

**MINUTES**  
**MONTANA SENATE**  
**68th LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION**  
**COMMITTEE ON (S) ENERGY AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS**

**Call to Order:** Chair Walt Sales-R, on April 27, 2023 at 3:03 PM, in 317

**ROLL CALL**

**Members Present:** Sen. Walt Sales, Chair (R)  
Sen. Ryan Lynch, Vice Chair (D)  
Sen. Mike Cuffe (R)  
Sen. Brad Molnar (R)  
Sen. Keith Regier (R)  
Sen. Russel (Russ) Tempel (R)  
Sen. Daniel Zolnikov (R)

**Members Excused:** Sen. Janet Ellis (D)  
Sen. Steve Fitzpatrick (R)  
Sen. Denise Hayman (D)  
Sen. Christopher Pope (D)  
Sen. Jason Small (R)

**Staff Present:** Hunter Camac, Attorney  
Jason Mohr, OBPP Staffer  
Jack Racicot, Secretary

**Audio Committees:** These minutes are in outline form only. They provide a list of participants and a record of official action taken by the committee. The link to the audio recording of the meeting is available on the Legislative Branch website.

**Committee Business Summary:**

Hearing & Date Posted:

SJ 37 04/25/2023

Executive Action:

SJ 37 RESOLUTION ADOPTED

15:04:26 Sen. Zolnikov has left  
15:04:38 Vice Chair Small has arrived  
15:08:06 Sen. Cuffe has left

**HEARING ON SJ 37 - Provide for a study regarding the creation of customer-owned utility co-ops**

**Opening Statement:**

15:04:33 Sen. Brad Molnar (R), SD 28, opened the hearing on SJ 37, Provide for a study regarding the creation of customer-owned utility co-ops.

**Proponent Testimony:**

15:12:16 Anne Hedges, Montana Economic Environmental Center (MEIC)

**Opponent Testimony:**

15:14:27 Chris Puyear, NorthWestern Energy (NWE)

**Informational Witness Testimony:**

None

**Questions from Committee:**

15:18:18 Vice Chair Jason Small  
15:19:18 Sen. Brad Molnar-R  
15:22:33 Vice Chair Jason Small  
15:23:18 Chris Puyear, NWE  
15:24:08 Chair Walt Sales  
15:24:37 Sen. Brad Molnar-R

**Closing Statement:**

15:26:44 Sen. Brad Molnar (R), SD 28, closed the hearing on SJ 37.

**EXECUTIVE ACTION ON SJ 37 - Provide for a study regarding the creation of customer-owned utility co-ops**

15:28:48      **Motion:** Vice Chair Jason Small moved that **SJ 37 RESOLUTION ADOPTED.**

**Discussion:**

15:29:08      Vice Chair Jason Small

15:29:56      Vice Chair Ryan Lynch

15:30:37      Sen. Brad Molnar

15:28:48      **Vote:** Motion carried 10 - 2 by roll call vote with Sen. Fitzpatrick, Sen. Regier, voting no.  
Sen. Fitzpatrick, By Proxy

15:34:13      **Committee Discussion:** Possibly two more bills

**ADJOURNMENT**

Adjournment: 15:34:47

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Jack Racicot, Secretary

Additional Documents: [EXHIBIT\(230427ENSaad\)](#)