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Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee

60th Montana Legislature

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ETIC to discuss carbon sequestration, telecommunications, 9-1-1 programs

HELENA -- During an upcoming two-day meeting, the Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee is expected to close in on recommendations or potential legislation concerning carbon sequestration and will hear an overview on the state of Montana's telecommunication systems.

The committee meets May 1-2 in Room 172 of the State Capitol in Helena. The meeting starts at 8 a.m. on Thursday and at 9 a.m. on Friday. A complete agenda can be found at: www.leg.mt.gov/etic.

The committee last met January 24 and requested more information on how other states are handling legislation and regulations for geological carbon sequestration. The recently enacted federal energy law appears to give the Environmental Protection Agency authority to preempt state rules governing the injection of carbon sequestration but leaves the question of long-term oversight of carbon storage open.

A telecommunications panel planned for Thursday afternoon will include representatives of the Montana Telecommunications Association and Montana Independent Telecommunications Systems. Representatives of Qwest, Vision Net, Cellular One, Verizon, and Bresnan also have been invited. ETIC members also will hear from Becky Berger, Montana's 9-1-1 Program Manager. The 9-1-1 Advisory Council provides representatives of 9-1-1 jurisdictions with the opportunity to participate in the management of the state's 9-1-1 program, specified in 10-4-102(2), MCA. The council wraps up its work this month.

Presentations on clean coal technologies, Pick-Sloan project power, hydrogen development and demand-side management are on the ETIC's agenda. The committee also will continue its public power discussion and wrap up work on draft Universal System Benefits (USB) program legislation.

The Public Service Commission and Department of Commerce Energy Infrastructure Promotion and Development Division will provide updates, and the ETIC will hear an update on a wind integration study recently completed in NorthWestern Energy's service area.