

**Support HB 641: Energy Efficiency Standard for
Utilities and Low-income Home Weatherization Bill**
Lower Utility Bills, Jobs and Energy Security for Montana

Montana is sitting on a goldmine fuel source that has gone largely untapped – energy efficiency. Tapping into energy-efficient technologies could save the state between 25 and 30 percent on energy spending through 2030. Simple, practical energy saving upgrades to buildings and homes such as weatherization and replacing outdated lights and appliances with more efficient models can help get us there. Montana’s power companies play an important role in bringing these energy-saving solutions to their customers, and in the process create good local jobs to get the work done. Energy efficiency can be mined or developed like any other resource and is the fastest, cheapest path to meeting Montana’s growing energy needs. Typically, it costs half as much to save a kilowatt as it costs to produce one, so literally - a kilowatt saved is a kilowatt earned.

A proposed bill before the Montana legislature - HB 641- would ensure that all major gas and electric power companies are tapping into Montana’s reservoir of energy savings, from making power plants more efficient to helping households. Establishing an energy efficiency standard (EES) for utilities would give Montanans more incentives and information on how to reduce energy use, such as home energy audits and rebates on the purchase of efficient lighting, windows, heating and cooling systems.

The Montana Governor’s Climate Change Advisory Committee estimates if an EES was implemented, the state would save \$141 million on energy from 2007-2020. Other benefits include:

- Lower energy bills for consumers
- New green jobs
- Increased economic growth
- Less reliance on imported energy
- Less need for expensive new power plants
- Increased power grid reliability

Specifically, this bill requires gas and electric utilities that serve more than 20,000 customers to:

- Assess how much energy could be saved across the entire service area by 2020
- Set biennial goals for reducing energy use through 2020
- Implement all cost-effective energy efficiency measures from power plants to end customer to meet energy-reduction goals by 2020
- Pay into a low-income home weatherization program fund if goals are not met

Montanans pay more for electricity than any other state in the region. It is time to put energy efficiency technology to work to help Montanans reduce energy use and lower monthly energy bills. Investing in energy efficiency for Montana’s households, businesses and industries is a down payment on energy independence for Montana and can put people to work now using the skills they already have.

For more information, download the full text of the bill at:
<http://data.opi.mt.gov/bills/2009/billhtml/HB0641.htm>

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