

MPMCSA-LEGISLATIVE BULLETIN
March 10, 2013

FINAL NOTICE

This will serve as the final notice for the legislative reception Tuesday evening in Helena at the Montana City Grill – 5:30 p.m.-8:30 p.m. I'm sure you're all glad of that but perhaps we've talked a couple more of you into attending!!!

The 63rd finally got into gear after the break, producing a very busy week for all. This coming week will also be packed with hearings and executive action on many bills. On Monday, the House Appropriations Committee will vote on amendments to House Bill 2, the major bill to fund state government for the next two years, and then take action on the measure as a whole. The bill, by Rep. Duane Ankney-Colstrip, then will head to the House floor for debate later this month. On Tuesday, the Joint Select Committee on Pensions will take votes on some of the major bills it has considered aimed at fixing Montana's financially troubled public pension plans.

Upcoming hearings of interest:

CAMPAIGN FINANCE: On Thursday, the Senate Judiciary Committee takes up SB375, by Senator Jim Peterson-Buffalo and endorsed by Governor Bullock. This is a major bill to tighten state campaign finance and disclosure laws with twenty two pages of new legislation.

ENERGY: The House Federal Relations, Energy and Telecommunications Committee on Monday will hear SB45, by Senator Jim Keane-Butte, revising the state renewable portfolio standard laws to include hydro expansions.

INCOME TAXES: On Thursday, the House Taxation Committee considers HB532, by Rep. Roy Hollandsworth-Brady, to revise state income taxes by using a flat tax rate and a tie to federal taxable income. The same committee hears a similar measure Friday, House Bill 581, by Rep. Kris Hansen-Havre, to revise state income taxes by tying them to federal taxable income and repealing tax credits.

PROPERTY TAXES: The House Taxation Committee on Wednesday seeks comments on HB569, by Rep. Scott Reichner-Bigfork, to provide a property-tax freeze for qualified residential property owners who are at least 65 years old.

TERM LIMITS: On Wednesday, the Senate State Administration Committee considers HB277, by Representative Bill McChesney-Miles City to amend the state constitution to allow legislators to serve up to 16 years as a senator, representative or both, in any 24-year period.

INDUSTRY BILLS

HOUSE BILL 347-Transportation Contract Indemnification

House Bill 347 introduced by Representative Steve Fitzpatrick-Great Falls, is the primary bill of the Motor Carriers Association. It would void certain types of cross-party indemnification in transportation contracts. The bill was heard in the Senate in the Highways Committee on Thursday.

POSITION: SUPPORT

HOUSE BILL 509 – 911 fee collection at retail. By Representative Keith Regier-Kalispell. This bill enacts a 911 fee/tax collection at the retail point of sale for Trac phones & cards. The bill was heard by the House Telecommunications Committee last Friday and my prediction is that the bill will be passed.

POSITION: OPPOSE

SENATE BILL 116-Special Fuel Permits

Senate Bill 116 by Senator Ron Arthun-Wilsaw, repeals the controversial legislation passed by the MT Contractors Association in 2009 that requires small contractors to secure a temporary special fuel permit and file a \$500 bond. The legislation in fact, repeals the temporary permits in total unless the vehicle (over 26,000 lbs. gvw) is not covered under the International Fuel Tax Agreement. The bill will be heard in the House Transportation Committee on March 13th.

POSITION: MONITOR

SENATE BILL 294 – “Mitigating Circumstances”. Sponsored by Senator Elsie Arntzen-Billings, this is the Associations’ bill to insert language into the alcohol enforcement statutes that will require the Department of Revenue to consider “mitigating circumstances” before assessing a violation to a licensee. The bill has passed the Senate with flying colors and will be heard in the House Business Committee in the next week.

POSITION: SUPPORT

GENERAL BUSINESS BILLS

HOUSE BILL 230 – Representative Scott Reichner-Big Fork. House Bill 230 would reduce property taxes on individuals and businesses by about \$50 million a year by cutting the statewide school equalization property tax levy to 19.6 mills from the current 40 mills. HB230 has passed the House and been sent to the Appropriations Committee. This bill contrasts to Governor Bullocks’ bill, HB361 that would give Montana homeowners a one-time, \$400 property tax rebate. HB361 has passed the House on second reading and will now go to the Appropriations Committee.

Please contact me at the Email address listed below if there are questions or concerns.

Submitted by

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