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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SERVICE REGULATION  
BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION  
OF THE STATE OF MONTANA

In Re NorthWestern Energy's Large  
New Load Tariff Rule

Docket No. 2026.04.023

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**PETITION FOR GENERAL INTERVENTION**

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Pursuant to Administrative Rules of Montana 38.2.2407, Big Sky 55+, Butte Watchdogs for Social and Environmental Justice, Climate Smart Missoula, Helena Interfaith Climate Advocates, Honor the Earth, Montana Environmental Information Center, Montana Public Interest Research Group, and NW Energy Coalition (collectively "Petitioners" or "Ratepayer Advocates") hereby petition for general intervention in this proceeding. As described below, general intervention should be granted because Ratepayer Advocates have direct and substantial interests in this proceeding and will not unduly broaden the issues beyond those

raised by NorthWestern Corporation d/b/a NorthWestern Energy's ("NorthWestern") application and applicable state law.

## **I. PETITIONERS**

Petitioner Big Sky 55+ is comprised of Montanans who are fifty-five years of age or older who are passionate about advancing solutions that make life better for Montanans of all ages. Big Sky 55+ organizes more than 3,000 members throughout Montana to advocate for the interests of older Montanans, but in a manner that does not sacrifice the interests of younger Montanans and the natural environment that supports us all. Many of its members are current retail customers of NorthWestern. Big Sky 55+ and its members lobby the Legislature and State agencies, like the Montana Public Service Commission, to advocate for the betterment of all Montanans and to ensure a better world for future generations, both economically and environmentally. Big Sky 55+ and its members are concerned about the potential harms associated with the unregulated development of data centers in Montana. Many of Big Sky 55+'s members are on fixed incomes and are harmed by increases in cost-of-living expenses, such as rising utility bills. The organization's mailing address is P.O. Box. 1462 Helena, MT 59624. Big Sky 55+ can be reached by telephone at (307) 679-0774. Big Sky 55+ can be contacted by electronic mail at [info@bigsky55.org](mailto:info@bigsky55.org).

Petitioner Butte Watchdogs for Social and Environmental Justice is a small non-profit organization dedicated to advancing the cause of social and environmental justice for the people of Butte-Silver Bow, Montana, and the state of Montana. Butte Watchdogs was created to hold polluters accountable for the Butte

area Superfund cleanup. Butte Watchdogs believes in social and environmental justice that is rooted in transparency, accountability, and morality. The organization demands quality, timely, and science-based solutions. Butte Watchdogs has approximately 500 supporters. The organization began engaging on data center issues in April 2025, when Sabey Data Center Properties LLC sought to purchase 606 acres from the Butte-Silver Bow County Commission. Since then, its supporters have become increasingly concerned about the lack of transparency and opportunities for public participation in governmental review of data center agreements. Butte Watchdogs' supporters want to make sure that there are protective terms to insulate residential ratepayers from the unpredictable costs associated with data centers coming onto the grid in Montana. The organization's mailing address is 3310 Hannibal Street Butte, MT 59701. Butte Watchdogs can be reached by telephone at (406) 360-0345. Butte Watchdogs can be contacted by electronic mail at [admin@buttewatchdogs.org](mailto:admin@buttewatchdogs.org).

Climate Smart Missoula is a community-based nonprofit organization with a mission to build and accelerate climate solutions for Missoula, Montana and beyond through collaborative programs, advocacy, and catalyzing climate leadership. The organization works with local government and other partners to develop policies and implement programs to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and reach the community's goal of 100% clean electricity by 2030 for the Missoula urban area, which was jointly adopted by the City of Missoula and Missoula County in 2019. The organization has four staff members, eight members of its board of directors,

and more than 300 annual supporters. Climate Smart Missoula works to reduce fossil fuel use in the state, while also strengthening climate resiliency and adaptation, with a focus on human and environmental health. The organization's advocacy to transition to 100% clean electricity hinges on affordable electricity rates, which are at risk of further rising if data centers come onto the grid in Montana. The Commission's decision-making around utility energy resource planning directly impacts Climate Smart Missoula's ability to meet this goal. Climate Smart Missoula is also interested in electrification issues from a public health perspective. The organization's mailing address is P.O. Box 8945 Missoula, MT 59807. Climate Smart Missoula can be reached by telephone at (406) 926-2847. Climate Smart Missoula can be contacted by electronic mail at [info@climatesmartmissoula.org](mailto:info@climatesmartmissoula.org).

