

NEWS RELEASE
MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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PSC sponsors energy transmission forum

HELENA - The Montana Public Service Commission is sponsoring an Aug. 30 informational meeting to discuss proposed electricity transmission projects in the region and potential impacts to Montana ratepayers.

The public meeting comes as owners of major electricity transmission lines in Montana consider upgrades to enable more power to flow across the state to markets elsewhere in the West.

The informational meeting will feature two panels, the first beginning at 10 a.m. with a discussion focusing on possible upgrades to the Colstrip Transmission System (CTS) and the Bonneville Power Administration's transmission system.

The CTS carries power from Colstrip to Townsend where it interconnects with BPA's 500-kilovolt system. The CTS is owned by NorthWestern Energy, PacifiCorp, Puget Sound Energy, Avista Corporation and Portland General Electric.

The federal BPA and CTS co-owners are collaborating on the upgrades, which would enable the lines to carry roughly 600 megawatts of additional generating capacity.

BPA has proposed a new substation near St. Regis or Missoula and upgrades at its Garrison substation as part of its Montana-to-Washington Transmission System Upgrade Project. The project includes upgrades in Idaho and Washington. The CTS co-owners continue to evaluate the scope of possible upgrades to its system.

The first panel will discuss the upgrades to both systems and any impacts or risks to Montana ratepayers or other parties. It will also address BPA's rates and the question of who should pay for upgrades to the CTS.

Panelists are Brian Silverstein, Larry Bekkedahl, Brian Altman and Gail Kuntz of BPA and Mike Cashell, John Leland and Ray Brush of NorthWestern Energy. The PSC invited representatives from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to address various transmission orders.

The second panel kicks off at 1:30 p.m. to discuss new generation projects and their possible impact on transmission service providers as well as potential impacts on regulation service and integrating large-scale wind into the grid.

Panelists are Ted Williams of Gaelectric, Meredith Aitken of Powerex, and representatives from NorthWestern Energy.

The meeting is open to the public and anyone may attend at the Public Service Commission, 1701 Prospect Ave., in Helena or watch live via the Internet at www.psc.mt.gov. A recording of the meeting will be archived at the PSC's site.

For more information, contact PSC Communications/Research Director Justin Post at 406.444.6171. Follow the PSC at [Twitter.com/@MT_PSC](https://twitter.com/MT_PSC) or visit www.facebook.com/MontanaPSC