



**TREASURE STATE**  
**RESOURCES ASSOCIATION**  
OF MONTANA

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TREASURE STATE RESOURCES ASSOCIATION NEWS  
June 2024



## The Primary election was June 4<sup>th</sup>

Now it is on to the general election in November, with hopefully a break from the campaign ads.

There really are not many close general election races, so we are getting a pretty close glimpse of what the 2025 legislature is going to look like

Full results from federal to local elections are available on the [Montana Secretary of State website](#) or at the [Montana Free Press Dashboard](#). For additional analysis of the contested races, check out [this Montana Free Press article](#) article.

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## Montana DEQ solicits public comment on water quality standards

The Montana DEQ is taking public comment on implementing water quality standards for rivers across the state.

In 2021, the legislature passed Senate Bill 358. The law requires implementing narrative nutrient standards and the option for an adaptive management program for DEQ. [Click here for more.](#)

[Here are the proposed rules.](#) Treasure State Resources Association and our many partners have been active in letting DEQ know that these rules are not ready for prime time, but DEQ is moving forward. The Administrative Rules Hearing is June 10<sup>th</sup>. TSRA will oppose the rules.

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## **Montana Supreme Court will hear oral arguments set for July 10 in *Held v. Montana* case**

The Montana Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in the *Held v. Montana* case on July 10, 2024 at 09:30 AM MT in the Old Supreme Court Chambers (Room 303) in the Montana State Capitol. The Plaintiffs will receive 30 minutes for their arguments, and the State, agencies, and others will receive a total of 40 minutes for their arguments. [Click here](#) to read the full article.

TSRA has filed an amicus brief in the Held case.

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## **Governor Gianforte, Senator Daines: Biden Must End His War on Coal**

*Blast new regulations that target Colstrip, cost Montanans \$1.1 billion*

COLSTRIP, Mont. – Joining representatives from Montana’s energy industry, Governor Greg Gianforte and U.S. Senator Steve Daines, R-Montana, held a roundtable at the Rosebud Mine in Colstrip today, calling on Joe Biden to end his war on American-made energy.

“Joe Biden has made it clear that he’d rather appease the demands of far-left activists than address the affordability crisis he’s created,” Gov. Gianforte said. “Affordable power generated by coal keeps the lights on in Montana and fuels manufacturing across the country. Today, we call on the president to end his war on coal that drives up costs, threatens the reliability of our electrical grid, and destroys jobs.”

“Joe Biden is doing everything he can to kill Colstrip and made-in-Montana energy—from the EPA’s new MATS and Clean Power Plan 2.0 rules that directly threaten Colstrip Power Plant, to slow walking permits that threaten the continued operation at Rosebud coal mine,” said Senator Daines. “This administration is dead set on shuttering the Colstrip community. I will be fighting each day against the radical left and Biden’s anti-energy agenda.”

The visit to the mine and discussion come on the heels of the Biden administration’s recently released Resource Management Plan Amendment which prohibits future coal leases in eastern Montana through 2038. It is the latest in a series of regulations issued by the administration that directly target Colstrip and coal-generated power.

Colstrip generating units account for a significant percentage of Montana's baseload electricity supply and consistently rank among the lowest-cost dispatchable power plants in the western United States.

The 25,000-acre Rosebud mine produces upwards of six to eight million tons of coal to supply the adjacent four coal-fired generating units which provide enough energy to power nearly 500,000 homes. As one of the largest coal plants in the western United States, Colstrip employs around 360 Montanans at the power station and another 370 at the Rosebud Mine.

According to Northwestern Energy's Integrated Resource Plan, the new rules released by the Environmental Protection Agency threaten to force the early retirement of the facility, costing Montana consumers over \$1.1 billion over the next 20 years.

Blasting the president for his overreach, the governor and senator aired their concerns surrounding its threat to energy independence, affordability, and to good-paying jobs.

"This is an unacceptable burden on Montanans, especially as historic inflation and skyrocketing mortgage rates stretch paychecks thinner and thinner," Gov. Gianforte said during the roundtable.

According to the Consumer Price Index released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, prices continued to rise in April. Since President Biden took office, the energy index has risen nearly 35 percent.

During the roundtable, the governor and senator heard from Westmoreland Mining CEO Martin Purvis on how the Biden administration's overhaul of coal-generated power not only threatens livelihoods, but also fails to establish a reliable energy plan for Americans, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. There is no plan here, it's all being made up as we go and the risk is its coming back on the American people who will suffer the most."

Purvis continued, "Not being able to turn your lights on and basically get what you need to conduct your day-to-day life is not acceptable."

