. Andrea Olsen (D-Missoula), Hearing, House Transportation, 4/9, Support.** SJ 19 would task a legislative interim committee to study ways to improve public transit services in Montana, including exploring the establishment of a passenger transportation commission. Contact: Nick Fitzmaurice, MEIC, 406-534-9307, [nfitzmaurice@meic.org](mailto:nfitzmaurice@meic.org).

### PLEASE OPPOSE:

**HB 285—Generally Revise Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA), Rep. Brandon Ler (R-Savage), Returned to House with Amendments, Oppose.** HB 285 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, require consideration of long-term productivity of the land and long term impacts from projects, and 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), or Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, [caroline@northernplains.org](mailto:caroline@northernplains.org).

**HB 838—Allow supreme court justices to use partisan affiliation, Rep. Brandon Ler (R-Savage), Second Reading, 4/7, Oppose.** HB 838 would allow Montana Supreme Court candidates to identify a party when they are running for election and to publicly announce their political party endorsements. This is another bill that would inject an extreme amount of partisanship into our judicial system, which should only apply the facts and the law. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org), or Kearnstyn Cook, MCV, 406-426-2422, [kearnstyn@mtvoters.org](mailto:kearnstyn@mtvoters.org).

**HB 877—Establish the Montana Data Center Act, Rep. John Fitzpatrick (R-Anaconda), Tabled in House Energy, Oppose.** HB 877 would remove PSC oversight when NorthWestern Energy enters into an agreement with a data center to provide power. This will result in higher electric bills, because PSC oversight prevents NorthWestern from increasing existing residential and small business customers' electric rates to subsidize the cost of power for data centers. Contact: Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546, [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org).

**HB 911—Revise the meaning of the term “public utility,” Rep. John Fitzpatrick (R-Anaconda), Second Reading, 4/7, Oppose.** HB 911 would redefine what constitutes a public utility and allow a utility to create a separate entity to serve large customers loads. This bill fails to require the PSC to verify that the public utility isn't charging ratepayers to fund infrastructure investments, upgrades, and maintenance costs for non-regulated customers. There should be a well-defined firewall between the regulated portion of the utility and the portion of the utility that provides power to large customers. Contact: Anne Hedges, MEIC, 406-461-9546, [ahedges@meic.org](mailto:ahedges@meic.org).

**SB 221—Generally Revise the Montana Environmental Policy Act, Sen. Wylie Galt (R-Martinsdale), Passed House Natural Resources, Oppose.** SB 221 would dramatically limit environmental reviews under MEPA by narrowly defining what is considered a fossil fuel activity that requires greenhouse gas emissions analysis. This bill prohibits consideration of downstream impacts from any fossil fuel operations, meaning that the burning of coal or oil and gas and the transport of fossil fuels via pipeline, truck or rail would not require consideration of greenhouse gas emissions. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org), Caroline Canarios, NPRC, 406-248-1154, [caroline@northernplains.org](mailto:caroline@northernplains.org), or Natalie Wright, MCV, 406-426-2645, [natalie@mtvoters.org](mailto:natalie@mtvoters.org).

**SB 262—Exempt subdivision, water/sewer plans from environmental review, Sen. Forrest Mandeville (R-Columbus), Passed Senate Local Government, Oppose.** SB 262 would exempt subdivisions from having to conduct an environmental analysis under the Montana Environmental Policy Act when reviewing water treatment plans. MEPA is necessary for cataloguing and considering the cumulative impacts associated with the impact of subdivisions on water quality. Contact: Derf Johnson, MEIC, 406-581-4634, [djohnson@meic.org](mailto:djohnson@meic.org).

**SB 436—Generally revise laws relating to exempt wells, Sen. Carl Glimm (R-Kila), Awaiting E.A., House Natural Resources, Oppose.** SB 436 would allow for the continued use of the exempt well loophole based upon a lot size calculation up to current limits. Although smaller lots would be entitled to less water, this bill maintains free reign to drill wells without permits and could potentially see further amendments as it progresses. Contact: Laura Collins, MEIC, 406-443-2520, [lcollins@meic.org](mailto:lcollins@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 Kearnstyn 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