



BILL TABLE – 2017 MONTANA LEGISLATURE

This table contains the bills we are working on during the 2017 Montana Legislature. For more information, contact [Amy Seaman](mailto:aseaman@mtaudubon.org) (406-210-9449; aseaman@mtaudubon.org) or [Dan Roper](mailto:danroper@mtaudubon.org) (704-222-6989; danroper@mtaudubon.org)

Acronym legend: FWP: MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks. DNRC: Dept. of Natural Resources & Conservation

Legislation we are tracking falls in these categories:

- Wildlife
- Habitat Protection
- Wildlife Program Funding
- Climate Change & Energy
- General Environmental Protection
- Public Lands, Recreation & Parks
- Subdivisions & Land Use Planning
- General Government Policies

Legislation at the 2017 Montana Legislature			
Bill Number/ Sponsor	Description	Status	Audubon Position
Wildlife			
HB 98 Rep. Janet Ellis (D-Helena)	This bill <u>removes spotted skunks from the Montana list of predator species</u> , and the amended version would reclassify the species as furbearers, allowing for greater management by the Fish, Wildlife, and Parks Department.	Passed House	Support
HB 82 Rep. Jacob Bachmeier (D-Havre)	In its original form, this bill would allow the Department of Agriculture to <u>classify birds and almost any wildlife as “pests”</u> . An amendment to this bill in committee would reinstate side-boards in the	Passed out of committee	Support amended version

	definition of pest, and reassure that MT Fish, Wildlife, and Parks has authority over non-game wildlife.		
<u>SB 84</u> Sen. Steve Hinebauch (R-Wilbaux)	One of two bills that would <u>extend the paddlefish caviar donation program operated by FWP and the Glendive Chamber of Commerce for 10 years.</u> FWP's data shows a lack of recruitment of young paddlefish in eastern Montana populations. Because this bill would extend the program for an additional 10 years, we are opposing it and calling for more research on the health of this fish species.	In committee	Oppose
<u>HB 69</u> Rep. Virginia Court (D-Billings)	This bill would <u>extend the sunset for the paddlefish caviar program by 2 years.</u> Given the apparent declines in young populations of Paddlefish, a two-year extension is more appropriate than the 10 year extension.	In committee	Support
<u>SB 41</u> Sen. Frederick Moore (R-Miles City)	This bill will revise terms for livestock loss prevention grants by eliminating specific proactive measures, such as fencing or purchasing hay or feed from statute. This is intended to ensure that funds are not allocated or misused, but utilized for proactive preventative measures that reduce human-wildlife conflict, address economic losses to livestock operators, and recognize the complex natures of managing livestock in areas where large predators live.	In committee	Support amended version
<u>HB 157</u> Rep. Forrest Mandeville (R-Columbus)	This bill seeks to <u>remove the restrictions on possession of domestically-bred foxes.</u> Allowing individuals to have foxes as pets, including non-native fox species, could pose a threat to native fox populations and moves one step in the direction of the commercialization of wildlife.	Failed in Committee	Oppose
<u>SB 91</u> Sen. Jedediah Hinkle (R-Belgrade)	This bill would <u>make it legal to hunt from private roads and vehicles,</u> and is in direct contrast to the concepts of fair chase and ethical hunting.	In committee	Oppose
Habitat Protection			

Wildlife Program Funding			
HB 164 Rep. Kelly Flynn (R-Townsend)	This bill would <u>revise the distribution of base hunting license revenue</u> to fund Block Management (hunting access). While we support the intent of this bill, taking funds from the general license account compromises other important programs at FWP intended to benefit all of Montana's wildlife.	In committee	Oppose
SB 73 Sen. Pat Connell (R-Hamilton)	This bill will remove the termination date on the transfer of funds from the state special revenue account to the predatory animal special revenue account to maintain the state's livestock loss program that includes funding preventative livestock loss measures.	In committee	Support
Climate Change & Energy			
HB 34 Rep. Daniel Zolnikov (R-Billings)	This bill would <u>increase the net metering size cap</u> for government entities (cities and counties, schools and universities, state agencies and tribal entities) from 50 to 250 kilowatts. Raising the 50 kilowatt cap would allow for greater expansion of Montana's growing renewable energy industry.	In committee	Support
HB 52 Rep. Daniel Zolnikov (R-Billings)	This bill would <u>grandfather existing net metering customers</u> under any future changes to the rate structure of net metering, creating greater certainty for solar businesses and consumers and protecting their investments in clean energy.	In committee	Support
SB 32 Sen. Keith Reiger (R-Kalispell)	This bill would hurt Montana's clean energy job sector by <u>repealing the Community Renewable Energy Projects (CREPs) provision</u> of Montana's Renewable Energy Standard. Community renewable energy projects are locally owned projects that put clean energy on the grid right here in Montana. Passage of this bill would mean the loss of otherwise guaranteed clean energy and jobs across Montana.	In committee	Oppose
General Environmental Protection			

<p>SB 42 Sen. Dick Barrett (D-Missoula)</p>	<p>An act revising major facilities sighting act. Reducing the sighting corridor from 1 mile to 500 feet while allowing a high level of coordination between the Department of DEQ and the applicant. The current bill form does not require public notice of “adjustments” to the corridor after a certificate has been awarded. Without an amendment to reinstate this public process, we will oppose the bill.</p>	<p>In committee</p>	<p>Oppose</p>
<p>SB 48 Sen. Chas Vincent (R-Libby)</p>	<p>This bill directs DEQ to assume the dredge-and-fill permitting program under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Currently the program is administered by the US Army Corps of Engineers. This bill is expected to cost Montana taxpayers almost \$1.7 million with almost no benefit to Montanans or our environment.</p>	<p>In committee</p>	<p>Oppose</p>
Public Lands, Recreation & Parks			
<p>HB 154 Rep. Willis Curdy (D-Missoula)</p>	<p>This bill would <u>limit the use of exploding targets on state lands</u>, including state parks, primitive parks, state recreation areas, etc. during the fire season of May 1 - October 31 of each year.</p>	<p>In committee</p>	<p>Support</p>
Subdivisions & Land Use Planning			
General Government Policies			
<p>HB 215 Rep. Mary Ann Dunwell (D-Helena)</p>	<p>In 1999, the legislature created a tax breaks for oil and gas companies that lowers taxation of oil and gas during the most profitable period of extraction. This bill would <u>repeal this oil and gas tax holiday</u>, providing millions of dollars each year in revenue to state and local governments, including revenue that</p>	<p>In committee</p>	<p>Support</p>

	could be spent to benefit wildlife and mitigate environmental impacts from oil and gas extraction.		