

The Legislature has completed its first full month of work. While the pace of bills has not sped up, the appropriations and budget work has.

The big news from this past week was Governor Bullock's veto of House Bill 1. HB 1 is also called 'the feed bill' because the bill provides funding for the Legislature to operate, including providing the per diem funding for the individual legislators and funding for legislative staff. This was a highly unusual move by the Governor given that no governor has ever vetoed HB 1, but could be in retaliation for the Legislature moving to restrict the Governor's use of the State Plane.

It was a busy week for the Association. To wit:

1. MWGA livestock loss bill:

I am pleased to write that the bill the Association is advancing to extend general fund funding for the livestock loss board another six years passed out of the Senate Agriculture Committee. I am even more pleased to write that the vote was unanimous and done by a voice vote, both of which factors bode well for the bill getting to the Governor's desk. The fact that our bill made it out of committee with opposition is a bit unexpected given the tough fiscal environment this legislative session. The bill will be on the Senate floor this week.

2. Funding for wolf collaring and depredation:

MWGA strongly opposed a bill this past week brought forth by Senator Phillips of Bozeman which would undermine statutory protections for livestock producers. Montana law requires MT FWP to collar at least one wolf in every pack known to be proximate to livestock and/or to human habitations. Further, Montana law authorizes MT FWP, by and through Montana WS to kill wolves that are or have been depredating on livestock. In 2011, the Legislature passed legislation that requires MT FWP to use all monies collected from wolf licenses for these purposes. This bill would have stripped out the language requiring wolf license dollars be spent for livestock protection purposes and, instead, would have allowed the funding source to be used for educational programs and habitat improvement. I expect this bill to fail.

MWGA made the press on this bill.

http://www.bozemandailychronicle.com/news/environment/ag-groups-push-back-on-wolf-bill-say-it-could/article_8d1530e2-7949-5111-b967-37a68c291a43.html

3. Funding for MUS agency

The House Appropriations Committee considered this week the budget for MSU agencies, including MAES, extension and forestry conservation. The Governor's budget has recommended deep cuts for these programs. Specifically, the Governor has recommended a cut of some \$350,000 for the experiment stations and almost 1.2

million for MSU extension. Overall, the Governor has proposed a cut of \$25 million for the MUS budget.

<http://ypradio.org/post/deep-cuts-proposed-university-service-agencies#stream/o>

4. Funding for the Department of Livestock

The appropriations committee also considered this week the budget for the Department of Livestock. The Department is in a much better place financially this session than it was going into the 2015 legislative session. The most interesting portion of the hearing was the request by Executive Secretary Honeycutt for funding to begin the process of building a diagnostic lab.

5. This week will be a bit slower for the Association in terms of legislation, but far more busy in terms of legislative-related activities.

This week, the Board will be holding its first board meeting of the year in Helena. As part and parcel of the Board's activities, the Board will be hosting a lunch for the legislators in the capital on Wednesday, February 8th at noon. The Association puts on this event every session. The MWGA would love to have you join us for this event.

UPCOMING HEARINGS:

Monday – February 6 – Legislative Day 26

Senate Education and Cultural Resources – Room 422, 3pm

HJ1 – Request study of funding for education programs for special needs students
(Kathy Kelker)

Senate Finance and Claims – Room 303, 1:30pm or upon adjournment of Senate Floor
SB64 – Generally revise laws related to the board of pardons and parole (Cynthia Wolken)

Senate Natural Resources – Room 303, 3pm

HB53 – Repeal assessment computation statute for conservation districts (Zach Brown)

HJ3 – Interim study of water right change process (Zach Brown)

Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety – Room 317, 3pm

SB133 – Prohibit use of tanning devices by a person under 18 years old (Roger Webb)

SB160 – Require DPHHS to streamline procedures related to mental health services
(Mary Caferro)

HB177 – Revise administration of immunization laws (Janet Ellis)

Senate State Administration – Room 335, 3pm

SB149 – Revise times state officers and candidates file business disclosure reports
(Douglas Kary)

SB152 – Revise laws relating to state employees (Jon Sesso)

HB79 – Modify when a military member may be turned over to civil authorities for trial

(Willis Curdy)

HB81 – Revise publication and distribution requirements for MARA and ARM (Willis Curdy)

House Appropriations – Room 102, 3pm

HB175 – Revise laws related to medical saving accounts (Jim Hamilton)

HB196 – Institute vehicle registration fee for volunteer EMS (Becky Beard)

HB205 – Revise tax laws related to vehicles (Alan Redfield)

House Education – Room 137, 3pm

HB253 – Inflationary increase for special education allowable cost of payment (Moffie Funk)

House Human Services – Room 152, 3pm

HB35 – Create a grant program for training volunteer respite providers (Gordon Pierson)

HB36 – Fund Alzheimer’s related services provided by area agencies on aging (Gordon Pierson)

