

Exhibit No. 9
2.8.05
SB 365
Senate Energy & Telecommunications Committee

Testimony
On Senate Bill 365

Before the Senate Energy and Telecommunications Committee
By Doug Hardy on behalf of the Montana Electric Cooperatives Association
2-8-05

Mr. Chairman, Members of the committee, I am Doug Hardy General Manager of Park Electric Cooperative based in Livingston, Montana testifying on behalf of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association.

We are pleased to support SB 365. The extension of USBP without expansion allows the Cooperatives to meet the commitments made in 1997 when USB came into existence, without increased costs to our member consumers.

The co-ops have not heard an outcry or even many requests from their members to expand USB but also acknowledge that USB serves a purpose we have been and are meeting and exceeding.

SB 365 also meets a form of commitment many of those involved in the passage of customer choice and the formation of USB gave the co-ops. We were told if we could retain local control in most areas of the deregulation bill but part of that commitment was agreeing to the provisions of USB. We agreed to those provisions.

The co-ops supported the bipartisan USB recommendations of the Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee. Extension of USB was a part of that bill, which is in the House.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee and I will be available to respond to any questions you may have.