



2025 Montana Legislature Report & Voting Record



The following report summarizes Montana Audubon's legislative priorities and outcomes during the 69th Legislative Session.

The report covers 11 bills, which fall under three broad categories that are central to our mission: Wildlife & Habitat Protection, Energy & Environment, and Land Use & Water. Each represents a major change avoided or enacted that affects birds and wildlife in Montana. Use this record to understand our policy positions and how they aligned with the records of each Legislator in 2025.

Please look for your local Senator and Representative, thank them for their work, and voice your concerns if you have any!



Report from the Capitol

During the 2025 Legislature, Montana Audubon's lobbyist team, Peter Dudley and Tom Jacobson, actively worked on 51 bills and tracked over 100 bills throughout the session. This year was nearly an even split of 26 supported and 25 opposed. So how did Audubon's issues fare at the 2025 Legislature? Our efforts helped defeat 14 bad bills and pass 19 good bills affecting Montana's wildlife and environmental protection laws. Unfortunately 10 bills we opposed passed through both houses and 7 bills we supported failed to be signed into law, including a bill regulating single-use styrofoam, which was vetoed by the Governor. We lobbied on 29 bills pertaining to Wildlife & Habitat, 8 relating to Climate & Energy, 12 bills related to Land Use & Water, with several one-off bills, like the bill to establish Indigenous People's Day.

Wildlife bills in the 69th session primarily dealt with conservation and habitat funding. Montana Audubon pushed through two proactive bills, HB 932 and HB 537, both of which secured funding for Habitat Montana, the state non-game wildlife program, a new wildlife-crossing account, and a newly restructured Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program. Per usual, a slate of damaging predator bills played a major role this session, with all but one failing to pass both houses.

While the wins for wildlife conservation cannot be overstated, we lost significant protections for air quality and water quality, tools to fight climate change, and environmental protections provided by the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA).



2025 Public Lands Rally

The transition from numeric water quality standards in HB 664, and the new calculations for degrading Montana's waters in HB 685 puts our river and riparian ecosystems at increased risk following unprecedented growth in our state over the last decade.

On energy and climate issues, we supported a bill to create community solar programs in Montana, while opposing bills that reduced protections for wildlife, habitat, and environmental quality. SB 221, a bill passed to codify the *Held v. Montana* ruling, missed the mark for creating greenhouse gas emissions guidelines.

We hope you find the issues covered in this report as a useful summary to a busy session!



Peter

Voting Table Key

- + = Vote in favor of Montana Audubon's position
- = Vote against Montana Audubon's position
- A = Legislator absent
- D/R = Democrat; Republican
- HB = House Bill

