



ENERGY AND TECHNOLOGY INTERIM COMMITTEE

69th Montana Legislature

SENATE MEMBERS

Gregg Hunter
Gayle Lammers
Christopher Pope
Daniel Zolnikov

HOUSE MEMBERS

Bob Carter
Becky Edwards
Gary Parry
Kerri Seekins-Crowe
Katie Zolnikov

COMMITTEE STAFF

Griffin Burns – Lead Staff
Jacelyn Sterling - Secretary
Jameson Walker – Legal Staff

MINUTES LOG

January 15, 2026
Capital Room and Zoom
Helena, Montana

Please note: This document is a Minutes Log and provides annotation of the time elapsed between the beginning of the meeting and the time at which the item was presented or discussed, a motion was made, or a vote was taken. The narrative presented here is provided only as a guide to the audio or video recording of the meeting. The official discussion, motion, or vote is available on the audio or video archive of this meeting. The Legislature does not prepare a transcript of the meeting activities. The time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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MEMBERS PRESENT:

Sen. Daniel Zolnikov, Presiding Officer (R)
Rep. Becky Edwards, Vice Presiding Officer (D)
Rep. Bob Carter (D)
Sen. Gregg Hunter (R)
Sen. Gayle Lammers (R)
Rep. Gary Parry (R)
Sen. Christopher Pope (D)
Rep. Kerri Seekins-Crowe (R)
Rep. Katie Zolnikov (R)

MEMBERS EXCUSED:

MEMBERS ABSENT:

STAFF PRESENT:

Griffin Burns, Lead Staff
Jacelyn Sterling, Secretary
Jameson Walker, Legal Staff

AGENDA ([Attachment 1](#))

VISITORS' LIST ([Attachment 2](#))

CALL TO ORDER/ROLL CALL

09:05:53 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. The committee secretary took roll.

WHO OWNS THE HEAT AND GEOTHERMAL

09:08:22 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

09:09:38 Gabriel Eckstein, Texas A&M University School of Law (ATM)

[EXHIBIT 1](#)

Public Comment

09:33:15 Bran Van Wert, President, Montana Renewable Energy Association (MREA)

Committee Questions / Discussion

09:34:38 Rep. Gary Parry

09:35:07 Gabriel Eckstein, ATM

09:36:53 Sen. Christopher Pope

09:39:39 Gabriel Eckstein, ATM

09:41:49 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

09:41:55 Vice Presiding Officer Becky Edwards

09:44:04 Bran Van Wert, MREA

09:44:30 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

09:44:34 Bran Van Wert, MREA

09:44:53 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

09:45:18 Sen. Gayle Lammers

09:45:44 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

09:46:17 Sen. Gayle Lammers

09:47:42 Sen. Christopher Pope

09:50:14 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

09:50:19 Griffin Burns, LSD

09:51:03 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

09:51:13 Sen. Christopher Pope

09:51:54 Vice Presiding Officer Becky Edwards

[EXHIBIT 2](#)

09:52:15 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

Motion

09:52:26 Rep. Gary Parry moved the committees support of Rep. Becky Edwards in her organization of interagency working groups.

Vote

09:52:55 Carried by unanimous consent.

Committee Questions / Discussion - Continued

09:53:14 Rep. Bob Carter
09:53:53 Gabriel Eckstein, ATM
09:55:55 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
09:56:11 Vice Presiding Officer Becky Edwards
09:56:17 Rep. Gary Parry

NORTHWESTERN ENERGY (NWE) 2026 MONTANA INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN DRAFT

09:57:04 Jonathan Shafer, Manager, Energy Supply Planning, NWE
[EXHIBIT 3](#)

Public Comment

10:16:52 Nick Fitzmaurice, Energy Engineer, Montana Environmental Information Center
10:22:06 Makenna Sellers, Executive Director, Montana Renewable Energy Association
10:23:31 Bob Morris, Lance Energy Chair Montana Tech & Member, Governors Energy Task Force Generation Group & Member, Northwestern Energy Stakeholders Group

