

May 11, 2016

Chairman Keith Regier
Energy & Telecommunications Interim Committee
Legislative Services Division
PO Box 201706
Helena, MT 59620-1706

Chairman Regier and Members of the Energy & Telecommunications Interim Committee,

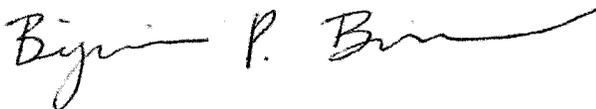
Over the two months since the Energy & Telecommunications Interim Committee (ETIC) last met in Helena, NorthWestern Energy and the Montana Renewable Energy Association have continued a series of meetings with the goal of defining elements of agreement on an updated framework for net metering in Montana. We have analyzed and discussed various changes and alternatives to the existing Montana net metering statutes, and remain committed to pursuing a collaborative resolution to recent net metering debates that will earn the support of other net metering stakeholders and the Legislature.

At this time we are continuing our discussions on the details of the following policy issues related to net metering:

1. Implementation of interconnection standards and rules that ensure safe and reliable utility delivery and net metering systems.
2. Modifications to metering technology and practices for customer generators and net metering systems.
3. Timing and framework of a net metering cost-benefit analysis.
4. Consumer protections for existing customer generators under future net metering policy changes.

We respectfully request that ETIC grant Ms. Nowakowski the authority to begin drafting an ETIC committee bill to revise net metering laws, and that ETIC give Ms. Nowakowski permission to consult Pat Corcoran on behalf of NorthWestern Energy and Ben Brouwer on behalf of the Montana Renewable Energy Association in drafting this bill. If our negotiations continue as planned and we can come to agreement on a possible legislative approach, we expect to complete draft bill language by the end of June for public consideration and review prior to the July 14-15 ETIC meeting.

Sincerely,



Ben Brouwer
Montana Renewable Energy Association



Pat Corcoran
NorthWestern Energy

Cc: Sonja Nowakowski, Todd Everts

ENERGY AND
TELECOMMUNICATIONS INTERIM
COMMITTEE 2015-16

May 13, 2016

Exhibit 7