

Seeking Sustainable Energy



Andrew Valainis
Executive Director

Montana Renewable Energy Association

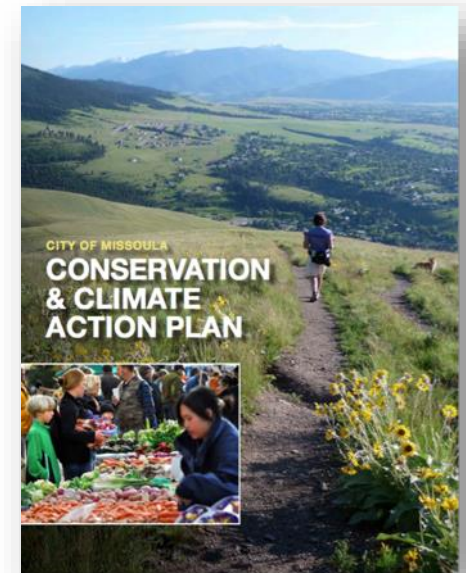
- Non-profit organization
- Founded in 2001



- Mission:
To expand the use of renewable energy in Montana, affect public policy in favor of renewable energy, and to educate and inform the residents of Montana of the benefits and uses of renewable energy.

www.montanarenewables.org

How I got here... from here



Our Work: Industry Engagement



Our Work: Education and Outreach







(Top) Solar Energy Innovation Network Team at National Renewable Energy Lab in Colorado



(Right) MREA presenting Missoula City Council members and Staff SolSmart Designation Award

Our Work: Legislative and Regulatory Advocacy



State Capitol Building in Helena, MT

Energy Policy vs. Politics

Montana Code Annotated 2017

TITLE 69. PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS

CHAPTER 8. ELECTRIC UTILITY INDUSTRY GENERATION REINTEGRATION

Part 6. Net Metering

Shared solar (i.e. “virtual net metering”) is prohibited for NWE because MCA § 69-8-103(19)(c) states a net metering system “must be located on the customer-generator’s premises” and MCA § 69-8-103(6) states a “customer generator” is defined as “a user of a net metering system.”

Energy Policy vs. Politics



And then there's lobbying...



The Montana Legislature: what we're up against

House Bill 504: Solar Jobs and Energy Freedom Act (2017 session)

- Huge hearing, with dozens of folks supporting the bill (*Great!!*)
- Solar Jobs and Energy Freedom rally in the capitol rotunda (*Packed!!*)
- House Energy Committee votes 9-7 to pass the bill, sending it to the Floor (*Huzzah!!*)
- Chairman calls a recess (*But wait...*)
- Legislators return; motion to reconsider the vote (*What?!*)
- House Energy Committee votes 8-8 (party lines). Bill fails. (*WHAT?!*)

The flipped vote was a republican representative who
co-sponsored the bill!

Regulation: Montana Public Service Commission



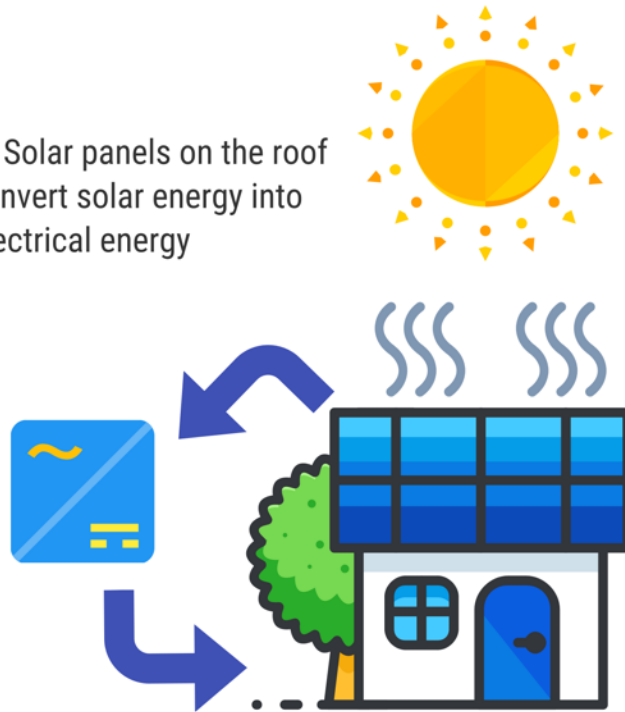
Learn what the PSC is, their role in renewable energy, and how to be involved:

