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PSC Evaluating NWE Generation Ownership Plans

This week the Public Service Commission (PSC) is evaluating NorthWestern Energy's (NWE's) plan to build and operate a \$206 million natural gas fired generator east of Anaconda. The hearing on the facility, known as Mill Creek, begins at 9:00 am on Wednesday February 25, and is expected to last three days.

The purpose of the hearing is to consider NWE's case for proceeding with the plant as well as hearing about the topic from other interested parties, known as intervenors. Colstrip Energy Limited Partnership (CELP), the Montana Large Customer Group, the Montana Consumer Counsel and the Renewable Northwest Project are the intervenors in this case. The public will have the opportunity to provide comments during the hearing as well.

"This proceeding has the potential to represent a big change in Montana's energy policy," explained Commission Chair Greg Jergeson. "The authority for the Mill Creek application is made possible by HB 25 passed during the 2007 Legislative Session. This facility could be a big step toward the company becoming a fully integrated utility," he added.

The hearing is taking place at the PSC office located at 1701 Prospect Avenue in Helena. The proceedings can also be viewed live via the Internet at <http://psc.mt.gov/eDocs/#Calendars>, where they are archived for later viewing too.

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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