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PSC Approves Propane to Natural Gas Switch for Cascade

The Montana Public Service Commission (PSC) voted unanimously today to give final approval to Energy West to replace Cascade's existing propane system with a new natural gas system. PSC Vice Chairman, Ken Toole, said, "Assuming current prices, this will save the average Cascade rate payer over 40% in their bill." He added, "Natural gas rates fluctuate but over time they have proven to be consistently lower than the cost of propane."

Energy West will be bringing the new gas lines about 12 miles from Ulm. The consumer cost of the project is greatly reduced because Energy West received a grant covering up to \$500 of the cost of converting each residence and business in town.

The project has been in the works for the last several years and PSC approval is the final go ahead needed to start the project. The final PSC order directs Energy West to begin the conversion to natural gas June 24. Additional information about the switch can be found under docket D2009.5.66 on the PSC website at <http://psc.mt.gov/eDocs>.

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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