

July 2010

To: MECA Board of Directors

From: Montana Rural Electric Cooperative Members across the state

Re: Our Energy Future

As members of a Montana Rural Electric Cooperative, we would like to share our concern for our energy future. We support a sustainable energy policy that saves energy and money, promotes local solutions, creates economic opportunities in rural Montana, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions. We believe that MECA and our state's electric cooperatives should take a more active role in moving toward a clean energy future.

Specifically, we ask MECA and its member cooperatives to adopt policies that further investments in conservation and renewable energy and to support federal comprehensive energy and climate legislation.

Conservation investments are the best strategy to reduce our electrical costs, create good paying jobs in energy efficiency, and position our utilities to meet a low carbon future. Utilities everywhere recognize that efficiency is the most available and cheapest resource, far easier to acquire than developing expensive new generation. Montana electrical cooperatives are not taking advantage of this resource to the extent we could be, and this is to the detriment of cooperative members.

Similarly, Montana electrical cooperatives have yet to pursue renewable energy to the extent possible and appropriate. Renewable energy promotes local self-reliance, benefits local economies, and has no direct fuel costs, so it is not subject to the energy price volatility that has been so harmful to Montana consumers. Renewable energy is an ideal generation resource for Montana's electrical cooperatives and their members.

Federal legislation designed to achieve a clean and sustainable energy economy is needed. As you know, utilities are unable to plan for the future, energy costs are volatile and are continuing to rise, and our energy system is unsustainable. We urge you to support comprehensive clean energy legislation. Legislation that seeks to change the way our nation produces and consumes energy will enable Montana to take advantage of our energy efficiency and renewable resources and hard-working citizens, transforming our economy for the better.

As cooperative members, we have been disappointed in the role MECA and many cooperatives have taken with regards to climate legislation that places a cap on carbon. Tourism, agriculture, hunting, fishing, recreation and myriad natural resource based businesses and interests only stand to lose if we do not develop real solutions to climate change, and we believe that MECA needs to consider the cost of inaction to our state. We urge you to evaluate the effect of comprehensive clean energy legislation compared to the cost of inaction, to consider the ramifications of unmitigated climate change Montana, and take a stand in support of legislation that promotes certainty and puts a strong cap on carbon.

We remain optimistic for an improved and thoughtful way forward in working with MECA and our member coops to ensure a sound and responsible energy future for rural Montana.

Sincerely,

Name, location, name of coop