

For Immediate Release

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PSC Chairman Brad Johnson Praises Resolution Supporting Grid Modernization

HELENA, Mont. – A resolution to address Montana’s aging energy infrastructure through the deployment of new technology passed the house today with wide, bipartisan support.

[SJ 18](#), sponsored by Senator Mark Blasdel (R-Somers), encourages project developers and policy makers to consider the potential cost savings and revolutionary performance benefits of advanced transmission technologies when planning future investments in the state’s electricity grid.

The resolution comes on the heels of a recent [report](#) by the American Society of Civil Engineers, which assigned a D- grade to the condition of the nation’s energy infrastructure.

“This resolution is an important step to address our aging energy infrastructure in the West,” said PSC Chairman Brad Johnson (R-East Helena). “As chairman, the continued reliability and security of our nation’s electricity grid is one of my top priorities. Over 200,000 miles of the nation’s transmission grid are at least 50-75 years old and badly in need of replacement. At the same time, the continued growth of generation from both traditional and renewable sources compounds the need to invest in new and existing infrastructure”

Last year Johnson co-sponsored a pair of national policy resolutions to help members of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and Council of State Governments (CSG) bring cost –effective revolutionary transmission technology solutions into their states.

Blasdel said he agreed to sponsor a similar resolution because he believes these technologies could provide answers to some of the state’s most difficult policy questions. “We’ve seen lengthy and protracted battles over the citing and approval of new transmission lines in this state. If we can rely on some of this new technology to increase grid efficiency, and temporarily postpone the need to build new lines or generation sources, I view that as a win for all Montanans.”

Chairman Johnson hopes that the senator’s resolution will serve as a catalyst for a region-wide dialogue about the importance of grid modernization.

“These challenges will need to be addressed sooner rather than later, and it is to the benefit of all Montanans that these conversations take into account regional differences in the energy landscape between states,” Johnson said.

To view a copy of the NARUC Resolution, visit: <http://bit.ly/2oFePNd>

To view a copy of the CSG Resolution, visit: <http://bit.ly/1PUv3r>

About NARUC:

[NARUC](#) is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty States, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the Federal Government.

About CSG:

[The Council of State Governments](#) is the nation's only organization serving all three branches of state government. CSG is a region-based forum that fosters the exchange of insights and ideas to help state officials shape public policy. This offers unparalleled regional, national and international opportunities to network, develop leaders, collaborate and create problem-solving partnerships.

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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.