Highlighting the necessity of coal-fired generation for grid reliability, the governor shared, "Energy isn't a luxury in Montana, it's a necessity. Every year, harsh winter conditions remind us of the need for an all-of-the-above energy approach and reliable, baseload power."

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## **Governor Gianforte: Active Forest Management Reduces Wildfire Risk, Fuels Timber Production**

KALISPELL, Mont. – Governor Greg Gianforte this week continued his fourth annual 56 County Tour as governor, visiting Flathead and Powell counties to highlight the importance of active forest management to reduce wildfire risk and fuel the state’s timber industry.

“When a forest is managed properly, we have less severe wildfires, more recreational opportunities, more wildlife habitat, and more jobs,” Gov. Gianforte said. “And as we better manage our lands, we increase timber yields to fuel our wood products industry – it’s a win-win for Montana.”

Touring a Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) fire mitigation project on state school trust lands, the governor received an update on the progress on the site funded by the state’s latest investment in active forest management projects across Montana.

Last spring, the governor signed House Bill 883 into law allocating \$60 million over the biennium to significantly increase the pace and scale of management practices that improve forest health, reduce wildfire risk, and increase wildfire preparedness. Over 6,700 acres of forest is set to be managed across the state with funding secured from this allocation.

“What we’re really doing is lowering the potential for an intense fire in here. And then by treating all of the fuels after, we’re really lowering the risk that anything could get going in here at all,” shared Pete Seigmund, a state forester with the DNRC Kalispell unit.

Since Gov. Gianforte took office, DNRC has shown a steady and significant increase in the pace and scale of forest management. Earlier this year, Gov. Gianforte and DNRC Director Amanda Kaster announced the state placed over 36,000 forested acres under management in 2023, up from 11,000 in 2020 when the governor took office.

During the visit, the governor heard from foresters on the benefits of management for healthier forests and to produce commercial-value timber.

Spotlighting the wood products industry and visiting Sun Mountain Lumber in Deer Lodge yesterday, the governor toured the mill and talked with owners on the legacy of the family business and the importance of forest management to produce timber.

As owner and operator since 1976, Sherm Anderson is in the process of turning over the family-owned forest products company to his grandson, Chris Anderson.

“Sun Mountain Lumber has been a family business for over twenty years now. It’s important to continue supporting timber industries in the state because if we don’t manage the forests, the forest will manage us and that’s very true for the state of Montana,” Chris said.

He continued, “With so few mills left in the state, we want to continue that legacy.”

As the timber industry navigates ongoing challenges and several recent mill closures, the governor highlighted the importance of supporting the wood products industry and the need for greater certainty from the federal government.

“Of the 23 million acres of forest in Montana, the majority is federally managed by the United States Forest Service. We need greater certainty from our federal management partners to ensure safe communities and to produce timber to keep our mills in production,” Gov. Gianforte added.

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## **Upcoming Legislative Meetings:**

### **Local Government Interim Committee**

**Next Meeting is Scheduled for July 17, 2024**

**Where: State Capitol & Zoom**

For more information go to: [committee website](#)

### **Revenue Interim Committee**

**Next Meeting is Scheduled for May 24-25, 2024**

**Where: State Capitol Room & Zoom**

For more information go to: [committee's website.](#)

Contact committee staff, [Megan Moore](#), with any questions.

## **Water Policy Interim Committee**

**Next Meeting is Scheduled for July TBD, 2024**

**Where: State Capitol & Zoom**

An agenda and materials will be available at <http://leg.mt.gov/water> For more information, contact Jason Mohr, committee staff, at 406-4444-1640 or <http://jason.mohr@legmt.gov>.

## **Environmental Quality Council**

**Next Meeting is Scheduled for August 14-16, 2024**

**Where: Libby, MT**

Please use this link to check in for more information:

<https://leg.mt.gov/committees/interim/eqc/>

## **Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee**

**Next Meeting is Scheduled for July 17-18, 2024**

**Where: State Capitol & Zoom**

For more information go to:

<https://leg.mt.gov/committees/interim/etic/meeting-info/>

**Upcoming Events/Dates:**

June 10-12, 2024

Montana Petroleum Association Planning Meeting  
Great Northern Hotel, Helena MT

**June 12-13, 2024**

**Treasure State Resources Association Annual Meeting**  
**The Forge Hotel, Anaconda, MT**

July 22-24

Montana Coal Council Annual Convention  
Northern Hotel, Billings, MT

*If you don't want to receive the TSRA Newsletter, please let me know. If you want to share with others in your company or organization, please do so. The mission of the Treasure State Resources Association is to promote and enhance the Montana Way of Life through responsible resource development.*