



*Montana Public Service Commission*

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## **PSC Ensures Future Source of Power for NorthWestern Energy Customers**

The Montana Public Service Commission (PSC) voted 4-1\* today in favor of a plan requiring NorthWestern Energy (NWE) to dedicate energy generated at the utility's Colstrip Unit 4 plant to their Montana electricity customers. The 222 megawatts generated at the coal-fired unit east of Billings is anticipated to fulfill one-quarter to one-third of Montana consumer need. The resulting reduction in the amount of power the utility will have to buy on the open market should help insulate NWE's 300,000 electricity customers in Montana from wide price swings in the energy market.

PSC Chair Greg Jergeson stressed the point by noting, "By all measures energy prices are expected to continue upward. This plan is good for NWE consumers in the long run because it will help minimize the impact of price spikes in the market."

In exchange for dedicating the power, the PSC agreed to place Colstrip Unit 4 in the utility's electric rate base at a value of \$407 million.

Made up of 5 elected commissioners, the PSC works to ensure that Montanans receive safe and reliable service from regulated public utilities while paying reasonable rates. Utilities regulated by the PSC generally include private investor-owned natural gas, electric, telephone, water, and sewer companies. In addition, the PSC regulates certain motor carriers, and oversees natural gas pipeline safety and intrastate railroad safety.

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\*Commissioner Ken Toole voted in opposition.