House Judiciary – Room 137, 9am

HB366 – Abolish death penalty and replace with life w/o parole (Adam Hertz)

House Natural Resources – Room 172, 3pm

HB337 – Require water reservation report by 2026 (Bradley Hamlett)

HB344 – Provide funding for coal bed methane protection program (Geraldine Custer)

House Transportation – Room 455, 3pm

HB313 – Require one license plate on certain motor vehicles (Barry Usher)

HB355 – Revise laws related to school district transportation (Ray Shaw)

Tuesday – February 7 – Legislative Day 27

Senate Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs – Room 422, 8am

SB148 – Establish the Montana Pay Equity Act (Sue Malek)

HB106 – Provide registration authority for appraisal management companies (Tom Jacobson)

Senate Energy and Telecommunications – Room 317, 3pm

SB146 – Revise community renewable energy project requirements (Dick Barrett)

SB154 – Revise net metering incentives (Mike Lang)

Senate Finance and Claims – Room 303, 1:30pm or upon adjournment of Senate Floor

SB162 – Establish regional infrastructure (Keith Regier)

Senate Fish and Game – Room 422, 3pm

SB171 – Prohibit restriction of certain deer permits (Cary Smith)

HB128 – Revise waiting period for bighorn sheep licenses (Ray Shaw)

HB183 – Remove termination date on outfitter assistant laws (Kelly Flynn)

HB240 – Clarify allowed use of groomed snowmobile trails with snowmobile trail pass (Kerry White)

Senate Highways and Transportation – Room 405, 3pm

HB241 – Revise unattended motor vehicle laws (Alan Doane)

HB267 – Revise laws related to bicycles on roadways (Frank Garner)

Senate Judiciary – Room 303, 9am

SB172 – Prohibit sale of fishing or hunting license if child support owed (Make Lang)

HB202 – Generally revise laws related to government employees and officers (Kirk Wagaoner)

HB237 – Create grant program for behavioral health crisis response by law enforcement (Ron Ehli)

Senate Taxation – Room 405, 9am

SB150 – Require vacation rentals to collect bed taxes (Dee Brown)

HB112 – Revise uniform dispute review procedures for collection of delinquent taxes (Dave Fern)

House Agriculture – Room 137, 3pm

HB338 – Revise livestock transportation permit laws (Casey Knudsen)

House Appropriations – Room 102, 3pm

HB22 – Appropriate money to assist/intervene/plan for closure of coal-fired generation (Jim Keane)

HB61 – Revise and update 9-1-1- laws (Frank Garner)

House Business and Labor – Room 172, 8:30am

HB346 – Designate fiscal agent as employer for workers' compensation insurance (Willis Curdy)

House Fish, Wildlife and Parks – Room 152, 3pm

HB324 – Revise laws related to state parks' administration (Bradley Hamlett)

HB367 – Create voluntary hunting license check-off for predator management (Becky Beard)

House Local Government – Room 172, 3pm

SB39 – Repeal notification of cnty commission re: organization of conservation district (Tom Richmond)

House State Administration – Room 455, 9am

HB86 – Authorize youth election judges (Kathy Swanson)

HB341 – Generally revise state employee travel and per diem laws (Mary Ann Dunwell)

House Taxation – Room 152, 8am

HB30 – Remove voted levies approved after creation of TIF from tax increment provision (Jeff Essmann)

HB308 – Provide for apprenticeship tax credit with increased amount for veterans (Casey Schreiner)

Wednesday – February 8 – Legislative Day 28

Senate Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs – Room 422, 8am

SB169 – Revise laws relating to agr. And construction equip. manufacturers (Brian Hoven)

Senate Education and Cultural Resources – Room 422, 3pm

SB159 – Revise laws related to community colleges and bonding (Mark Blasdel)

HB185 – Establish grant program to eliminate tuition for certain postsecondary programs (Shane Morigeau)

Senate Judiciary – Room 303, 9am

SB179 – Revise offer of judgment laws (Steve Fitzpatrick)

HB246 – Revise handgun laws pertaining to federal property (Randy Brodehl)

HB258 – Require detention center to allow inmates free calls to attorney (Ellie Hill Smith)

HB262 – Generally revise concealed carry regulations for legal gun owners (Bill Harris)

Senate Local Government – Room 405, 3pm

SB188 – Revise authority to create special districts (Keith Regier)

SB189 – Revise protest provisions for special districts (Keith Regier)

Senate Public Health, Welfare and Safety – Room 317, 3pm

HB24 – Providing protections to vulnerable persons from financial exploitation (Ron Ehli)

Senate State Administration – Room 335, 3pm

HB101 – Generally revise MPERA public employee retirement systems (Wendy McKamey)

HB103 – Generally revise election laws – administrative cleanup (Geraldine Custer)

HB162 – Provide appropriation for purple heart scholarship program (Rae Peppers)

