

2023 Montana Legislative Update – Week 1



January 9, 2023

Monday, January 2nd, marked the first day of the 68th Montana State Legislature and for the next 90 days our focus will be on state ag policy. This session will be the first Republican bicameral supermajority since 1972. With the two thirds supermajority, Republicans do not need votes from the minority party to pass votes. As of Friday morning, the total number of bills is 4,415 with 357 of them introduced. While draft language is available for some bills, there are many bills draft requests serving as placeholders and using broad titles that could later be used for a more specific bill later in the session.

Legislators were sworn in in both the Senate and House on Monday and leadership announced their legislative priorities. The Republicans will focus on the \$1 billion-plus budget surplus, address inflation, housing, and cost of living issues. The Democrats will work to advance policies addressing housing affordability, protect access to abortion and mental health care.

Located on our website is the [2023 MGGA Bill Preference List](#). This is a fluid list our lobbyist, John Semple, has organized for us based upon our policy resolutions that MGGA leadership will continue to watch and monitor.

On Legislative Day #2, President Keane and Vice President Heilig drove to Helena to participate in the Treasure State Resources Association Legislative Showcase. MGGA was

well represented and joined by our lobbyist, John Semple, and mingled with industry leaders, legislators and members of various associations from labor, agriculture and recreation groups who work together on issues that impact land use and resource development.



Week 1:

[HB 3 - Supplemental Appropriations Bill](#)

Sponsored by: Llew Jones

Tuesday, January 3

[House Appropriations](#)

[HB 4 - Appropriations by budget amendment](#)

Sponsored by: Llew Jones

Tuesday, January 3

[House Appropriations](#)

[HB 26 - Generally revise highway use laws](#)

Revises highway use laws; revises hay hauling requirements; eliminates imprisonment as a potential penalty for violating certain weight and speed restrictions

Sponsored by: George Nikolakakos

Friday, January 6

[House Transportation](#)

[HB 75 - Revise reporting requirements for fuel tax refunds](#)

Revises reporting requirements for motor fuel tax refunds; allows the use of electronic transaction reports for refund claims

Sponsored by: Jerry Schillinger

Wednesday, January 4

[House Transportation](#)

[HB 113 - Repeal licensing of hucksters](#)

Sponsored by: Greg Kmetz

Tuesday, January 3

House Local Government

[HB 129 - Revise fees for special mobile equipment](#)

Revises laws related to special mobile equipment exemptions and identification decals

Sponsored by: Tom Welch

Wednesday, January 4

House Transportation

[HB 198 - Provide for municipal authority regarding encroachments](#)

Provides for municipal authority to enact certain ordinances regarding highway encroachments; defines "impermanent encroachment"

Sponsored by: Julie Dooling

Introduced Friday, January 6

[HB 201 - Revise minimum wage laws](#)

Provides for an increase in the minimum wage; limits cost-of-living increases until the minimum wage reaches \$11.39 an hour

Sponsored by: Kelly Kortum

Introduced Friday, January 6

[HB 212 - Increase business equipment tax exemption](#)

Increases the class eight business equipment tax exemption

Sponsored by: Joshua Kassmier

Introduced Friday, January 6

[SB 42 - Revise laws related to easements on state lands](#)

Revises applications for easements on state trust lands; exempts the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation from environmental review and historic preservation for certain existing easement purposes

Sponsored by: Steve Hinebauch

Friday, January 6

Senate Natural Resources

[SB 121 - Reduce top marginal income tax rate and increase EITC](#)

Revises individual income tax laws; reduces the top marginal individual income tax rate; increases the earned income tax credit

Sponsored by: Becky Beard

Referred to Senate Taxation Wednesday, January 4

[SB 124 - Revise corporate income tax apportionment](#)

Revises apportionment of income for purposes of Montana's corporate income tax; adopts a single-sales factor apportionment model for purposes of Montana's corporate income tax

Sponsored by: Greg Hertz

Referred to Senate Taxation Wednesday, January 4

[SB 125 - Limit certain property tax levies to 5 years without reapproval](#)

Limits the duration of certain mill levies submitted to voters; limits mill levies to 5 years without voter approval

Sponsored by: Greg Hertz

Referred to Senate Taxation Friday, January 6

[SB 132 - Revise agricultural education laws](#)

Enhances agricultural education in Montana; revises the requirements and payments under the Advancing Agricultural Education in Montana Program