Voting Table: House of Representatives

Name	Party	District	Town	HB 57	HB 258	HB 372	HB 932	HB 477	SB 188	SB 221	HB 285	HB 664	HB 685	SB 262	
Albus, Eric	R	28	Glasgow	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Barker, Brad	R	55	Red Lodge	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	55%
Baum, Denise	D	45	Billings	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Bedey, David	R	86	Hamilton	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	55%
Bennett, Lyn	R	4	Columbia Falls	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Bertoglio, Marta	R	75	Clancy	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Brewster, Larry	R	43	Billings	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Buttrey, Ed	R	21	Great Falls	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Byrne, Ed	R	11	Kalispell	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Caferro, Mary	D	81	Helena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Carter, Bob	D	96	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Close, Brian	D	65	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Cochran, Curtis	R	90	St Regis	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Cohenour, Jill	D	83	East Helena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Crowe, Thedis	D	15	Browning	A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Cunningham, Melody	D	97	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Darling, Julie	R	84	Helena	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	45%
DeMarois, Scott	D	71	Anaconda	A	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	82%
Deming, Lee	R	54	Laurel	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Duram, Neil	R	1	Eureka	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Edwards, Becky	D	61	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Elverum, Pete	D	82	Helena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	91%
Essmann, Sherry	R	49	Billings	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	45%
Etchart, Jodee	R	51	Billings	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Falk, Terry	R	10	Kalispell	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Fielder, Paul	R	14	Thompson Falls	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Fitzpatrick, Chip	D	42	Crow Agency	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	+	+	73%
Fitzpatrick, John	R	76	Anaconda	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	45%
Fitzpatrick, Steve	R	24	Great Falls	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Fox, Mike	D	32	Hays	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
France, Tom	D	99	Missoula	+	A	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Fyant, Shelly	D	91	Arlee	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Gillette, Jane	R	77	Three Forks	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Gist, Steve	R	25	Cascade	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Gregg, Randyn	R	78	White Sulphur-	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Griffith, Alanah	D	60	Big Sky	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Hawk, Donavon	D	72	Butte	+	+	+	+	A	+	-	-	+	+	+	73%
Hinkle, Caleb	R	68	Belgrade	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Hinkle, Jedediah	R	67	Belgrade	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Howell, SJ	D	100	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Isaly, Jamie	D	58	Livingston	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Jones, Llew	R	18	Conrad	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Joy, Denise	D	46	Billings	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Karlen, Jonathan	D	98	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Kelly, Steven	R	9	Kalispell	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Keogh, Connie	D	92	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Klakken, Shane	R	37	Grass Range	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	+	-	27%
Kmetz, Greg	R	36	Miles City	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Kortum, Kelly	D	64	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Lee, Marc	D	74	Butte	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	91%

Voting Table: House of Representatives (cont.)

Name	Party	District	Town	HB 57	HB 258	HB 372	HB 932	HB 477	SB 188	SB 221	HB 285	HB 664	HB 685	SB 262	
Ler, Brandon	R	33	Savage	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Love, Kathy	R	85	Hamilton	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Lynch, Jennifer	D	73	Butte	+	+	+	+	A	+	-	+	+	+	+	82%
Maness, Shannon	R	70	Dillon	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Marler, Marilyn	D	94	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Matthews, Eric	D	66	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Mercer, Bill	R	52	Billings	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Millett, Tom	R	2	Marion	-	-	+	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Miner, Russ	R	26	Stockett	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Mitchell, Braxton	R	5	Columbia Falls	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Moore, Valerie	R	29	Plentywood	-	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	45%
Muszkiewicz, Luke	D	79	Helena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	91%
Nave, Fiona	R	56	Columbus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	A	A	-	0%
Nelson, Terry	R	87	Stevensville	A	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Nicastro, Anthony	R	50	Billings	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Nicol, Nelly	R	53	Billings	-	-	+	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	18%
Nikolakakos, George	R	22	Great Falls	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	45%
Nikolakakos, Melissa	R	20	Great Falls	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	55%
Oblander, Greg	R	38	Shepherd	-	A	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	A	36%
Overstreet, Greg	R	88	Stevensville	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Parry, Gary	R	35	Colstrip	-	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Powers, Debo	D	3	Polebridge	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Reavis, James	D	47	Billings	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Regier, Amy	R	6	Kalispell	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Reksten, Linda	R	13	Polson	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	55%
Romano, Melissa	D	80	Helena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Rosenzweig, Scott	D	57	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	91%
Running Wolf, Tyson	D	16	Browning	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	82%
Schillinger, Jerry	R	34	Circle	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Schomer, Curtis	R	48	Billings	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Schubert, Lukas	R	8	Kalispell	-	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Seckinger, Joshua	D	62	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Seekins-Crowe, Kerri	R	39	Billings	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Sharp, Tracy	R	12	Polson	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Smith, Frank	D	31	Poplar	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Sooktis, Jade	D	41	Lame Deer	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Sprunger, Courtenay	R	7	Kalispell	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Stafman, Ed	D	59	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Strand, Peter	D	63	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Sullivan, Katie	D	93	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Thane, Mark	D	89	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Thiel, Morgan	R	30	Sidney	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Tilleman, Eric	R	23	Cascade	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Tuss, Paul	D	27	Havre	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	-	+	+	82%
Vinton, Mike	R	40	Billings	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Walsh, Ken	R	69	Twin Bridges	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	45%
Weber, Jane	D	19	Great Falls	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	91%
Wirth, Zack	R	17	Wolf Creek	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Zephyr, Zooey	D	95	Missoula	+	+	+	+	A	A	+	+	+	+	+	82%
Zolnikov, Katie	R	44	Billings	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%

