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Exhibit 8

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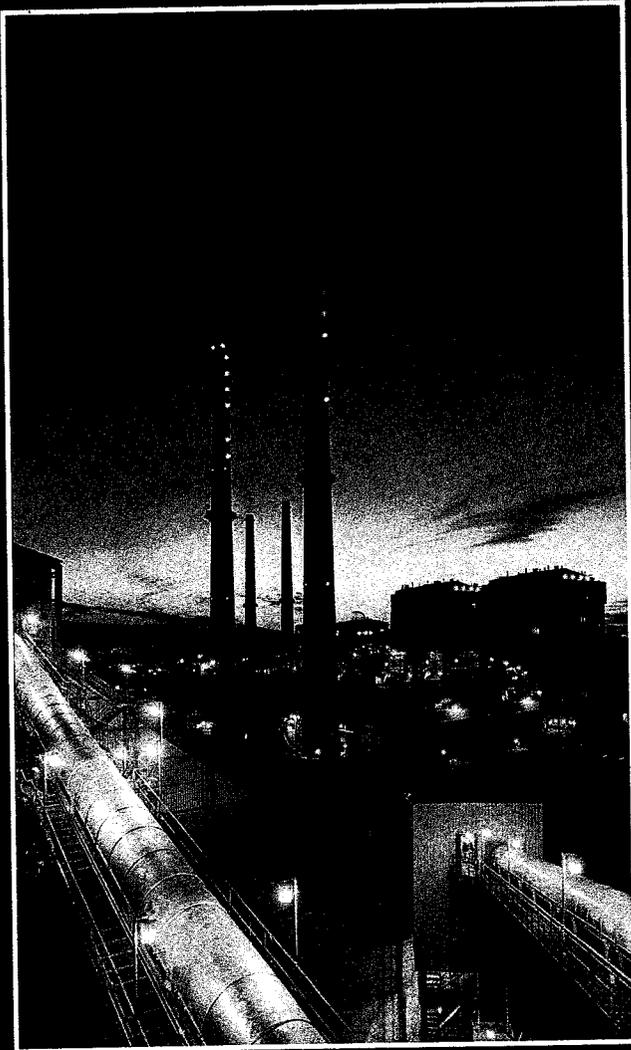


Prepared for: The Colstrip Steam Electric Station Owners

The
**ECONOMIC
CONTRIBUTION**

of Colstrip Steam
Electric Station
Units 1-4

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The
ECONOMIC
CONTRIBUTION
of Colstrip Steam
Electric Station
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What would the economy of Montana look like if the Colstrip Steam Electric Station did not exist? It is a hypothetical question – the facility has been in full operation for more than 20 years. Yet in a policy and political environment where the contributions of the plant to the state economy are poorly understood or perhaps taken for granted, it deserves to be carefully analyzed and answered.

Using a state-of-the-art policy analysis model of the Montana economy that has been peer-reviewed and used in dozens of other studies, we have carefully examined the contribution made to both the economy of eastern Montana as well as to the state economy as a whole by the continuing operations of the Colstrip generating facility. Our study has revealed the footprint of this single facility occupying less than three square miles in Rosebud County to be substantial. Comparing the actual economy to one that would exist if the operations of Colstrip were not present, we find that:

- 3,740 jobs, including 2,688 private sector jobs,
- more than \$360 million of personal income received by Montanans,
- \$638 million in net output produced in Montana, and
- more than 7,700 additional people

exist in our state today whose presence is attributable to Colstrip operations. To state it another way, without Colstrip, the economy around us would be smaller, less prosperous, and less populous by these same amounts.

It's clear why these contributions are so significant. The station pays wages and benefits to its workforce that are substantially above the state and regional average. When employees spend part of their money in the local and state economy, many other jobs are supported. A huge expenditure of the plant is for a product that is totally made in Montana – namely, coal from the adjacent Western Energy Company mine. Keeping those dollars within the state greatly increases the ultimate impact of Colstrip operations.

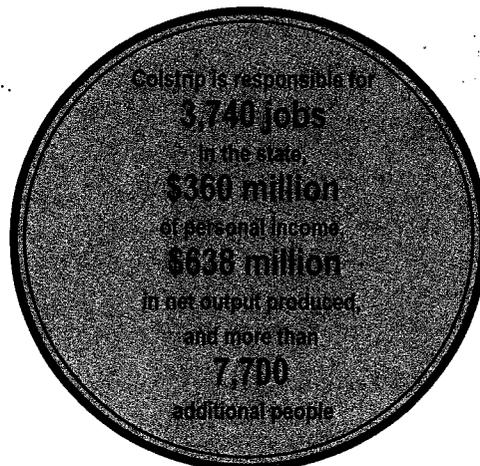
Finally, the product made by Colstrip – electricity delivered to Montana and other states – does not displace or crowd out other Montana producers. Thus its activities add to, rather than supplant or replace, other activities in the economy. The uses and demand for electricity continue to grow, and the continued operation of plants such as Colstrip is part of meeting that need.

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