

Service Date: March 13, 2006

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

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IN THE MATTER OF ENERGY WEST	)	UTILITY DIVISION
MONTANA, Application for Approval of	)	
Changes to the Universal Systems Benefits	)	DOCKET NO. D2005.12.177
Program and Low-Income Discount and	)	
Distribution of a No Interest Program Accrual	)	ORDER NO. 6719

**INTERIM ORDER**

On December 22, 2005, Energy West Montana (EWM) filed before the Public Service Commission (PSC) the above-entitled application, which includes an EWM request for PSC approval to distribute an approximate \$500,000 accrued over-recovery in the EWM's no-interest loan program to Energy Share of Montana.

The PSC is aware that parties to this proceeding have likely not had a reasonable opportunity to comment on EWM's proposal. The PSC is also aware of the objections registered by parties in a previous case in which the PSC directed a one-time emergency distribution of \$150,000 from NorthWestern Energy to Energy Share of Montana under similar circumstances. *See, Matter of NorthWestern Energy, PSC Dockets No. D2004.7.99 and D2004.12.192, Notice of Commission Action, February 17, 2005.*

As was the case in that matter the PSC respects the customary procedural steps through which interested persons have a full opportunity to comment or present detailed evidentiary support and legal argument regarding PSC action, prior to PSC action. However, the PSC determines the present circumstances regarding natural gas prices remain an emergency justifying an emergency response. On an interim basis, the PSC denies EWM's distribution-of-funds request in part and grants EWM's request in part. EWM shall distribute \$50,000 to Energy Share of Montana.

Done and dated this 23rd day of February, 2006, by a vote of 4-0.

BY ORDER OF THE MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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GREG JERGESON, Chairman

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BRAD MOLNAR, Vice-Chairman

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DOUG MOOD, Commissioner

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ROBERT H. RANEY, Commissioner

ATTEST:

Connie Jones  
Commission Secretary

(SEAL)

NOTE: Any interested party may request the Commission to reconsider this decision. A motion to reconsider must be filed within ten (10) days. See 38.2.4806, ARM.