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PSC HEARING BEGINS MAY 19 ON ISSUES RELATED TO
PACIFICORP'S INDUSTRIAL CUSTOMERS

The state Public Service Commission will conduct a hearing in Helena May 19 and 20 for the benefit of PacifiCorp's five large industrial customers entitled to choose their electric suppliers on July 1. Issues to be heard include rate design and a mechanism to track the company's stranded costs between July 1, when the large customers move to choice, and the date of the PSC's final order in this case.

All the other issues involved in PacifiCorp's electric restructuring and transition plan, including transition costs, customer education and pilot programs, will be subjects of a PSC hearing in Kalispell beginning August 25.

PacifiCorp filed its proposed plan last July to restructure its electric operations pursuant to the Electric Utility Industry Restructuring and Customer Choice Act passed by the 1997 Montana Legislature. The new law provides for deregulation of the generation and sale of electricity to Montanans while electricity transmission and distribution will remain regulated.

The new law requires PacifiCorp to offer its large industrial customers in Montana the opportunity to choose their electricity supplier by July 1998 and to begin pilot supplier choice programs for residential and small commercial customers by the same date. In its transition plan, however, Pacific Power proposes to forgo pilot programs and move all residential and small commercial customers to supplier choice on January 1, 1999.

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