

APRIL 2017 - LEGISLATIVE UPDATE FROM NM WILDERNESS ALLIANCE

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Senate Bill 340, which would require legislature approval and a showing of feasibility before money is spent on large diversion projects like the one proposed for the Gila river, was passed by the Senate Conservation Committee but was tabled (and dead for the Session) by the Senate Finance Committee. We expect this bill to be reintroduced in future Sessions.

House Bill 254, which would have changed the way members the State Game Commission are appointed, died in its second committee. Currently all seven members of the Commission are appointed by the Governor, leading to large swings in state wildlife policy depending on the administration. The bill would have given four of the appointments to the Legislature and would have delineated specific requirements for each position. We look forward to seeing this bill again.

Senate Bill 182 would have taken federal minerals which are under private lands in New Mexico, given them to the State, and earmarked any resulting royalties for early childhood education. While early childhood education desperately needs funding, this bill was similar to other **ALEC-sponsored "public land seizure"** bills which attempt to privatize publicly owned lands and minerals. Fortunately, the bill's sponsor got so many phone calls that she pulled the bill during its first committee hearing.

Senate Bill 364, which attempted to require State Land Office approval of new National Monuments, had most of its bad language removed in an Amendment and then was passed by the Senate Conservation Committee. It was never scheduled for a second committee hearing.

House Memorial 70 asked the Bureau of Land Management to cease leasing in the Farmington Field Office until after the Resource Management Plan Amendment is completed, in order to ensure interim protection of the Greater Chaco area. This Memorial passed the House and will be sent to the BLM.

Senate Memorial 119, and its House companion HM 91, would study the creation of an office of Outdoor Recreation. This Memorial passed the Senate but stalled in the House.

Senate Memorial 130, and its House companion HM 92, would invite large retailer shows to locate to New Mexico. Earlier this year Utah lost its host status to the largest outdoor retailer show due to the State's recent anti-public lands stance. This Memorial passed in both the House and the Senate.