

Montana Legislative update 2-07-2021

A quick run down on last week's legislative actions:

HB 215 the bill that would legalize bottle rockets, and roman candles passed on the house floor and has been sent to the Senate for a hearing in front of the Senate Judiciary Committee. A hearing date has not been set yet. This bill stands a very good chance of passing the Senate, especially if the fire service remains silent for the most part.

HB 264, the bill designed to strengthen the Move over Law, had a hearing on Wednesday the 3rd in front of the House Transportation Committee. There was very strong and emotional support for the bill from a lot of sources. The family of Nick Visser and Casie Allen testified, along with numerous Fire Chiefs, the Towers Association, the Troopers Association, and several others. There seemed to be support from the committee but as of now it is awaiting executive action.

HB 86 the bill allowing the creation of a Regional Fire Authority went back in front of the House Local Government Committee due to a technicality and was voted on again. The bill failed to pass the committee by one vote this time and was immediately tabled. This bill is more that likely dead for this session.

HB 24 would create a resiliency fund for DES. This bill was scheduled and pulled once again, and it may possibly be assigned to a different committee, although it is unknown at this time what is happening with this bill.

Legislative action this coming week:

NOTICE: SB 178 which was formally LC 871, has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee. This bill would prevent the adoption of any codes that would require sprinklers in single family dwellings. There are currently no such codes adopted in Building/ Life Safety Codes, however this really starts the slippery slope of state statute limiting what codes can be adopted, rather than the Department of Labor and Industry. The Fire Alliance should oppose this bill but there really needs to be a concerted effort by the Fire Marshals across the state to testify in opposition to this bill. No hearing date is set yet, but it will no doubt be coming up soon.

That is all that is really on the radar for this coming week, but things are always subject to change, stay tuned and if anything else comes up we will get the word out as soon as possible.

Again, with the COVID precautions this session there is the traditional way of testifying, in person or in writing, but testimony can also be done remotely by Zoom. For any that may wish to use this method, you must register 24 hours in advance, or by noon the preceding day.

Any questions feel free to call!

Rich Cowger