Voting Table: Senate

Name	Party	District	Town	HB 57	HB 258	HB 372	HB 932	HB 477	SB 188	SB 221	HB 285	HB 664	HB 685	SB 262	
Beard, Becky	R	38	Elliston	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Bogner, Kenneth	R	18	Miles City	+	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Boldman, Ellie	D	47	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Cuffe, Mike	R	1	Eureka	-	-	+	A	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Curdy, Willis	D	49	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Dunwell, Mary Ann	D	42	Helena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Ellis, Janet	D	41	Helena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Ellsworth, Jason	R	43	Hamilton	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Emrich, Daniel	R	11	Great Falls	-	-	-	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Esp, John	R	29	Big Timber	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Fern, Dave	D	2	Whitefish	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	82%
Flowers, Pat	D	31	Belgrade	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Fuller, John	R	4	Kalispell	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Galt, Wylie	R	39	Martinsdale	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Gillespie, Bruce "Butch"	R	9	Ethridge	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	45%
Glimm, Carl	R	3	Kila	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Harvey, Derek	D	37	Butte	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	73%
Hayman, Denise	D	32	Bozeman	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	91%
Hertz, Greg	R	7	Polson	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Hunter, Gregg	R	15	Glasgow	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	45%
Kassmier, Josh	R	13	Fort Benton	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Kerr-Carpenter, Emma	D	23	Billings	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	-	82%
Lammers, Gayle	R	21	Hardin	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Lenz, Dennis	R	25	Billings	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Loge, Denley	R	45	St Regis	-	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Mandeville, Forrest	R	28	Columbus	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0%
Manzella, Theresa	R	44	Hamilton	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
McGillvray, Tom	R	26	Billings	-	-	-	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
McKamey, Wendy	R	12	Great Falls	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	45%
Morigeau, Jacinda	D	46	Arlee	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Morigeau, Shane	D	50	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	91%
Neumann, Cora	D	30	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	91%
Noland, Mark	R	6	Bigfork	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Novak, Sara	D	36	Anaconda	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	-	+	-	73%
Olsen, Andrea	D	48	Missoula	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Phalen, Bob	R	17	Glendive	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Pope, Christopher	D	33	Bozeman	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Regier, Matt	R	5	Kalispell	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Ricci, Vince	R	27	Billings	+	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Smith, Laura	D	40	Helena	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	100%
Tempel, Russ	R	14	Chester	+	-	+	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Tezak, Tony	R	35	Ennis	+	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	27%
Trebas, Jeremy	R	10	Great Falls	+	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Usher, Barry	R	19	Billings	-	-	-	-	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	9%
Vance, Shelley	R	34	Belgrade	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Vinton, Sue	R	20	Billings	-	-	-	+	-	+	-	-	-	-	-	18%
Webber, Susan	D	8	Browning	+	+	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	91%
Windy Boy, Jonathan	D	16	Box Elder	+	+	+	+	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	73%
Yakawich, Mike	R	24	Billings	-	-	+	+	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%
Zolnikov, Daniel	R	22	Billings	+	-	+	-	+	+	-	-	-	-	-	36%

Bill Descriptions - Wildlife & Habitat

HB 57: Designate quail as an upland game bird

Sponsor: Rep. Paul Fielder (R-Thompson Falls)

House Action: Passed third reading 50-48

Senate Action: Failed third reading 15-35

Outcome: Failed to pass in the Senate.

