

WEEKLY REPORT
Missoula
Week Ending 4-2-2021

WEEK IN REVIEW

HB677: Revise laws to prohibit certain nonprofits from purchasing ag land

Position: OPPOSE

Status: Tabled in Committee

Similar to an earlier Jedidiah Hinkle bill, this was a clear affront to private property rights and an effort to prohibit landowners from putting their land into conservation programs. The bill came up rather abruptly, but we were able to get in touch with other opponents and assist in efforts to get the bill tabled early.

SB397: Generally revise laws related to accessory dwelling units.

Position: OPPOSE/MONITOR

Status: TABLED in Senate Local Government.

The League and the City of Bozeman were among those leading the opposition on this bill, which was another effort to limit local authority in zoning. Missoula did not support, but took a hands-off position early on. The bill initially was tabled in Senate Local Government on March 31, but was brought back for reconsideration, along with SB388 and SB384 the following day with little public notice. It died on a tie vote. The sponsor attempted to blast the bill on the Senate floor and that motion also failed.

SB388: Provide for infrastructure through tax increment financing

Position: OPPOSE

Status: AMENDED version PASSED Senate Local Government

This bill initially was tabled in Senate Local Government on March 31, but brought back the next day for reconsideration. The sponsor included amendments removing several of the critical concerns with the bill: the inclusion of university mills and any new mill levies. It also improved the definition of infrastructure. We believe the current version now only applied to future TEDDs. We will work with the Montana League of Cities and Towns and TIF/TEDD folks to determine our best approach moving forward. The bill is likely up for second reading in the Senate when it returns Tuesday.

The amended version passed the Senate Local Government.

SB385: Revise special district laws and provide time limit on property tax levies

Position: OPPOSE (Original version)

Status : PASSED Senate Local Government.

This was the third of three Hertz bills up in Senate Local Government for executive action on March 31 and, like the other two above, it initially failed and was tabled. It was brought back

the next day with amendments, and the amended version passed. We are continuing to discuss the provisions of the amended version, but will likely continue to oppose on the House side.

SB358: Repeal numeric nutrient standards for water quality

Position: SUPPORT

Status: Hearing held in House Natural Resources on 3-28. Awaiting Executive action.

We continue to assist the league on this after we were able to revive it from committee. We coordinated efforts to get input from clients on the amendments that have been offered by the DEQ. This bill continues to be a work in progress and is scheduled for a hearing later this month.

HB112; Require interscholastic athletes to participate under sex assigned at birth.

Position: OPPOSE

Status: Passed third-reading in the Senate with amendments and returned to the House to concur

SB215: Establish the Religious Freedom Restoration Act.

Position: OPPOSE

Status: Passed House on third-reading 4-1 and returned to the Senate.

STATUS OF OTHER ISSUES AND BILLS

HB427: Provide for youth health protection

Position: OPPOSE

Status: Passed Senate Judiciary on a party line vote and is headed to the Senate floor. We expect floor action next week.

HB436: Generally revise firearms laws

Position: OPPOSE

Status: Heard in Senate Judiciary. This bill would eliminate the ability of local governments to regulate the carrying of unpermitted, concealed weapons in government buildings. The committee chair has indicated he is not in a hurry to vote on this bill.

HB504: Generally revise firearms laws.

Position: OPPOSE

Status: Passed Senate Judiciary on 3/19 on a party line vote. Awaiting Senate floor vote.

HB121: Require elected official approval of local health board and officer actions.

Position: SUPPORT/MONITOR

Status: Amended version passed both houses. Of the many bills attempting to limit the ability of local health boards, this is the one we've determined we can work with and hopefully help

support and move forward. We've been generally successful in continuing to move this one forward with amendments local government can support. We believe that is still the case.

NEXT WEEK:

HB319: Revise dates for special purpose elections

Position: SUPPORT

Status: TABLED in Senate State Admin.

We are continuing to see if we can revive this bill. We talked with Sen. Bennett, who opposed it and led efforts to kill it and were confident concerns he'd initially raised had been addressed. He told us, however, that he doesn't like creating "exceptions" to the rule. Bozeman officials have reached out to him and he is somewhat open to allowing reconsideration of the bill in committee.