

Montana Legislative Update - The past week in review – March 17, 2019

SB38 (Allow emergency care providers to offer community health care) Had a hearing before the House Human Services Committee on Wednesday, March 13th. It would allow emergency care providers to be involved in community-integrated health care services under the regulation of the Board of Medical Examiners. The Montana Fire Alliance supports the bill.

SB160 (Provide workers' compensation for presumptive diseases of firefighters) Had a hearing before the House Business and Labor Committee on Friday, March 15th. The bill, known as "The Firefighter Protection Act", would create a presumption under workers' compensation for certain diseases associated with firefighting activities. It would automatically cover firefighters who are required to have work comp coverage under state statute. It would be optional for volunteer firefighters, who are not required to be covered by work comp, subject to the insurer agreeing to provide presumptive coverage. The Montana Fire Alliance is watching the bill

SB164 (Generally revise school safety laws) Had a hearing in front of the House Education Committee on Monday, March 11th. The bill would create an exception to the State Fire Code that would allow schools to lock fire exits, or entrances to fire exits, in the event of a threat to student safety. The bill was amended to apply to only interior school doors. The Montana Fire Alliance opposes the bill.

HB296 (Revise laws related to permissible fireworks) Had a hearing in the Senate Judiciary Committee on Friday, March 15th. The bill would allow the use of sky rockets, roman candles and bottle rockets which are currently prohibited in Montana. There were no proponents and the Montana fire service showed up in force to oppose the bill. The Montana Fire Alliance is opposed to the bill.

HB539 (Generally revise 911 laws) Was scheduled for a hearing in the House Energy, Technology and Federal Relations Committee on Monday, March 20th, however the bill was voluntarily "pulled" by its sponsor and is now probably dead. The bill was competing with HB150 that is already well along in the legislative process. It would have altered the distribution of funds to wireless providers and PSAPs. The Montana Fire Alliance was opposed to the bill.

HB618 (Establish a fee for statewide safety communications systems) Had a hearing in the House Taxation Committee on Thursday, March 14th. The bill would establish a 95 cent per month fee on phones to support, update, operate and expand the statewide public safety communication system. The Montana Fire Alliance supports the bill.

Hearings and issues this upcoming week:

HB31 (Revise fire assessment fees) Has a hearing before the House Natural Resources Committee on Wednesday, March 20th, at 3:00 PM in room 172. This bill was developed by the Environmental Quality Council Interim Committee. It assesses fees to

land outside of municipalities for wildland fire protection preparedness and aviation equipment replacement. At the present, the Montana Fire Alliance is watching the bill.

SB323 (Allow the creation and assessment of a public safety district) Has a hearing in the House Local Government Committee on Monday, March 18th, at 3:00 PM in room 405. The bill would allow for the establishment of public safety districts. The Montana Fire Alliance is watching the bill.

To follow the Montana Fire Alliance's watch list go to www.mtfirealliance.org

Respectfully Submitted
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Montana Fire Alliance - Legislative Liaison