



Oppose NorthWestern Energy's Bid to Avoid Purchasing Renewable Electricity

SB 201 will create barriers to renewable energy in Montana

OPPOSE SB 201 (Representative Fitzpatrick)

- SB 201 would make it easier for NorthWestern Energy (NWE) to avoid purchasing renewable electricity from solar, storage, and wind energy developers. **It would particularly impact small renewable energy producers.**
- Currently, NWE must consider the avoided cost it would have to pay for future regulation of carbon dioxide. SB 201 tries to prohibit consideration of these costs, claiming that "Avoided cost rates may not include a bonus or adder to provide additional compensation for environmental externalities or other costs above avoided costs, except when a bonus or adder is necessary to compensate for a real and actual cost required by existing regulation or existing law."
- This would result in ignoring the important benefits of clean energy when considering future costs of electricity. **SB 201 would help continue NWE's reliance on fossil fuel generating resources** and could make it easier to make the case for new gas plants.
- This change would also move Montana further out of step with FERC (the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission), the federal agency that regulates interstate utility matters.

The Latest in a Long History of Corporate Overreach by NorthWestern Energy

- **SB 201 is meant to facilitate NWE's continued and future reliance on fossil-fuel generating plants** by striking climate and environmental considerations, as well as the likelihood of future penalties, from climate regulations from the resource planning and regulatory system meant to hold them in check.
- SB 201 would weaken the Public Service Commission's mandate to regulate for-profit monopoly utilities like NWE in the public interest, by preventing them from factoring in environmental externalities into the picture.

We're seeing a slurry of bills aimed at weakening regulations on and affecting NorthWestern Energy this legislative session as the company continues its history of aggressive interference in the Montana Legislature. NWE is a for-profit company with a guaranteed monopoly over supplying energy to most of Western Montana. This company plays a key role in determining Montana's energy supply mix and energy future. NWE stands out in comparison with many other utilities across the country for its drive to build new fossil fuel plants in the middle of a climate emergency. In Montana, however, NWE has somehow managed to preserve a middling reputation, and continues to get away with launching shameless attacks on the laws and regulations that keep the company in check.

See the [current bill text](#) to learn more & check out our [citizen lobbying resources](#).