Wind Energy & Transmission: Accessing Montana's Potential

Transmission Access is Key to Montana's Economic Strength

- Montana wind resource ranks 3rd in the U.S. with 944,004 MW of potential wind power generating capacity.[1] However, without transmission, the enormous economic boon associated with developing this resource will not be realized.
- The Idaho National Laboratory estimates that failing to deliver potential low cost wind and hydro resources in the Northwest by increasing transmission capacity will lead to electric rate increases of 40-50% as load demand continues to grow.[2]

Economic Benefits of Transmission

- Fact: Six transmission line construction projects are currently being planned or are under construction in Montana, which would roughly add an additional 6,000 MW of transmission capability to the state and bring significant economic benefits.[3] 6,000 MW of transmission would generate $31.5 million annually in property taxes.[4] This will help individuals, families and communities that need support for anything from schools to local firehouses and public safety forces.
- **The Montana Department of Labor and Industry estimates that, in total, these transmission projects would have an economic impact of $1.3 billion on Montana's economy and create more than 11,600 jobs for construction alone.**[5]
- In Montana, the average salary for transmission line construction workers in 2009 was $65,300 compared to the average wage in all industries of $33,760.[6]
- The Idaho National Laboratory estimates that the Montana Alberta Intertie, Ltd (MATL) and the Grasslands Renewable Energy transmission lines, representing 3,300 MW of capacity, would have a combined lifecycle economic impact in the region of over $77 billion and increase regional employment by 125,000 jobs.[7]
- Fact: Transmission lines will bring significant benefit to the state from revenue generated by the Montana Wholesale Energy Tax (WET) and corporate income tax on companies owning the transmission lines.[8] In addition to statewide benefits, transmission lines will bring long-term tax revenue to Montana counties through the 3% property tax on lines transmitting wind energy and 12% property tax on lines transmitting non-renewable energy.
- Fact: The Wholesale Energy Tax of $0.00015 per kWh transmitted will generate nearly $600,000 annually for the State general fund per 1,000 MW of wind developed in Montana[9] in addition to revenue from corporate taxes on transmission companies.

REFERENCES

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Montana Energy Transmission Fact Sheet

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9) Assuming a 45% capacity factor for wind generators.

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