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## Montana Rural Electric Co-Op

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## **MT Rural Electric Co-op Speech**

Hello Everyone. Max here. I'm sorry I can't be with you all today. Ya know, I'm committed to doing all I can to provide quality, reliable energy for all Montanans.

I want to say hello to Dave Wheelihan. Dave, thank you for all your hard work. You're aces!

The Montana Rural Electric Cooperative Association is important to Montana. Your members consistently provide reliable and affordable electricity to rural Montana residents and businesses. I want to help make sure you can continue to do so in the future. That's why I've worked hard on tax and energy issues that will benefit our state's rural coops.

As the top Democrat on the tax-writing Senate Finance Committee, I was selected as one of a handful of senators to work out differences between the House and Senate Energy Bills. The Senate Energy bill contains the energy tax package that I developed along with the top Republican on the Finance Committee, Senator Grassley. I made sure the Senate tax package contained important changes to the tax code that will benefit Montana's rural electric coops. Including changes that will help coops maintain their tax exempt status in changing electricity markets.

I also worked hard to include provisions that will allow coops to take advantage of tax incentives for investments in renewable energy technologies and clean coal technologies. These technologies, particularly those for producing wind and coal-fired power, are important to Montana's energy future and to the rural coops.

Overall, my tax plan will provide incentives to increase domestic production of energy, promote conservation efforts, and boost alternative sources of energy like wind, solar, biomass and ethanol.

As for the larger Energy Bill, I received a personal assurance from the Energy Conference Chairman Pete Domenici that the interests of public power and rural electric cooperatives will be protected. For example, I emphasized to Senator Domenici that the coops should not be burdened by the expansion of federal jurisdiction over electricity markets. That just wouldn't be fair.

Rest assured, as we work out the differences between the House and Senate bills, I'm committed to doing all I can for Montana's coops.

There are a lot of big issues going on in the Senate right now. I won't go into all of them. But in general, I'm working to pass a prescription drug benefit for seniors. Cut taxes on Montana's manufacturers.

Pass Healthy Forests Legislation to reduce the risk of wildfire. And sell agriculture products to Cuba. All of this pertains to my top priority: that is, more good, high-paying jobs for Montana.

I know the next time you're in Washington you'll stop by to see me. The door's always open. And feel free to send me an e-mail for call me. After all, you're my bosses. We're here to help.

All the best.