

**ASSOCIATION OF GALLATIN AGRICULTURAL IRRIGATORS  
2009 WEEKLY LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS  
April 13, 2009**

The session is drawing nearer to an end. The legislators are under pressure to move legislation out of their committees. House Bill 2 was on the Senate Floor this week. The stimulus bill will be up on the Senate Floor this week. Once the funding bills are through the process it will move more quickly and we'll have to work to keep our bills intact that have funding outside of the funding bills. There is a rumor that they will finish up early – this will depend on the number of conference committees necessary to bring agreement on amendments. Please do not hesitate to let either Krista or Walt know about issues of concern, comments, and thoughts.

**Reports on Hearings Held April 6-April 10**

**SB 507 – (Story, R, Park City)** – Use of River Beds. Bill provides framework for the delineation of which riverbeds the state owns and the process that must be followed if users of the riverbed are required to pay for that use. Users would include owners of structures below the low water mark. The bill was amended in committee to make it clear that the state must determine title through a court of competent jurisdiction and once title is determined, the state must survey the riverbeds that they have determined they own so that titles can be cleaned up and corrected. *Bill passed out of House Tax 20-0.*

**Reports on Bills Heard but still in Committee – April 6-April 10**

**SB 343 – (Jackson, R, Kalispell)** -- Created the Montana Aquatic Invasive Species Act. As the bill was initially drafted it was not limited to aquatics. AGAI worked with other interested parties to amend the bill to limit it to aquatic species. It provides for public education, joint management and identification of management areas by FWP and Dept. of Agriculture. Hearing was held in front of House Agriculture. *Still in committee and committee isn't scheduled to meet again. Will need to try to get out of committee.*

**Reports on Committee Action – April 6-April 10**

**SB 465 – (Hamlett, D, Cascade)** – As a result of the District Court's decision in PPL v. Montana the Department of Revenue removed what they deemed to be navigable rivers from the tax rolls and did not differentiate between high water mark and low water mark. The primary concern with this action by the DOR is that they do not have the authority to determine title to property as an administrative action and the risk that the "lines" that were drawn by DOR would somehow be applied by DNRC to determine which property is school trust land. Hearing was held in front of House Tax. *Passed out of House Tax 20-0. Scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading on House Floor 4/14/09.*



**Reports on Floor Action Held April 6 – April 10**

**HB 52 – Hydrogeologic Assessments** – Senate 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading 50-0; rereferred to Senate Finance and Claims.

**SB 303 – Update State Water Plan** – House 2<sup>nd</sup> reading passed – rereferred to House Appropriations.

**Hearings for the week of April 13 – April 17**

**(Note: A hearing only requires a two day notice so this list may change)**

HB 52 and SB 303 have both been rereferred to committee but have not been scheduled yet.

**Monday 4/13/09:**

**Tuesday 4/14/09:**

**Wednesday 4/15/09:**

**Thursday 4/16/09:**

**Friday 4/17/09:**

