

Sunday, March 22nd, 2009

EXHIBIT 4
DATE 3/23/09
HB 641

Letter to the Editor

With skyrocketing energy bills, a struggling economy, and increased pressures on our natural resources, I think its time Montana acts to reduce our energy use and our power bills.

There's a bit we can do from home, but it turns out utilities can make an even bigger difference.

Right now, the Legislature is considering a good bill, House Bill 641, which reduces consumer energy costs through an energy efficiency standard for electric and gas utilities.

That means if the bill passes, Flathead Electric Cooperative would set energy savings goals, come up with a plan to meet them, and reduce overall energy use significantly. The bill also includes incentives for meeting those goals.

Energy savings result in my ability to spend more money in the local economy or save it for the years ahead. I'm doing my part to ensure my own home is energy efficient (new light bulbs, more insulation, turning off lights and water conservation). Why shouldn't I expect the same, and better, from those supplying the energy?

I urge anyone using power from Flathead Electric Cooperative to contact their local representative to support House Bill 641, the energy efficiency standard (call 406.444.4800 during business hours). And also send a note of encouragement to the Flathead Electric Coop saying you're making necessary changes and would like them do the same.

Sara Swan Busse
Kalispell, Mont.
406.755.4648

Jeffrey Funk
990 McCaffery Road
Bigfork, Montana 59911

March 22, 2009

Regarding: HB 641

Greetings FRET Committee members,

I am writing to emphatically support the passage of House Bill 641, Energy Efficiency and Weatherization Standard. As a long time member of the Flathead Electric Coop in Flathead County, I can attest to the effectiveness of utility led conservation and efficiency efforts. The Coop has long taken a proactive role in conservation through their communications and programs, and are to be commended for that. But their efforts alone are not enough.

Energy issues are now quite in the limelight of political policy making, and I believe will continue to be defining for the foreseeable future. The simple fact is that energy availability, source, and cost affect literally every aspect of our way of life. Energy security is much more than an abstract political concept. Especially here in the cold northern regions of the country, access to sensible, clean, and affordable energy is absolutely essential.

That increased efficiency and conservation are essential and cost effective ongoing goals for any rational energy policy is a matter of fact. It is simply cheaper and cleaner to not use energy in the first place than to provide it by generation and transmission of new power.

HB 641 would support the goals and proven effective strategies for accomplishing them by requiring utilities to meet reasonable standards. In the process, energy users would be provided more incentive and more information to conserve and use energy wisely. This bill is good for the state, and good for the citizens of Montana. Please see that this bill not only gets through committee, but passes on the floor. Quite literally, our collective future depends on it.

Respectfully,

Jeffrey Funk

Bigfork, Montana

City of Big Timber
PO Box 416
Big Timber, Montana 59011
406-932-5610

March 23, 2009

Representative Art Noonan, Chair
House Federal Relations, Energy,
and Telecommunications Committee

Re: HB 641

Representative Noonan,

I am writing in support of HB 641. I think it is time for Montana to make energy efficiency a top priority – this bill will do that. The City of Big Timber is serviced by NorthWestern Energy. I would like to see a program, whereby, significant energy consumption savings could be realized through customer conservation assistance.

Big Timber is experiencing an economic downturn as is much of the State. It is becoming more difficult for our citizens and small businesses to pay the high costs of home heating and lighting. I am aware of programs, available in other states, for low income customers to receive insulation, energy efficient windows and other energy saving devices. I would like to see these and other programs available for all Montanans.

Energy efficiency standards for utilities would make it possible all Montanans to receive energy incentives and education to lower their energy use. A conservation program saves energy, saves customers money, provides jobs for home and business energy retro-fits, and over all, extends the life of our natural resources.

A few years ago, Big Timber metered water use. A larger community today, we use about one third the amount of water we did prior to metering. I believe the same would be true of electricity and natural gas. I hope the committee will pass HB 641 without delay.

