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Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee

60th Montana Legislature

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ETIC discussing coal-to-liquids, carbon sequestration, USB

HELENA -- A panel discussion about converting coal into liquid fuels as well as an overview of the Universal System Benefits program in Montana top the upcoming Energy and Telecommunications Interim Committee agenda.

The committee meets Nov. 8 in Room 172 of the State Capitol in Helena. The meeting starts at 8 a.m. A complete agenda can be found at:
http://leg.mt.gov/css/committees/interim/2007_2008/energy_telecom/default.asp.

The committee also is continuing its study of carbon sequestration. Department of Environmental Quality Director Richard Opper will update the committee on the Montana Climate Change Advisory Committee's preliminary recommendations related to greenhouse gas emissions and energy supply. The public, and those involved in the committee's efforts, will be invited to share their thoughts. To date, the CCAC has released a draft set of recommendations that are subject to change. The draft is available at <http://www.mtclimatechange.us/CCAC.cfm>

In addition, Ted Dodge of the National Carbon Offset Coalition will discuss terrestrial carbon sequestration. Terrestrial sequestration is the application of carbon offsets from cropland, rangeland, and forests. The Idaho National Laboratory also is on the ETIC agenda to discuss carbon management.

A panel discussion focused on water usage at coal-to-liquids facilities is planned for Thursday morning. The panelists include Paul Cartwright, DEQ; Chuck Kerr, Great Northern Properties; and Chuck Magraw, Natural Resources Defense Council. The discussion is expected to focus on water usage, as opposed to particular plants proposed in Montana.

Committee members also will hear an update on the Universal System Benefits program in Montana. In 1997 S.B. 390 established the USB charge for all electric distribution utilities at 2.4 percent of 1995 electric utility revenues to begin January 1, 1999. The electric USB currently in law expires in December 2009.

The Public Service Commission and Department of Commerce Energy Infrastructure Promotion and Development Division also will provide updates.