

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 37
INTRODUCED BY J. WINDY BOY

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY TO EVALUATE CURRENT DATA REGARDING THE HEALTH IMPACTS OF COAL-FIRED POWER PLANTS, IDENTIFY WHAT DATA SHOULD BE COLLECTED, AND INVESTIGATE OPTIONS FOR GATHERING DATA.

WHEREAS, there is much enthusiasm to develop Montana's coal reserves and build new coal-fired power plants, some near tribal lands; and

WHEREAS, existing coal-fired power plants produce 95% of all industrial mercury air emissions in Montana; and

WHEREAS, mercury is a toxic heavy metal that, when ingested, can cause serious neurological damage, particularly to developing fetuses, infants, and children; and

WHEREAS, in Montana there are 25 rivers and lakes with mercury advisories warning people to limit or avoid consumption of fish; and

WHEREAS, nationally, coal-fired power plants are responsible for more than 68% of the total annual emissions of sulfur dioxide, the primary ingredient of fine particle pollution, as well as significant amounts of smog-forming nitrogen oxide emissions and carbon dioxide emissions; and

WHEREAS, it is estimated that particle pollution from power plants shortens the lives of nearly 24,000 Americans each year.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources, in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Quality and the Department of Public Health and Human Services, to study current data regarding the health impacts of coal-fired power plants and, paying particular attention to possible effects on those living on reservations, identify what data should be collected and investigate options for gathering data.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2008.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 61st Legislature.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Secretary of State send a copy of this resolution to each tribal government located on the seven Montana reservations and to the Little Shell Chippewa tribe.

- END -