Committee Questions / Discussion

10:25:05 Rep. Bob Carter
10:25:22 Bob Morris, Montana Tech & Governors Energy Task Force Generation Group & Northwestern Energy Stakeholders Group
10:25:46 Rep. Bob Carter
10:26:38 Jonathan Shafer, NWE
10:27:06 Vice Presiding Officer Becky Edwards
10:27:25 Jonathan Shafer, NWE
10:27:57 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
10:29:04 Sen. Christopher Pope
10:36:01 Jonathan Shafer, NWE
10:37:00 Sen. Christopher Pope
10:37:11 Rep. Gary Parry
10:38:02 Rep. Bob Carter
10:39:55 Jonathan Shafer, NWE
10:40:20 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
10:42:10 Jonathan Shafer, NWE
10:42:57 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

MONTANA NATURAL GAS TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE - NORTHWESTERN ENERGY (NWE)

10:44:04 Mike Cashell, Vice President, NWE

[EXHIBIT 4](#)

Public Comment

11:06:06 Brad Doney, Great Falls Development Alliance

MONTANA NATURAL GAS TRANSMISSION INFRASTRUCTURE – WBI ENERGY

11:11:02 Mark Anderson, WBI

[EXHIBIT 5](#)

Public Comment

11:24:04 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:24:07 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION RESTRUCTURING

11:24:35 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

11:25:35 Peter Wirth, Senator, New Mexico (NM)

11:29:02 Steve Neville Former Senator, New Mexico (NM)

11:34:31 Sen. Peter Wirth, NM

11:36:41 Steve Neville, NM

11:36:57 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

Public Comment

11:37:37 Brad Molnar, Commissioner, Public Service Commission

[EXHIBIT 6](#)

[EXHIBIT 7](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

11:44:25 Sen. Gayle Lammers

11:44:51 Steve Neville, NM

11:45:29 Sen. Peter Wirth, NM

11:45:49 Rep. Bob Carter

11:46:14 Sen. Peter Wirth, NM

11:48:27 Steve Neville, NM

11:50:11 Rep. Bob Carter

11:50:23 Sen. Peter Wirth, NM

11:51:10 Rep. Gary Parry

11:51:25 Steve Neville, NM

11:51:59 Sen. Peter Wirth, NM

FACTORS INFLUENCING RECENT TRENDS IN RETAIL ELECTRICITY PRICES IN THE U.S.

11:53:32 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

11:54:36 Ryan Wiser, The Brattle Group

[EXHIBIT 8](#)

Public Comment

12:19:38 Ron Catlett, Flathead Electric Cooperative

12:22:19 Nick Fitzmaurice, Energy Engineer, Montana Environmental Information Center

Committee Questions / Discussion

12:26:46 Sen. Christopher Pope

12:28:45 Ryan Wiser, The Brattle Group

12:30:45 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

12:32:25 Ryan Wiser, The Brattle

12:34:00 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

12:34:38 **Recessed**

13:35:19 **Reconvened**

ENERGY TASK FORCE & PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION UPDATE

13:35:44 Sonja Nowakowski, Director, Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ)

Public Comment

13:42:05 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:42:23 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

13:43:10 Dir. Sonja Nowakowski, DEQ

RULE REVIEW

13:43:43 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

[EXHIBIT 9](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

13:45:51 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

13:45:59 Jameson Walker, LSD

Public Comment

13:47:10 None

ENERGY TASK FORCE & PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION UPDATE

13:47:32 Alana Lake, Executive Director, Public Service Commission (PSC)

13:47:57 David Smith, Legal Staff, PSC

[EXHIBIT 10](#)

13:51:56 Will Rosquist, Regulatory Division Administrator, PSC

[EXHIBIT 11](#)