Petitioner Helena Interfaith Climate Advocates ("HICA") is comprised of ten board members, and approximately fifty supporters, who are members of twelve Helena congregations committed to acting against threats to our environment. HICA's actions derive from concerns as people of faith for the well-being of all Montanans currently and those of future generations. Its members are customers of NorthWestern. The organization was founded in 2022 around Earth Day in an effort to build community among members of different faiths who all have an interest in taking care of the planet. HICA has organized climate circles to build community in discussing issues relating to climate change and clean energy. HICA has also engaged in advocacy before the State Legislature and the Commission to advance

issues related to energy affordability and decreasing our reliance on fossil fuels in a reasonable, and deliberate manner. The organization and its members are concerned about data centers impacting affordability and deepening our state's reliance on Colstrip. HICA's members are also concerned that data centers will raise costs for everyone because they will increase demand on the grid. Its members are particularly concerned about low-income ratepayers and believe that access to affordable electricity is a basic need that needs to be protected. The organization's mailing address is 32 Hill Brothers Road Clancy, MT 59634. HICA can be reached by telephone at (406) 459-8561. HICA can be contacted by electronic mail at [hica.helena@gmail.com](mailto:hica.helena@gmail.com).

Petitioner Honor the Earth is an Indigenous-led organization fighting to dismantle settler-colonialism, racial capitalism, white supremacy, and imperialism. The organization is creating a world where Indigenous sovereignty is recognized, respected, and upheld. It is working to create a future where communities thrive with honor, abundance, and in right relationship with Mother Earth. It does this by investing in its communities through campaigns, research, training, reclaiming narratives, and providing capacity support in service of all land and life. The organization has eighteen employees and four members on its board of directors. Honor the Earth is based in Lame Deer, Montana, within NorthWestern's service territory. The organization is concerned about the material and physical impacts of artificial intelligence on Indigenous lands and rural communities, including the disproportionate effects on Indigenous, Black, and Brown communities across the

country. Honor the Earth is concerned by the speed and scale that NorthWestern is proposing to bring data centers onto the grid in Montana. The organization is concerned that NorthWestern and data center developers are racing to build these large load data centers without tribal or local community consent, at the cost of water, health, land, and energy bills. The organization's mailing address is P.O. Box 1531 Lame Deer, MT 59043. Honor the Earth can be reached by telephone at (406) 740-1508. Honor the Earth can be contacted by electronic mail at [info@honorearth.org](mailto:info@honorearth.org).

Petitioner Montana Environmental Information Center ("MEIC") is a non-profit environmental advocacy organization founded in 1973 by Montanans concerned with protecting and restoring Montana's natural environment. MEIC has members who are NorthWestern customers, and its office in Helena is within NorthWestern's service territory. MEIC and its approximately 10,000 members and supporters play an active role in promoting Montana clean energy projects and policies, including advocating for the expansion of responsible, renewable energy and energy efficiency; and supporting policies that insulate energy consumers from fuel price risk. At the state level, MEIC leads the effort to pass policies that help expand clean, affordable, reliable, and efficient energy solutions for Montana. MEIC has been engaged in advocacy before the Commission for decades through rate cases, integrated resource plans, rulemaking, cost-recovery dockets, and other petitions. MEIC and its members are concerned that data centers will result in more water and air pollution, force existing customers to subsidize the costs

associated with bringing data centers onto the grid making their utility bills unaffordable, and jeopardize the reliability of the system for all ratepayers. The organization's office is located at 424 Fuller Avenue #C-8 Helena, MT 59601. The organization's mailing address is P.O. Box 1184 Helena, MT 59624. MEIC can be reached by telephone at (406) 443-2520. The organization can be contacted by electronic mail at [meic@meic.org](mailto:meic@meic.org).

Petitioner Montana Public Interest Research Group ("MontPIRG") is a student-led nonpartisan organization dedicated to nurturing the next generation of civic leaders, advocating for community issues, and defending the environment. For nearly forty-five years, MontPIRG has represented the entire student population at the University of Montana and Montana State University. Additionally, the organization has a Board of Directors composed of twelve university students, and it enrolls approximately twenty-five students for internships each semester. Almost all of MontPIRG's members are NorthWestern customers. MontPIRG's members are concerned about the environmental degradation and rising electricity costs associated with data centers. As students, MontPIRG's members are particularly worried that the enormous demand from data centers will increase the burden on residential customers to cover the expenses incurred by data centers in the state. The organization's mailing address is 1820 West Lincoln Street Suite 3 Bozeman, MT 59715. MontPIRG can be reached by telephone at (406) 243-2908. The organization can be contacted by electronic mail at [info@mtpirg.org](mailto:info@mtpirg.org).

