

1 SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 21

2 INTRODUCED BY D. ZOLNIKOV

3
4 A JOINT RESOLUTION OF THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE STATE OF
5 MONTANA REQUESTING AN INTERIM STUDY ON INTERSTATE POWER GRID DEVELOPMENT; AND
6 REQUIRING THAT THE FINAL RESULTS OF THE STUDY BE REPORTED TO THE 70TH LEGISLATURE.
7

8 WHEREAS, the modernization and expansion of electric transmission infrastructure is essential to
9 ensuring a secure, reliable, and cost-effective energy supply for Montana and its neighboring states; and

10 WHEREAS, restrictive and anticompetitive policies in certain jurisdictions hinder the development of
11 necessary transmission projects, resulting in increased costs to ratepayers and inefficiencies in energy
12 markets; and

13 WHEREAS, the establishment of an interstate compact could facilitate a cooperative framework among
14 states to enhance market-driven solutions, reduce regulatory barriers, and encourage open bidding processes
15 for new transmission projects; and

16 WHEREAS, a comprehensive study is necessary to evaluate the potential benefits, legal
17 considerations, and implementation strategies of an interstate compact to ensure equitable access to
18 transmission infrastructure and cost-sharing mechanisms that fairly allocate expenses among all beneficiaries;
19 and

20 WHEREAS, an interstate compact should adhere to key principles, including technology neutrality,
21 uniform siting and certification processes, streamlined permitting, and the promotion of grid-enhancing
22 technologies to maximize efficiency and minimize costs; and

23 WHEREAS, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's order RM99-2-000 encourages state
24 adoption of regional transmission organizations and interstate compacts to enhance market efficiency, improve
25 reliability, facilitate just and holistic energy transmission pricing, and streamline electric transmission pricing;
26 and

27 WHEREAS, President Donald J. Trump declared a national energy emergency on January 20, 2025,
28 and through his public statements and executive orders encouraged a national energy policy focused on

1 increasing energy production, enhancing infrastructure, and reducing regulatory barriers to support economic
2 growth, emerging technologies, and national security, including the establishment of a National Energy
3 Dominance Council to further increase United States energy production, aiming to enhance the
4 interconnectivity and robustness of the energy infrastructure.

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6 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE AND THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF
7 THE STATE OF MONTANA:

8 That the Legislative Council be requested to designate an appropriate interim committee or statutory
9 committee, pursuant to section 5-5-217, MCA, or direct sufficient staff resources to:

10 (1) evaluate the legal and regulatory framework for Montana to participate in new cooperative
11 interstate agreements for electric transmission;

12 (2) examine the potential economic benefits and cost implications of a compact for Montana
13 ratepayers and industries;

14 (3) assess how an interstate compact can incorporate market-based principles to maximize
15 competition and minimize costs for consumers;

16 (4) explore best practices from other states and regional transmission organizations that have
17 implemented similar cooperative agreements;

18 (5) consider mechanisms to streamline the permitting process and eliminate duplicative regulatory
19 requirements for transmission projects;

20 (6) analyze the implications of federal regulatory requirements and how an interstate compact or
21 similar arrangements may facilitate compliance while preserving state sovereignty; and

22 (7) engage and consider input from relevant stakeholders, including representatives from the
23 energy industry, consumer advocacy groups, regulatory agencies, and legal experts.

24 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that if the study is assigned to staff, any findings or conclusions be
25 presented to and reviewed by an appropriate committee designated by the Legislative Council.

26 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that all aspects of the study, including presentation and review
27 requirements, be concluded prior to September 15, 2026.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the final results of the study, including any findings, conclusions,

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