

URGENT CALL FOR ACTION ON CD FUNDING (SB 28 - Funding through marijuana tax dollars)

Conservation Districts:

This email is a very important step for funding all Districts this Session. SB 28, which would provide additional funding for districts through marijuana tax dollars, was just scheduled for the Senate Finance and Claims Committee on Monday at 3pm.

We are asking you to send an email or telephone your Senator if he or she is on the Senate Finance and Claims Committee (See list below - click on names for contact information). You can also write and send a letter for the Committee. Please let us know what you did.

Here are the ways you can get your letter in the right hands (you can pick an option or do all three!)

(1) Submit an online comment/letter to the committee by 12pm on Sunday, Feb. 12th.

(<https://leg.mt.gov/session/have-your-say/>) If you are not able to get it done by this time, please still submit the letter by **COB on Monday**, as the Committee will receive these letters before they take a vote in Executive Action.

(2) Email or call senators on the Committee by 8am on Monday, Feb. 13th (Contact info below, please CC rebecca@macdnet.org)

(2) Email your letter to Rebecca (rebecca@macdnet.org) **by 1:30pm on Monday, Feb 13th.** Rebecca will then print and bring the letter to the committee hearing.

The letter below is only a guide. Your words referring to your situation are much more powerful.

IF YOUR DISTRICT HAS SOMEONE (A SENATOR ONLY) ON THE COMMITTEE* USE THE FOLLOWING LETTER AS A GUIDE BUT ADD IN YOUR DISTRICT'S INDIVIDUAL ISSUES.

Dear Senator _____,

We are writing to show our support for SB 28, a bill that will be in front of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee on Monday, February 13th.

SB 28 was put forward by the Environmental Quality Council (EQC) after an intensive study of conservation district funding needs over the 2021/2022 Interim Session. The EQC determined that the total annual funding needs of Montana's conservation districts (including currently available funds) is \$6 million. SB 28 would provide necessary cash to reach this funding level by supplementing current coal tax funding with new marijuana tax funds. Specifically, SB 28 contains a leveling mechanism: However much of a \$6 million CD budget is *not* covered by existing sources will then be filled by marijuana tax dollars. This would give funding stability for the 58 Conservation Districts moving forward.

Our Conservation District would benefit, as would all Districts, if this bill passes and becomes law. While the CD budgets approved in past Sessions have been supportive, often

there is not enough cash available to get to the level of funding that the Legislature approved for us. Projects such as (EXAMPLE HERE) are put off year after year because we cannot enter into contracts or do not have enough matching money or staff time to get conservation on the ground. This trust fund would address this head on.

This stable funding source would also allow Districts to address the over 25% staff turnover rate suffered by many Districts due to funding problems. IF APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR DISTRICT: As you know, in our District we have had staff turnover problems that could be addressed with stable funding.

We hope you will give serious consideration to SB 28, and support your Conservation District by voting yes.

Sincerely,

_____,
Board President

IF YOUR DISTRICT DOES NOT HAVE SOMEONE ON THE COMMITTEE* USE THE FOLLOWING LETTER AS A GUIDE BUT ADD IN YOUR DISTRICT'S INDIVIDUAL ISSUES.

Dear Representative or Senator _____,

We are writing to show our support for SB 28, a bill that will be in front of the Senate Finance and Claims Committee on Monday, February 13th. Our hope is that it will make it to the floor of the Senate and pass, then on to the House for consideration.

SB 28 was put forward by the Environmental Quality Council (EQC) after an intensive study of conservation district funding needs over the 2021/2022 Interim Session. The EQC determined that the total annual funding needs of Montana's conservation districts (including currently available funds) is \$6 million. SB 28 would provide necessary cash to reach this funding level by supplementing current coal tax funding with new marijuana tax funds. Specifically, SB 28 contains a leveling mechanism: However much of a \$6 million CD budget is *not* covered by existing sources will then be filled by marijuana tax dollars. This would give funding stability for the 58 Conservation Districts moving forward.

Our Conservation District would benefit, as would all Districts, if this bill passes and becomes law. While the CD budgets approved in past Sessions have been supportive, often there is not enough cash available to get to the level of funding that the Legislature approved for us. Projects such as (EXAMPLE HERE) are put off year after year because we cannot enter into contracts or do not have enough matching money or staff time to get conservation on the ground. This trust fund would address this head on.

This stable funding source would also allow Districts to address the 20-25% staff turnover rate suffered by many Districts due to funding problems. IF APPROPRIATE FOR YOUR DISTRICT: As you know, in our District we have had staff turnover problems that could be addressed with stable funding.

We hope you will give serious consideration to SB 28, and support your Conservation District by voting yes.

Sincerely,

_____,
Board President

Senate Finance and Claims Committee - Members

| Member | Assignment | Conservation District(s) |
|--|------------|--|
| John Esp (R) SD 30 | Chair | Sweetgrass Park Gallatin |
| Janet Ellis (D) SD 41 | Vice Chair | Lewis and Clark |
| Carl Glimm (R) SD 2 | Vice Chair | Flathead |
| Dan Bartel (R) SD 15 | Member | Meagher Fergus Petroleum Upper Musselshell Lower Musselshell |
| Kenneth Bogner (R) SD 19 | Member | Custer Powder River Carter Little Beaver Prairie Garfield McCone |
| Ellie Boldman (D) SD 45 | Member | Missoula |
| Mike Cuffe (R) SD 1 | Member | Lincoln |
| Pat Flowers (D) SD 32 | Member | Gallatin |
| John Fuller (R) SD 4 | Member | Flathead |
| Mike Lang (R) SD 17 | Member | <i>Lang is the sponsor for SB28. Please focus on emails to the overall committee.</i> Sheriden Daniels Valley Phillps Hill |
| Dennis R Lenz (R) SD 27 | Member | Yellowstone |
| Ryan Lynch (D) SD 37 | Member | Mile High |
| Forrest Mandeville (R) SD 29 | Member | Stillwater Carbon |

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|---|----------------------------|---|
| | | Sweetgrass |
| Tom McGillvray (R) SD 23 | Member | Yellowstone |
| Shane A Morigeau (D) SD 48 | Member | Missoula |
| Christopher Pope (D) SD 31 | Member | Gallatin |
| Daniel R Salomon (R) SD 47 | Member | Missoula Lake |
| Shelley Vance (R) SD 34 | Member | Gallatin |
| Jeffrey W Welborn (R) SD 36 | Member | Beaverhead Ruby Valley Madison Mile High Jefferson Valley |
| Julie Johnson | Legislative Branch Staffer | – |
| Joe Triem | Legislative Branch Staffer | – |
| Cy Walsh | Secretary | – |