

It's the latest version of MountainTrue's Raleigh Report. This week...A dust up over rules; questions over moving parks; and the General Assembly takes a break. And, here's your chance to get involved in MountainTrue's work at the General Assembly.

Leadership Rules on Rules

Last week the House adopted its final procedural rules for the current session. There's no news there; it is not uncommon for the rules to be finalized after the start of session. But, this year, a group of Republican members in House Rules, led by Rep. John Blust (Guilford-R), attempted to lead a bit of a coup. The group tried to block conference committee members from adding provisions to a final conference report that were not part of the House- or Senate-approved versions of the bill. This was a standard rule in the past, but leadership has become accustomed to having the flexibility to put anything into a conference report. It makes negotiations between House and Senate leadership at the end of session easier and allows House leadership to act independently of its own caucus. After Blust's amendment initially passed, House leadership put the hammer down, reconsidering and stripping the amendment from the bill.

Doubts on Parks

Last week, DENR Chief Operating Officer John Evans spoke to legislators about the administration's proposal to move the state parks, NC Zoo, Museum of Natural Science and the aquariums from DENR to the Department of Cultural Resources. The rationale given for the move was that Cultural Resources is better at raising money off state assets. This dovetails with another McCrory priority – something called “dynamic pricing,” which allows flexible pricing based on season, special events and other marketing strategies.

Legislators had lots of questions. Freshman Rep. Brian Turner (Buncombe-D) noted that he has participated in business mergers, and “sometimes they work and sometimes they don't;” and asked when legislators would see additional details on efficiencies and savings. Rep. McElraft (Carteret-R) handed a long list of questions to Evans, and said she's been troubled by the decline in funding for state parks; she'd like to see the Governor ask for a restoration of the parks dedicated funding source (turned into a yearly appropriation in the 2013-2014 biennium). Stay tuned for more on this proposal...

Spring Break

This week, the General Assembly is taking spring break. We hope they enjoy a break – and maybe they'll take the opportunity to come and visit our beautiful mountains. Expect the honorables to be hard at work when they return.

Join MountainTrue in Raleigh

MountainTrue leaders are headed to the General Assembly again on April 16th to meet with legislators and discuss issues important to WNC. If you are interested in joining us for one of our monthly trips to Raleigh, [click here](#) and we'll add you to our list. We only take a small group each month, and we usually stay in Raleigh overnight so we can start meetings bright and early.

Energy Freedom

Last issue we told you about the Energy Freedom Act (HB245), which would boost solar and renewable energy in North Carolina. HB245 would, for the first time, allow customers and businesses to purchase electricity directly from a renewable energy company--a practice known as third party sales.

Giving customers the freedom to decide where to put their energy dollars would provide even more clean energy jobs, provide more affordable, reliable options for customers and protect our air, water, and communities from dangerous and polluting fossil fuels. [Tell your lawmakers that everyone in North Carolina wins with more energy freedom and to support HB245 today!](#)

FracTracker

Now is the time to tell our state leaders that we will continue to fight fracking in North Carolina. On April 15th, join Brook Lenker from [FracTracker Alliance](#) to explore the impacts of oil and natural gas extraction in America and the potential impacts for North Carolina. Staff from [Environment NC](#) and MountainTrue will get you up to date on how you can get involved in fighting fracking and positively shape our energy future. Get all the details and RSVP [here](#).