HB207 – Revise number and time period for campaign reports (Bryce Bennett)

HJ5 – Resolution recognizing the anniversary of the Fort Robinson Breakout (Kelly McCarthy)

House Business and Labor – Room 172, 8:30am

HB329 – Revise contract amounts at which prevailing wages are paid (Theresa Manzella)

HB347 – Revising speech-language pathologist or audiologist licensing laws (Donald Jones)

House Energy, Technology, and Federal Relations – Room 472, 3pm

HB365 – Revise underground utility laws (Ray Shaw)

House Education – Room 137, 3pm

HB134 – Revise school funding related to facilities (Jeff Essmann)

HB298 – Emphasize sexual abuse awareness and prevention in elementary schools (Edward Greef)

House Human Services – Room 152, 3pm

SB83 – Volunteer Health Services Act (Roger Webb)

HB142 – Revise insurance law to give mental health coverage parity with physical health (Laurie Bishop)

HB323 – Authorize emergency use of opioid antagonist in a school setting (Gordon Pierson)

House Natural Resources – Room 172, 3pm

HB360 – Establish Surface Water Assessment and Monitoring Program (Bradley Hamlett)

HB368 – Establish setbacks for wells and lagoons (Walt Sales)

House State Administration – Room 455, 9am

HB322 – Change name of Columbus day holiday (Bridget Smith)

House Taxation – Room 152, 8am

SB85 – Submitting a 6-mill levy for support of the Montana University System to voters (Mary Moe)

HB343 – Require Dept. of Revenue to amend rule for active duty tax exemption (Daniel Zolnikov)

HB359 – Limit tax increment financing revenue to local mills (Tom Burnett)

House Transportation – Room 455, 3pm

HB336 – Change the opt-in for TBI to an opt-out on vehicle registration forms (Bradley Hamlett)

HB374 – Revise right of way laws for county water and sewer districts (Kerry White)

Thursday – February 9 – Legislative Day 29

Senate Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs – Room 422, 8am

SB166 – Adopt enhanced nurse licensure compact (Edward Buttrey)

HB223 – Revise laws relating to title insurance (Geraldine Custer)

Senate Energy and Telecommunications – Room 317, 3pm

SB164 – Revise northwest power and conservation council member appointment laws (Keith Regier)

SB168 – Revising energy procurement plan review (Sue Malek)

Senate Highways and Transportation – Room 405, 3pm

SR3 - Confirm Governor's appointee for Director, Dept. of Transportation (Gordon Vance)

Senate Judiciary – Room 303, 9am

SB174 – Revise laws related to landlord-tenant disputes (Roger Webb)

SB175 – Generally revise landlord and tenant laws (Roger Webb)

SB176 – Revise requirement for landlord to access and maintain premises (Roger Webb)

SB177 – Revise authority of self-governing local governments (Roger Webb)

House Agriculture – Room 137, 3pm

HB325 – Create exemption for raw milk producers (Nancy Ballance)

House Business and Labor – Room 172, 8:30am

SB89 – Generally revise automobile franchise laws (Gordon Vance)

HB354 – Revise unemployment insurance retirement considerations (Jim Keane)

House Local Government – Room 172, 3pm

HB319 – Provide process for designating roads as public (Jeff Essmann)

House State Administration – Room 455, 9am

HB357 – Generally revise laws related to strengthening voter identification (Derek Skees)

HB371 – Allow late registrant absentee ballots to be dropped off at polling locations (Bryce Bennett)

Friday – February 10 – Legislative Day 30

Senate Business, Labor, and Economic Affairs – Room 422, 8am

SB184 – Revise workers compensation to allow termination of payments due to fraud (Frederick Moore)

SR8 – Confirm Governor's appointee for Director, Dept. of Labor and Industry (Edward Buttrey)

Senate Judiciary – Room 303, 9am

HB208 – Provide that it is unlawful to retaliate against public whistleblowers (Kirk Wagoner)

HB277 – Revise speedy trial laws for felony offenses (Matt Regier)

HB278 – Provide option for drug treatment on a deferred sentence (Matt Regier)

House Human Services – Room 152, 3pm

HB328 – Revise county crisis intervention and jail diversion grant procedures (Ron Ehli)

HB333 – Adopt the Help Save Lives from Overdose Act (Frank Garner)

HB334 – Directing that Medicaid appropriations be used only for Medicaid expenditures (Jon Knokey)

House Judiciary – Room 137, 8am

HB348 – Generally revise tenant landlord laws (Peggy Webb)

HB349 – Revise effect of failure to sign landlord tenant rental agreement (Peggy Webb)

HB350 – Generally revise default provisions in rental agreements (Peggy Webb)

House State Administration – Room 455, 9am
HB383 – Provide actuarial required funding for Sheriff's Retirement System (Geraldine Custer)