montanarenewables.org/programs/montana-psc-the-unknown-energy-battleground/

NWE General Electric Rate Case: punitive NEM proposal

montanarenewables.org/programs/general-electric-rate-case/

1) Solar panels on the roof convert solar energy into electrical energy



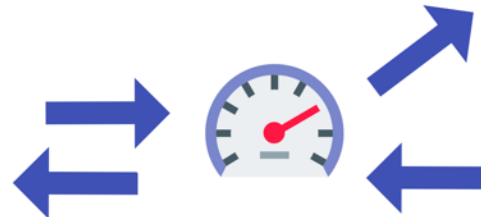
2) The inverter converts the direct current (DC) from the panels to alternating current (AC). AC electricity is what is used in homes, businesses, and schools for things like lights and appliances.

4) Customers earn an on-bill credit for the excess energy they export to the grid. At the end of each month, the customer is billed for the net difference between the energy they purchased from the grid and the energy credits they earned.

Net Metering

Rooftop Solar Example

Panels are producing more than the home needs. Energy flows from the home to the grid for others to use.



Panels are producing less energy than the home needs. Energy flows from the grid to the home.



NW Energy rate change could devastate rooftop solar installation in Montana, industry says

Posted: 6:58 PM, Mar 13, 2019 **Updated:** 3:40 PM, Mar 14, 2019

By: Mike Dennison

“What I’ve been hearing from our installer members is that they’re kind of looking down the barrel of a loaded gun,” says Andrew Valainis of the **Montana Renewable Energy Association**. “They’re very nervous about the proposal. We’re concerned that this could really devastate the industry.”

Consumers blast NW Energy’s proposed rate change for rooftop solar systems

Posted: 5:29 PM, May 23, 2019 **Updated:** 5:51 PM, May 23, 2019



By: Mike Dennison

PSC pulls plug on proposed changes for net metering

Phil Drake, Great Falls Tribune Published 5:19 p.m. MT Nov. 25, 2019

[CONNECT](#) [TWEET](#) [LINKEDIN](#) [COMMENT](#) [EMAIL](#) [MORE](#)

Great Falls Tribune
PART OF THE USA TODAY NETWORK

Missoula
CURRENT

Missoula's News Journal

PSC says 'no' to higher electric rates for homeowners with solar panels

BY LAURA LUNDQUIST

NOVEMBER 26, 2019



 **UTILITY DIVE**

BRIEF

Montana rejects NorthWestern's bid to end net metering, add separate rate class for solar

By Robert Walton

Published Nov. 27, 2019

Needs:

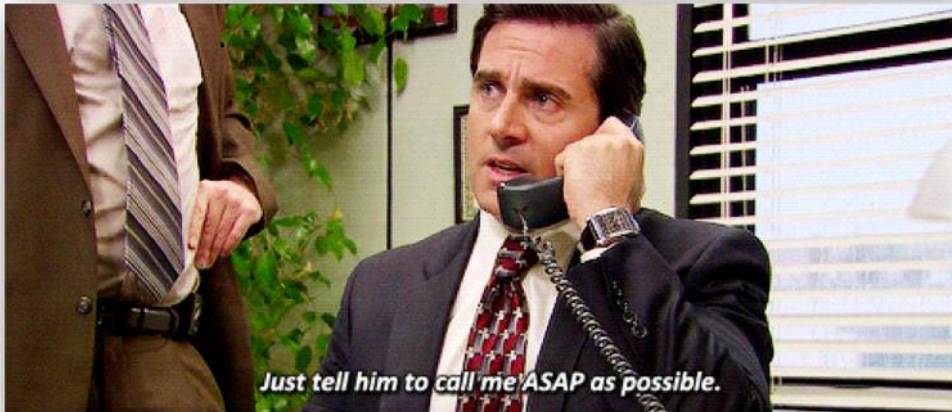
Fund *work already being done,*

Support local and state advocacy groups,

Turn ~~Apathy~~ into **Action.**



How to get what we need



“I’d put my money on the sun and solar energy.
What a source of power! I hope we don’t have to
wait until oil and coal run out before we tackle that.”
– *Thomas Edison, 1931*



Andrew Valainis
andrew@montanarenewables.org
www.montanarenewables.org