

Week 12:

Mercifully, we completed the 74th day of the 90 day legislature.

This has been a productive session for the association. To wit:

1. SB 73 – our bill to extend general fund funding for the montana livestock loss board has passed the senate and has now passed out of the House agriculture committee. The bill passed the house committee by a unanimous vote the bill is awaiting approval by the full house, which I expect to occur. This bill should be signed by the governor
2. HJ 15 – our resolution that expresses the will of the montana legislature that our congressional delegation introduce federal legislation to delist Montana's entire grizzly bear population. This resolution has passed the full house, and has now passed the senate fish and game committee. It is awaiting action by the full senate.
3. Funding for the wool lab – great news, HB 2, the big funding bill contains \$110,000 over the next two years for the wool lab. We got \$120,000 for the 2016-17 time period. So, we will have a bit of a haircut for this funding, but not bad considering the funding environment we are in.

As to the other MSU programs, the Senate finance claims committee did the following positive actions.

\$300k/year has been restored to the Extension budget

\$100k/year has been restored to the Fire Services budget

\$100K/year in OTO has been provided to the Seed Lab

So, with the restoration of this funding, HB 2 would represent about a 5% cut for MSUE instead of a 9.6% (if it passes). This is very positive development.

On other issues,

- The bill to allow the livestock loss board to pay on mountain lion kills was signed by the governor;
- The county bounty bill has been signed into law
- The bill to revise the definition of a legal fence has been signed into law
- The bill to allow the free movement of bison without certification by the state vet as brucellosis free was killed
- the animal boarding and licensing laws, as backed by HSUS, have been killed, all 3 bills
- SB 262 to shift the burden to a landowner to show a road was not a public road was killed.
- Hb 410, a bill to increase funding for noxious weed trust fund by increasing vehicle license registration fees, which would have raised \$1 million for the trust fund was killed.
- The mt wildlife habitat improvement act, which would use approximately \$2 million of pitman/Roberts money has passed the house and is awaiting senate action. MWGA supports.
- Hb 368, which would eliminate the 500 foot setback of a well from a lagoon has passed the house. It is awaiting senate action as well.
- The exempt well issue ...which would include well spacing of 330 or 660 feet per open or closed basis has passed the house. It is running into difficulty in the senate.

UPCOMING HEARINGS

Monday – April 10 – Legislative Day 75

House Education – Room 137, 3pm

SB361 – Revise education laws related to truancy (Chas Vincent)

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

SB335 – Generally revise laws to facilitate public/private partnerships (Jeffrey Welborn)

SB339 – Establishing the coal-fired generating unit remediation act (Duane Ankney)

SB374 – Revise laws related to utility line extensions (Duane Ankney)

House Natural Resources – Room 172, 3pm

SB330 – Provide for property assessed clean energy financing (Chas Vincent)

SB342 – Good neighbor forestry to encourage economic development (Chas Vincent)

Tuesday – April 11 – Legislative Day 76

Senate Energy and Telecommunications – Room 317, 3pm

HB384 – Revise oil and gas lease provisions (Austin Knudsen)

Senate Highways and Transportation – Room 405, 3pm

SR39 – Confirm Governor's appointees to Transportation Commission (Gordon Vance)

SR51 – Confirm Governor's appointees to the Board of Aeronautics (Gordon Vance)