

For Immediate Release

Contact: Chris Puyear
christopher.puyear@mt.gov
(C): 406-431-2499

September 1, 2017

NorthWestern Energy, Fergus Electric Reach Agreement to Serve Black Butte Copper Project

Helena, Mont. – Fergus Electric Cooperative will provide power to a proposed copper mine located near White Sulphur Springs under an agreement reached with NorthWestern Energy, and approved by the Montana Public Service Commission this week.

Under the terms of the agreement, NorthWestern waives the right to provide electric service to Tintina Resources, the owner of the planned Black Butte Copper Project, allowing Fergus Electric to take up the obligation.

“I’m pleased the parties could come to an agreement to provide service to the Black Butte Copper facility. This project is too important to the future of the community to be delayed by a protracted legal battle over service territory,” said Commissioner Roger Koopman, R-Bozeman.

The Commission determined that the agreement would not impact the reliability of service for customers of either utility, but did direct NorthWestern to account for the lost revenue that the company would have otherwise received from Tintina.

“By relinquishing the right to serve this customer NorthWestern will be spreading the fixed cost of its grid over fewer megawatt hours sold. The Commission will take up the issue of lost revenue in a future rate case for the utility,” said Vice-chairman Travis Kavulla, R-Great Falls.

Fergus Electric will construct a new 100-kV transmission line and substation in order to provide service to the mine and future customers in the area. The line will connect to NorthWestern’s existing Two Dot to King Hill transmission facility and is expected to cost an estimated \$3.6 million.

Tintina Resources will pay for 100 percent of the new construction costs, along with any additional expenses associated with providing service to the Black Butte facility.

Tintina projects an average energy usage of roughly 7,000 megawatt hours per month and the company is expected to begin taking service from Fergus Electric as early as January 2021.

To view the final order, visit: <http://bit.ly/2gvLimg>

###

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

Made up of five 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.