Sincerely,
Diana Taylor

Diana Taylor
Mayor

Working for Economic Equality and Liberation (WEEL)

32 S. Ewing St #109

Helena, MT 59601

(406) 495-0497

March 23, 2009

Dear Members of the Federal Relations, Energy and Telecommunications Committee,

I am writing to urge your support for HB 641, a bill that will make energy efficiency a top priority for Montana's electric and natural gas utilities. WEEL is a grassroots social and economic justice organization made up of people experiencing poverty and our supporters. We advocate for policies that help and don't hurt Montanans living in poverty. This is a bill that will help our members reach economic security.

Low-income families across the state are the ones hit hardest by high energy prices. Many low-income families rely on government subsidized bill-assistance to get through our cold winter months. A true investment by our utilities in energy efficiency will go a lot further than bill-paying assistance. Simple things like insulation, efficient light bulbs and caulk around leaky windows, give low-income families a break in their energy bills, and help make families more financially secure. Under this bill, we could expect a new level of investment by our utilities in rebates, educational programs and weatherization programs that help to make those simple fixes available and affordable.

Energy efficient homes are not only easier on family budgets, but they are more comfortable, healthier and safer for the environment. Furthermore, students and employees are more productive if they live in an energy efficient home. Thank you for your support of HB 641.

Respectfully,

Layna George
Interim Executive Director

Kate G. O'Brien
421 West 7th Street
Whitefish, MT 59937

March 23, 2009

Dear Members of the Federal Relations, Energy and Telecommunications Committee,

My name is Kate O'Brien and I have been living in Whitefish for 17 years, am a member of Flathead Electric Coop and a customer of Northwestern Energy. I am writing to express my support for HB 641. I want to see Montanans moving toward a future of reduced energy consumption and I see the energy suppliers in our state as the obvious leaders of that movement. I am a big supporter of alternative energy and feel that energy efficiency is the "low hanging fruit" in this regard. I feel HB 641 would be a huge step in helping all Montanans implement the personal solutions necessary for increased energy efficiency while reducing costs in the long term.

Thank You,

Kate G. O'Brien
406-862-8073

Walter Redfield
Redfield Construction
10025 Oral Zumwalt Way
Missoula, MT 59803

March 23, 2009

Dear Members of FRET Committee,

My name is Walter Redfield and I have been involved in sustainable building in Missoula for many years. I have found that the most effective way to reduce energy consumption in the house are as follows: 1. Add insulation 2. Weatherize and upgrade inefficient windows 3. Convert lighting to CFL or LED 4. Upgrade inefficient heating systems 5. Upgrade inefficient appliances.

These are simple things that can drastically reduce energy consumption. I strongly support HB641 as clear choice to reduce our energy consumption.

Respectfully,

Walter Redfield



Mother's Power

Renewable Energy Solutions

420 East Third Street
P.O. Box 580
Whitefish, MT 59937
406.250.7853

March 23, 2009

The House Local Government Committee
Montana House of Representatives
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620-0400

Madame Chair and Members of the House Local Government Committee:

I am writing to express my gratitude for the work you do and to request that you please support Support HB 641: The Energy Efficiency Weatherization Standard . As a member of The Flathead Electric Cooperative I know that we are facing many changes in the future of our regional electric supply. I believe that serious effort to conserve energy is an extremely important part of meeting future challenges. Additionally, as a Montana small-business owner, I am confident that this bill will directly contribute to new jobs and new opportunities throughout our great State.

I strongly believe that it is time for Montana to join the ranks of the States that are leading the way to sustainable energy independence for our Nation.

Thank you once again for all your good efforts.

Best regards,

Jeff Arcel
CEO
Mother's Power, Inc.
jarcel@centurytel.net



Gordon and Helen Waller

• 615 Weldon Road • Circle, MT 59215 • (406) 485-3490

March 21, 2009

Dear Members of the House FRET Committee,

I am writing to encourage you to support HB 641. Utilities serving the public should be required to meet the consumers' needs by providing the least expensive power. It is a fact that the cheapest power available is that which is captured by energy efficiency. Until Utility Companies are required to make that commitment which will bring savings to their customers, they will continue to purchase higher cost energy and pass that cost on.

My daughter and her family owned and operated a café in a small town in Western Montana that is served by NorthWestern Energy. When the energy bill reached over \$600. per month, she had to close her doors. There is a limit to how much one can pay.

Please support this legislation. It is critical that we establish a statewide standard.

Thank you,

Helen Waller

Helen Waller