Montana Audubon position:
OPPOSE

A vote against this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: HB 57 would have designated California and Gambel's Quail as Upland Game Birds in Montana. Both species were classified as exotic-prohibited species by the department's Classification Review Committee in 2015, which bans the possession, purchase, and transport of the species to prevent negative impacts to agriculture and native ecosystems. Without sufficient data to support removing such restrictions, we strongly opposed opening the door to new feral populations of Quail in Montana. The bill certainly would have passed without Montana Audubon's efforts.

HB 258: Requiring the extension of wolf hunting season

Sponsor: Rep. Paul Fielder (R-Thompson Falls)

House Action: Third reading 44-54

Senate Action: Third reading 31-19

Outcome: Not passed as amended by the Senate.

Montana Audubon position:
OPPOSE

A vote against this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: Of the slate of wolf bills this session, HB 258 best represents the fight over 2025 predator bills. It would have required the commission to extend wolf hunting into wolf denning and whelping season, allowing for nursing mothers and pups to be killed. Ethical considerations aside, a season extension such as this one would reduce pack recruitment and thus the accuracy of FWP's population estimate for years. This bill died on its final vote after the house approved Senate amendments. We opposed this bill because of our ardent defense of science-based wildlife management.

HB 372: Revise license fees used for Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program

Sponsor: Rep. Tom France (D-Missoula)

House Action: Third Reading 90-9

Senate Action: Third reading 31-19

Outcome: Signed by the Governor.

Montana Audubon position:
SUPPORT

A vote for this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: HB 372 modestly increased game bird license fees, adding roughly \$1 million annually to the Upland Game Bird Enhancement Program (UGBEP). The UGBEP, which hasn't seen a funding increase in over a decade, funds habitat enhancement projects for wildlife, and promotes collaboration between landowners and FWP.

Bill Descriptions - Wildlife & Habitat

HB 932: Generally revise conservation financing laws

Sponsor: Rep. Ken Walsh (R-Twin Bridges)

House Action: Passed third reading 88-12

Senate Action: Passed third reading 38-11

Outcome: Signed by the Governor.

Montana Audubon position:
SUPPORT

A vote for this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: This historic bill permanently secures \$32 million biannually from the State's marijuana excise taxes for conservation purposes. HB 932 creates a "Habitat Legacy Account," which expands the Wildlife Habitat Improvement Program, and provides funding to the State's Non-game and newly minted wildlife crossing accounts. Montana Audubon worked to stop SB 307 from cutting these dollars. Additionally, we were instrumental in this bill's passage. Consistent, dedicated funding is the bedrock of conservation, which is why HB 932 is considered the biggest win for conservation this session.



Energy & Environment

HB 477: Phase out polystyrene single use food containers (with exceptions)

Sponsor: Rep. Marilyn Marler (D-Missoula)

House Action: Passed third reading 56-41

Senate Action: Passed third reading 26-22

Outcome: Vetoed by the Governor.

Montana Audubon position:
SUPPORT

A vote for this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: HB 477 would have phased out single-use styrofoam containers through statewide uniform regulation over five years. The bill incorporated business community feedback from the previous two sessions it was run, passing both houses with bipartisan support. In particular, vocal support came from agricultural communities that could benefit from in-state manufacturing of compostable containers. We supported this bill, as we have before, due to our commitment to reducing environmental degradation.

Bill Descriptions - Energy and Environment

SB 188: Revising solar energy policy laws

Sponsor: Sen. Chris Pope (D-Bozeman)

House Action: Passed third reading 54-43

Senate Action: Passed third reading 46-4

Outcome: Vetoed by the Governor.

Montana Audubon position:
SUPPORT

A vote for this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: SB 188 would have enabled households and businesses to purchase shares in community solar generation. By allowing consumers to purchase shares of larger solar arrays, and receiving credit on their monthly power bill, this bill would have created green infrastructure that, up to this point, Northwestern Energy has failed to develop. Our position comes from our support for responsible renewable energy development.