14:01:29 Alana Lake, PSC

Public Comment

14:03:20 None

Committee Questions / Discussion

14:03:29 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

14:12:11 Will Rosquist, PSC

14:12:46 Rep. Bob Carter

14:14:55 Will Rosquist, PSC

14:15:04 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

14:15:22 Will Rosquist, PSC

14:15:49 Rep. Gary Parry

14:16:17 Will Rosquist, PSC

14:16:45 Sen. Christopher Pope

14:20:38 Alana Lake, PSC

14:21:33 Sen. Christopher Pope

14:22:10 Will Rosquist, PSC

Public Comment

14:24:08 None

HOUSE BILL (HB) 368 (2025 Session)- COLSTRIP WATER

14:24:46 Shannon Brown, Managing Director, Talen Energy

[EXHIBIT 12](#)

Public Comment

14:27:42 Jesse Luther, Talen Energy

14:32:13 Jerry Grebenc, Montana League of Cities and Towns

Committee Questions / Discussion

14:33:51 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

14:35:24 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)

14:36:12 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, LSD

14:36:28 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

14:38:15 Griffin Burns, LSD
14:38:44 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
14:39:46 Rep. Gary Parry
14:40:16 Griffin Burns, LSD
[EXHIBIT 13](#)
14:41:24 Rep. Gary Parry
14:42:12 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

Public Comment

14:43:22 Dave Herbst, American Power Play
[EXHIBIT 14](#)

Committee Questions / Discussion

14:45:10 Rep. Gary Parry
14:45:20 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
14:45:50 Griffin Burns, LSD
14:46:11 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

Motion

14:47:08 Rep. Gary Parry moved to authorize staff to begin formalizing and drafting the Montana Interstate Compact drafts that the committee viewed during their last meeting.

Vote

14:47:16 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

Public Comment

14:47:28 None

TRANSMISSION AUTHORITIES IN THE WEST

14:48:55 Maury Galbraith, Executive Director, Colorado Electric Transmission Authority (CETA)
[EXHIBIT 15](#)
15:04:10 Lynn Mostoller, Executive Director, New Mexico, Renewable Energy Transmission Authority (RETA)
[EXHIBIT 16](#)

Public Comment

15:17:50 Brad Molnar, Commissioner, Public Service Commission

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:25:46 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

15:25:57 Lynn Mostoller, RETA
15:28:42 Sen. Christopher Pope
15:29:43 Maury Galbraith, CETA
15:30:43 Lynn Mostoller, RETA
15:32:07 Sen. Christopher Pope
15:36:16 Lynn Mostoller, RETA
15:36:38 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov

BILL DRAFT WORKSHOP & GENERAL WORK SESSION

15:37:01 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
15:37:07 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
15:37:38 Rep. Bob Carter
15:39:26 Sen. Gayle Lammers
15:44:20 Rep. Bob Carter
[EXHIBIT 17](#)

Public Comment

15:46:11 Todd O Hair, CEO, Chamber of Commerce
15:49:55 Derick Goldman, NorthWest Energy Coalition
15:51:46 Brad Molnar, Commissioner, Public Service Commission (PSC)
15:55:48 Bob Morris, Lance Energy Chair, Governors Energy Task Force

Committee Questions / Discussion

15:57:38 Rep. Bob Carter
15:59:21 Sen. Gayle Lammers
16:00:09 Rep. Gary Parry

Motion

16:00:21 Rep. Gary Parry moved to that the committee move forward with proposed bill draft language.

Vote

16:01:10 Carried unanimously by voice vote.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION RESTRUCTURING

16:00:39 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
16:01:34 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
16:01:50 Jameson Walker, Legal Staff, Legislative Services Division

Public Comment

16:02:05 Matt Elsasser, Upper Missouri Water Keepers
16:03:03 Amy Grmoljez, Crowley Fleck Law Firm

16:07:00 Joe Kolman, Montana Electric Cooperatives Association
16:08:18 Alan Olsen, Government Affairs Director, NorthWestern Energy

Committee Questions / Discussion

16:10:35 Rep. Gary Parry
16:10:40 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
16:11:02 Rep. Bob Carter
16:11:25 Griffin Burns, Lead Staff, Legislative Services Division (LSD)
16:12:38 Rep. Gary Parry
16:13:04 Presiding Officer Daniel Zolnikov
16:14:09 Rep. Gary Parry

ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 16:16:24