

At the meeting of the Public Service Commission of the State of Montana held at the Commission's Office in Helena, Montana, on Tuesday, April 15, 2025, at 11:00 a.m., a quorum was met with the following members present:

Brad Molnar, President  
Jennifer Fielder, Vice President  
Randy Pinocci, Commissioner  
Annie Bukacek, Commissioner  
Jeffrey Welborn, Commissioner

PUBLIC COMMENT

Kyle Unruh, Renewable Northwest  
Shannon Heim, Northwestern Energy

Mr. Unruh commented on wind generation. Ms. Heim commented on Docket 2024.05.053, NorthWestern Energy's Rate Review Hearing.

ANNOUNCEMENT

President Brad Molnar, District 2

The Commission has appointed Executive Director Alana Lake as the Commission's Safety and Security Chair. Ms. Lake will lead the safety and security committees.

Work session number four 2025.04.027 – NorthWestern Energy – Natural Gas Universal System Benefits ("USB") Charge Rate Adjustment has been deferred.

APPEARANCE

Patricia Trooien, Commission Secretary

(57) In the matter of the approval of the Commissioner Minutes for the week of April 07, 2025.

Vice President Fielder moved to APPROVE the Commission Minutes for the week of April 07, 2025. Commissioner Welborn seconded the motion, which passed unanimously 5-0.

APPEARANCE

Grant Fink, Regulatory Division

(58) 2024.04.045 – Flathead Utility Company – Application to Increase Rates – To consider a decision on Flathead Utility Company's Application.

Vice President Fielder moved the Commission to DENY FLT's request to increase rates for its three water systems and issue the proposed final order, with any necessary clerical edits permitted by our staff. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bukacek, which passed unanimously 5-0.

APPEARANCE

Mike Dalton, Regulatory Division  
Amanda Webster, Legal Division

(59) 2024.10.108 – Montana-Dakota Utilities – Request for Approval to Update Power Purchase Time Differentiated Rate 93 – To consider raising an additional issue.

Commissioner Pinocci moved the Commission to APPROVE the draft Notice of Additional Issue and Schedule and directed staff to issue the draft Notice with any appropriate clerical edits. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Welborn, which passed unanimously 5-0.

APPEARANCE

Amanda Webster, Legal Division

(60) 2025.02.017 – Commission Initiated – Amendment of ARM 38.3.405 and 38.3.406 pertaining to the completion of protests to applications for motor carrier authority – To consider adoption of the proposed protest verification rulemaking.

Commissioner Welborn moved the Commission to APPROVE the draft Notice of Adoption and direct staff to file the Notice, with any appropriate clerical edits, with the Secretary of State's office for publication in the Montana Administrative Register. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pinocci, which passed unanimously 5-0.

APPEARANCE

None

(61) 2025.04.027 – NorthWestern Energy – Natural Gas Universal System Benefits ("USB") Charge Rate Adjustment – To consider approving an interim adjustment to NorthWestern's USB charge.

This work session was deferred.

APPEARANCE

Amanda Webster, Legal Division

(62) 2025.04.029 – Commission Initiated – Organizational Rule Update – To consider amendment of ARM 38.1.101.

Commissioner Welborn moved the Commission to APPROVE the redlined copy of Montana Administrative Rule 38.1.101 and direct staff to file the redlined rule with the Secretary of State's office for publication in the Montana Administrative Rules. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Bukacek, which passed unanimously 5-0.

APPEARANCE

Alana Lake, Centralized Service Division

(63) Legislative – Commission Initiated – To discuss bills relevant to the PSC mission, statutory authority, administrative process, and general agency concerns. Discuss PSC budget request and presentation; consider staff analysis and recommendations; provide direction on PSC response to bills.

HB 45 – Generally, revise telecommunications regulation laws - Passed the Senate and awaits

House approval of Senate amendments. This is the Commission's final legislative agenda item awaiting passage.

HB 490 – Revise Civil Liability Laws - Passed out of the Senate and awaits House approval of Senate Amendments. The bill was amended to include the Montana DNRC and Department of Emergency Services in the commission's approval process for wildfire mitigation plans.

HB 911 – Revise the meaning of the term "public utility" - The bill amends the definition of public utility to allow utilities to operate unregulated subsidiaries for the purpose of providing power to large customers - is scheduled for hearing in Senate Energy at 3:00 p.m., April 15, Room 405

SB 301 – Generally, revise utility lines and facilities laws

Provides for a certificate of public necessity for transmission projects and a preapproval process for transmission ratemaking – Passed second reading in the House on April 14, 2025.

SB 561 - Revise public service commission membership - Passed the Senate on a 34-14 vote on April 5. The bill was heard on Wednesday, April 9 at 8 a.m. in House State Administration Room 455. Executive Action is likely today, 4/15/2025, in the House State Administration Committee.

HB 2 – General Appropriations Act – Passed out of Senate Finance and Claims and awaits its Senate floor hearing.

SB 22 – Revise class D motor carrier deadline laws - Signed by the governor, and a chapter number is assigned.

SB 23 – Increase thresholds for railroad accident reporting requirements - Transmitted to Governor and awaits signature.

SB 51 – Revise telecommunications provider registration laws – Signed by the governor, and a chapter number is assigned.


(64) Commissioner Bukacek moved the Commission rediscuss scheduling for next week. Motion failed for a lack of a second.

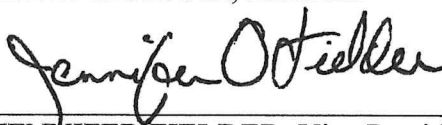
#### ANNOUNCEMENT

President Brad Molnar, District 2

The next Commission Business Meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 22, 2025, at 1:30 p.m.

There being no further business to come before the Commission, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.

  
BRAD MOLNAR, President

  
JENNIFER FIELDER, Vice President

  
RANDALL PINOCCI, Commissioner

  
ANNIE BUKACEK, Commissioner

  
JEFF WELBORN, Commissioner

ATTEST:

  
Patricia Trooien, Commission Secretary

