



A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION CAPACITY ON PATHS 8, 18, 80, AND 83 TO ANALYZE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MONTANA'S CITIZENS AND INDUSTRY DUE TO THE OBSERVED CONGESTION AND CURTAILMENTS OF TRANSMISSION PATHWAYS; AND REQUIRING THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

WHEREAS, Montana has the best resources for renewable energy in the West, and the demand for Montana's renewable energy generation is increasing; and

WHEREAS, lack of access to lower-cost power in Montana has already resulted in the loss of large industrial employers in the state and inhibits the ability to attract new businesses to Montana; and

WHEREAS, large industrial users of electricity wish for more options in requests for proposals to address electricity needs; and

WHEREAS, Montana's neighboring states have more robust transmission infrastructure and available capacity than Montana, and the state's energy infrastructure may become inadequate to serve demand; and

WHEREAS, a secure, reliable, and resilient power grid that integrates generation resources serves as a foundation for an affordable and reliable power supply, a growing economy, and national security; and

WHEREAS, regulators, policymakers, citizens, and industry expect generating resources and the grid to perform reliably.

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 or statutory committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

- (1) investigate issues relating to the available transmission capacity on transmission paths 8, 18,

80, and 83;

(2) analyze the economic impact to Montana's citizens and industry due to the observed congestion and curtailments on Montana transmission paths;

(3) identify and measure the resources in interconnection queues of Montana's transmission service providers;

(4) sample the depth of market and power supply pricing for Montana's large loads; and

(5) suggest specific transmission capacity upgrades, and associated cost-benefit analysis, required to maintain a reliable, affordable electric supply for Montana's citizens and industry.

BE 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 FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

BE FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions, comments, or recommendations of the appropriate committee, be reported to the 70th Legislature.

- END -

I hereby certify that the within bill,
SJ 12, originated in the Senate.

Secretary of the Senate

President of the Senate

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

Speaker of the House

Signed this _____ day
of _____, 2025.

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 12

INTRODUCED BY G. HUNTER, M. YAKAWICH

A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION CAPACITY ON PATHS 8, 18, 80, AND 83 TO ANALYZE THE ECONOMIC IMPACT ON MONTANA'S CITIZENS AND INDUSTRY DUE TO THE OBSERVED CONGESTION AND CURTAILMENTS OF TRANSMISSION PATHWAYS; AND REQUIRING THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.

Study: SJ 12 Interim Study on Energy Transmission

Interim Study Poll Rank: 4

Staff Recommendation: Assign to Energy and Technology Interim Committee

Workload projection: Low- Moderate

Estimated LSD staff time: 288-720 hours

Preliminary Analysis

Summary of study directives:

Montana's lack of access to low-cost power compared to neighboring states inhibits the ability to attract new businesses, and limits economic growth and development. This is due to limited transmission capacity. Montana's transmission pathways are congested, and electric utilities and cooperatives are struggling to meet customer demand.

Preliminary study approach:

OPTION A .25 FTE (MODERATE)	OPTION B .10 FTE (LOW)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of option B• Field trip to Colstrip, Montana to visit the proposed connection site of the North Plains Connector, a transmission line project which will connect the eastern and western grid (<i>currently entering the permitting phase</i>).• Legal or data modeling/analysis of identified areas.• Additional panel(s) or stakeholder roundtable discussion of potential/proposed legislation.• Additional staff paper(s)/presentation as requested by the committee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Panel discussion/roundtable with stakeholders listed below to identify issues and recommend solutions to observed transmission pathway congestion and lack of transmission infrastructure.• Staff background paper/presentation on Montana transmission pathways, regulatory framework, and the factors that attribute to pathway congestion and the current lack of transmission infrastructure.• Final report on committee activities, findings, and requested legislation.

Option C: The committee may determine not to allocate any time to this study.

Recent study or research products on this topic? ___ Yes X No

If yes, explain: A reoccurring topic with the Energy and Technology Interim Committee, but no recent LSD-generated research products on energy transmission. DEQ's Understanding Energy, 2023, provides background and data on Montana's transmission pathways, and current transmission issues. SJ21 Interim Study on Energy Transmission, 2025 may produce similar work, and discussion. The committee could pursue to combine SJ21 and 12 into one study.

Additional considerations

Data/visual analysis opportunities? X Yes ___ No

If yes, explain: DEQ's Energy Bureau provides mapping for Montana's electric transmission system and pathways.

Agency/stakeholder involvement:

Department of Environmental Quality, Public Service Commission, and Department of Commerce, as needed; Electric Utilities and Cooperatives; Transmission Service Providers; Load Serving Entities; Consumer Advocacy Groups; and Regional Transmission Organizations and Independent System Operators.

Potential additional costs (field trips, out-of-town meetings): X Yes ___ No

If yes, explain: The committee could pursue a field trip to Colstrip, Montana to visit the location of the proposed connection site of the North Plains Connector, a transmission line project.

Interim FTE Equivalents

1 Interim FTE = 16.5 months = 2880 hrs.

.05 FTE	144 Hours	18 days	LOW
.10 FTE	288 Hours	36 days	LOW
.25 FTE	720 Hours	90 days	MODERATE
.50 FTE	1440 hours	180 days	MODERATE
.75 FTE	2160 hours	270 days	HIGH
1 FTE	2880 hours	360 days	HIGH