Petitioner NW Energy Coalition (“NWECC”) is a non-profit organization whose primary purpose is to promote an energy future that is clean, reliable, affordable, and equitable. NWECC has approximately 100 member organizations—including environmental, civic, and human service organizations, unions, utilities, and businesses—as well as individual members throughout Montana, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and British Columbia. NWECC has eleven Montana-based organizational members, among them organizations that promote clean energy, advance sustainable solutions to reduce poverty, and help Montanans obtain low-income energy assistance. NWECC has members and staff who are NorthWestern customers. One of NWECC’s chief strategic priorities is to grow programs that make energy services affordable and equitable for all customers through advocacy in utility and regulatory proceedings. NWECC’s members are concerned that the costs associated with data centers will be shifted to NorthWestern’s existing ratepayers. The organization’s mailing address is 811 First Avenue Suite 305 Seattle, WA 98104. NWECC can be reached by telephone at (406) 461-6632. NWECC can be contacted by electronic mail at [nwec@nwenergy.org](mailto:nwec@nwenergy.org).

## **II. PETITIONERS’ INTERESTS, POSITION, AND RELIEF SOUGHT**

Petitioners Big Sky 55+, Butte Watchdogs for Social and Environmental Justice, Climate Smart Missoula, Helena Interfaith Climate Advocates, Honor the Earth, Montana Environmental Information Center, Montana Public Interest Research Group, and NW Energy Coalition seek intervention in this proceeding to advance the “substantial interest[s]” of their organizations and members. Mont. Admin. R. 38.2.2407(7). Additionally, the participation of Petitioners in this

proceeding “will be in the public interest.” *Id.* Petitioners have members and supporters who are residential electric customers in NorthWestern Energy’s service territory whose rates will be affected by the outcome of this proceeding. To protect those interests, Petitioners have participated in Commission proceedings—including filing a Complaint and Petition for Declaratory Ruling—to advocate for just and reasonable electric rates for existing ratepayers and clarity with respect to NorthWestern’s provision of electricity supply service to large load data centers. *See* Dkt. No. 2025.11.084, Index #1, 33; Dkt. No. 2022.09.087, Index #24, 35. Like their ongoing advocacy, in the present proceeding, Petitioners will represent their members’ and supporters’ interests by advocating for NorthWestern to charge its residential ratepayers just and reasonable rates. *See* Mont. Admin. R. 38.2.2407(3)(d).

Granting this petition for general intervention will not unduly broaden the issues in the proceeding. Petitioners intend to limit testimony and briefing to (1) the issues presented by NorthWestern Energy’s application and (2) the applicable statutory and regulatory framework. Mont. Admin. R. 38.2.2407(7) (noting that intervention should “not unduly broaden the issues in the proceeding”).

Within this broad framework, Petitioners will formulate their position on NorthWestern Energy’s proposed application for Large New Load Service Tariff Rule No. 24 (“LNL Rule”). *See* Mont. Admin. R. 38.2.2407(3)(e) (noting petitioners for general intervention must state “to the extent known, the position taken by the movant and any issues the movant intends to raise in the proceedings”). If

Petitioners' review demonstrates that NorthWestern's proposed terms and rates in this matter are unlawful, unjust, or unreasonable, Petitioners will request that the Commission deny NorthWestern's application in whole or in part.

### III. SERVICE

Petitioners request that parties provide service of all filings in this case on the following:

cpepino@earthjustice.org  
cnapoli@earthjustice.org  
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For the foregoing reasons, Big Sky 55+, Butte Watchdogs for Social and Environmental Justice, Climate Smart Missoula, Helena Interfaith Climate Advocates, Honor the Earth, Montana Environmental Information Center, Montana Public Interest Research Group, and NW Energy Coalition respectfully request that this petition for general intervention be granted.

Respectfully submitted on this 15th day of June, 2026.



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## CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I certify that on June 15, 2026, I caused a true and accurate copy of the foregoing document to be e-filed with the Montana Public Service Commission in Docket No. 2026.04.023 and served by email to the following:

Montana Public Service Commission


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