Sponsored by: Becky Beard

Referred to Senate Education and Cultural Resources Friday, January 6



Week 2:

[HB 1 - Feed bill to fund 68th legislative session and prepare for 2025](#)

Appropriates money for the operation of the current and subsequent legislature

Sponsored by: Llew Jones

[HB 2 - General Appropriations Act](#)

Sponsored by: Llew Jones

Many joint subcommittee hearings will take place throughout the week

[HB 114 - Revise timelines for water right permit and change process](#)

Revises the application process and department consideration of a permit or change in an appropriation right; revises timelines for department consideration of an application for a water right or a change of water right

Sponsored by: Sue Vinton

Wednesday, January 11

House Natural Resources

[SB 16 - Revise the distribution period for a Montana farm/ranch risk management account](#)

Aligns the distribution period for a Montana farm and ranch risk management account

Sponsored by: Greg Hertz

Wednesday, January 11

Senate Taxation

[SB 54 - Revise centrally assessed property appraisals](#)

Revises the reappraisal cycle for certain centrally assessed property; provides for a 2-year reappraisal cycle for certain centrally assessed property

Sponsored by: Greg Hertz

Wednesday, January 11

Senate Taxation

[SB 58 - Increase landowner payment cap for block management](#)

Increases the maximum annual block management program allowable payment to landowners

Sponsored by: Steve Hinebauch

Tuesday, January 10

Senate Fish & Game

[SB 62 - Revise confidentiality of financial information used for property tax purposes](#)

Restricts access to income and expense information provided to the Department of Revenue for property tax purposes

Sponsored by: Daniel Zolnikov

Tuesday, January 10

Senate Taxation

[SB 72 - Revise judicial administration of water rights](#)

Revises the powers, duties, terms, designations, appointments, operations and jurisdiction of the Water Court

Sponsored by: Steve Fitzpatrick

Monday, January 9

Senate Natural Resources

[SB 78 - Revise reimbursement values for registered livestock](#)

Revises the Livestock Loss Mitigation Program; revises the definition of "guard animal"

Sponsored by: Bruce Gillespie

Tuesday, January 10

Senate Agricultural, Livestock and Irrigation

[SB 105 - Prohibit rent control of private property](#)

A local government unit may not enact, maintain, or enforce an ordinance or resolution that would have the effect of controlling the amount of rent charged for private residential or commercial property

Sponsored by: Steve Fitzpatrick

Tuesday, January 10

Senate Business, Labor and Economic Affairs

For more information:

- [Primary Preference List](#)
 - [MGGA State Legislature Home Page](#)
 - [House Ag Committee Hearing](#)
 - [Senate Ag Committee Hearing](#)
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How To Have Your Say Virtually! There are new ways to participate with new remote capabilities!

[Request To Testify Remotely/Upload Your Testimony](#)

- You will be able to select from the bills that are currently scheduled for hearing for the next 3 days.
- By 5PM the day before the hearing, you will be able to submit your written testimony, write a brief message, or request a Zoom link to testify in the bill hearing.
- Fill out the form with the pertinent details and submit. You will receive an email confirmation.
- You do not have to testify in order to submit written comments. Written comments received by the deadline will be distributed to all committee members. However, if you request a Zoom link, we request that you write a brief message in the event of technical difficulties so that your name will be entered into the record.
- If you wish to submit written testimony after the 5PM deadline please call the Information Desk at (406) 444-4800 for assistance
- Rules of decorum must be followed, and the Presiding Officer will call on you when it is your turn to speak. Follow the Zoom directions and raise your hand to let the Remote Committee Coordinator know when you want to speak. We will not assume that because you requested the Zoom link that you automatically want to testify. There may be limits placed on how many people are allowed to testify remotely on each bill.

Traditional ways of accessing the Legislature are still available

Website Messages

- [Send messages through the website](#): you can send a web message to a single legislator or to a committee at anytime using a web form.

Phone Messages

- Call (406) 444-4800 and your message will be delivered to a legislator.

Attend committee hearings

- The public will be allowed to attend hearings at the capitol, but because of social distancing, you may only be allowed in the room when it is your time to testify and may not be able to stay in the room. We ask that you wear a mask or face covering in the Capitol Building and in hearing rooms.

Watch/Listen

- [Watch or listen to committee hearings](#): All committee meetings will have a video-stream link and an audio-stream link so you can observe a committee meeting live or watch the archive of the hearing.
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Contact us:

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