

Quote Sheet for Montana PSC Data Center Complaint

“Montana’s seniors, many on fixed incomes, should not be forced to subsidize artificial intelligence data centers,” said **Terry Minow, chair of Big Sky 55+**. “We ask the PSC to require large load data centers to pay their fair share of utility costs. Otherwise, Montanans will be left struggling with the burden of even higher utility costs while big, out-of-state businesses take home the profits.”

“The people of Butte have heard hollow promises from out-of-state corporations and monopoly utilities and elected officials that haven’t panned out far too many times,” said **Sister Mary Jo McDonald, chair of the Butte Watchdogs for Social and Environmental Justice**. “If people want transparency and law to drive good public policy, and to hold NorthWestern accountable, sometimes we have to take the bull by the horns to make sure people and the community are protected from rising utility bills. We know full well how past and future Copper Kings take the gold while Butte gets the shaft.”

“Our organization works at the intersection of climate and health, and it is increasingly difficult and expensive for low-and middle-income residents to stay healthy during wildfire smoke or extreme heat events. We all need affordable, reliable and clean electricity for portable air cleaner, air conditioners, and heating appliances,” said **Amy Cilimburg, executive director of Climate Smart Missoula**. “We’re very concerned that households will be forced to make decisions about their health based on electricity costs just so data centers can operate in Montana. We ask the commission to allow all ratepayers the opportunity to participate in decisions surrounding data centers so that we do not, ultimately, bear the burden of these energy hogs. Fairness and transparency cannot be too much to ask.”

“The law requires NorthWestern to shield its existing customers from rising energy costs associated with providing electricity to large load data centers,” said **Lars Phillips, senior attorney with Earthjustice’s Northern Rockies Office**. “Montanans have a right to know about the impacts of data center development, and must be allowed to participate in the utility’s decision to serve these large loads so that wealthy out-of-state companies come here on our terms.”

“Public participation in the process by which the commission will determine whether NorthWestern’s sale of electricity to data centers will allow consumers to be heard and prevent disagreements over the long term,” said **Jasmine Krotkov with Golden Triangle Resource Council**. “Having a seat at the table while the commission considers ratepayer protective tariff terms specific to data centers is a central piece of

this process. It is good business to determine the terms of a business arrangement clearly at the beginning, rather than later after a dispute has arisen.”

“We believe in an open and fair process to consider the implications of data center development in Montana,” said **Hank Hudson with Helena Interfaith Climate Advocates**. “We trust the PSC would agree.”

“Generative AI and hyperscale data centers benefit global tech billionaires at the tangible expense of local people and our environment. Montanans need not, and must not, support these overleveraged speculators or their false, predatory economic promises at the cost of our lands and waters, communities and economy, health and safety, sovereignty and security,” said **Krystal Two Bulls, executive director of Honor the Earth**. “Behind the smokescreen of convenience, AI technology pollutes while violating our privacy. Feeding traditional, cultural, and language Indigenous knowledge into the ‘cloud’ of data centers is the new era of graverobbing. Don’t be fooled, Montana.”

“For nearly a year, NorthWestern Energy has ignored its legal obligation to protect existing customers from subsidizing power for rich tech companies,” said **Shannon James, with the Montana Environmental Information Center**. “Communities across the country have suffered when large, noisy, data centers move into their neighborhoods, raising their power bills and taking their water. Montana has a chance to get ahead of the curve and protect existing utility customers from having to pay for expensive new fossil fuel power plants so NorthWestern Energy can cater to wealthy tech companies.”

“The future belongs to Montana youth,” said **Dean McGovern, executive director of Montana Public Interest Research Group (MontPIRG)**. “MontPIRG students feel strongly that without careful planning and oversight by our Public Service Commission, incoming data centers will wreak havoc on our environment, cost of living, and our quality of life. We demand that MontPIRG students be invited to participate in hearings, reviews, and evaluations of data center power usage and any proposed tariffs.”

“We have a long history of well-financed industries coming to Montana, exploiting our resources and our workers, and then leaving Montanans holding the bag,” said **Derek Goldman, Montana policy and regulatory associate with the NW Energy Coalition**. “The influx of data centers feels like another one of those boom and bust resource grabs, and our state regulators need to act now to ensure that Montana residents and energy customers are protected.”