HB 285: Generally revise the Montana environmental policy act

Sponsor: Rep. Brandon Ler (R-Savage)

House Action: Passed second reading 65-35

Senate Action: Passed second reading 31-19

Outcome: Signed by the Governor.

Montana Audubon position:
OPPOSE

A vote against this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: Another reaction to the Held decision, HB 285 repealed language recognizing that MEPA implements the right to a clean and healthful environment pursuant to the Montana Constitution. It also removed clarifying language that states MEPA is intended to prevent harm and requires consideration of long-term productivity of the land and the impact of projects. Finally, it struck language that requires agencies to use MEPA to prevent the degradation of Montana's environment.

SB 221: Generally revise the Montana environmental policy act

Sponsor: Sen. Wylie Galt (R-Martinsdale)

House Action: Passed third reading 63-35

Senate Action: Passed third reading 37-13

Outcome: Signed by the Governor.

Montana Audubon position:
OPPOSE

A vote against this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: SB 221 limits considerations of greenhouse gasses under MEPA by narrowly defining what is considered a fossil fuel activity requiring 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 greenhouse gas emissions analyses.

Bill Descriptions - Land Use & Water

HB 664: Repeal numeric nutrient standards

Sponsor: Rep. Bill Mercer (R-Billings)

House Action: Passed third reading 69-30

Senate Action: Passed third reading 34-16

Status: Signed by the Governor.

Montana Audubon position: OPPOSE

A vote against this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: HB 664 repealed Montana's water quality standards for nutrients and directed DEQ to develop less protective narrative standards. Previous attempts to repeal Montana's numerical water quality standards have failed to adequately protect our waters, and were subsequently reverted. As Montana continues to grow, we oppose loosening stringent environmental standards that are proven to protect waterways, wildlife, recreation, and livelihoods.

HB 685: Feasibility allowance for nondegradation policy

Sponsor: Rep. Steve Fitzpatrick (R-Great Falls)

House Action: Passed third reading 56-43

Senate Action: Passed third reading 33-17

Outcome: Signed by the Governor

Montana Audubon position: OPPOSE

A vote against this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: HB 685 changed Montana's non-degradation policy, which is meant to "maintain and protect" Montana's water quality. Primarily, HB 685 removes the balancing of interests in Montana's non-degradation policy, by striking language that requires "the benefit of the development exceeds the costs to society of allowing degradation" of Montana's high-quality waters. The bill would shift from what should be a "pollution prevention" approach to one of "pollution allowance," through a "feasibility allowance" – an undefined term.

SB 262: Exempt subdivision, water/sewer plans from environmental review

Sponsor: Sen. Forest Mandeville (R-Columbus)

House Action: Passed third reading 57-42

Senate Action: Passed second reading 39-11

Outcome: Signed by the Governor

Montana Audubon position: OPPOSE

A vote against this bill is a vote for our position.

Description: SB 262 now exempts all subdivisions from conducting an environmental analysis under the Montana Environmental Policy Act when reviewing water treatment plans. MEPA is necessary for cataloging and considering the cumulative impacts associated with the impact of subdivisions on water quality.

Thank You!

Since 1981, Montana Audubon has lobbied at the Capitol during our state's Legislative Session. This year's efforts were led by Policy Specialist, Peter Dudley, supported by Lobbyist, Tom Jacobson. They spent their days tracking bills, attending numerous hearings, producing legislative alerts and updates, and working one-on-one with legislators to protect Montana's treasured wildlife.

However, they couldn't do it without your help! We owe a thank you to those who make our work possible - generous donors, citizens heeding our calls to action and those cheering at home. Special thanks to those who contacted legislators, attended lobby days and showed up to the Capitol to rally for wildlife and the landscapes they call home. As always, we will return in 2027 for more!

To learn more about Montana Audubon's work at the 69th Legislature, including specifics about legislation, visit our website or email info@mtaudubon.org.



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