



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
Contact: Eric Sell- Communications Director
esell@mt.gov
W: 406.444.5772
C: 406.202.5326

March 9, 2016

Montana District Court judge upholds PSC order rejecting lower compensation rates for small wind and solar generators

HELENA, Mont. – March 9, 2016 – Montana District Court Judge Mike Menahan affirmed a 2015 PSC order denying NorthWestern Energy’s request to decrease the amount paid to small wind and solar projects for their electricity.

In a ruling issued Thursday, March 3, Judge Menahan upheld the PSC’s decision to maintain existing “standard rates” for certain wind and solar projects no larger than three megawatts in size. The Public Utility Regulatory Policy Act, passed by Congress in 1978, requires NorthWestern Energy to purchase power from these “qualifying facilities” based on the “avoided cost” to the utility.

In May of 2015, the PSC found that NorthWestern Energy had failed to provide sufficient information to support its application to decrease the rates paid to small wind and solar projects. NorthWestern disagreed with the PSC’s ruling and filed a complaint in district court last June.

In his ruling, Judge Menahan stated that the PSC acted reasonably, in part because NorthWestern “calculated proposed rates using a flawed methodology.”

Speaking to the Court's decision, PSC Chairman Brad Johnson, R-Helena, said,
"I am very pleased with the court's decision as it recognizes that the PSC's order was based on our unique knowledge and expertise of the subject at hand, as well as a thorough and fair analysis of NorthWestern's proposal."

To view Judge Menahan's full decision, visit: <http://1.usa.gov/1p5R6BG>

###

For MPSC updates, please follow us on twitter [@MT_PSC](#), and "like" our Facebook page [Montana PSC](#)