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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MONTANA COUNTIES AND LOCAL NGOS TO REVIEW MSTI
*INDEPENDENT REVIEW WILL EXAMINE THE NEED FOR THE TRANSMISSION LINE, IDENTIFY
CORRIDORS, AND CONDUCT AN ECONOMIC ANALYSIS*

Virginia City, Montana - Two Montana counties and five local non-governmental organizations today launched an independent review to better evaluate the possible effects of the Mountain States Transmission Intertie (MSTI) line on local communities in Montana and Idaho. The MSTI Review Project believes that it is essential to work together to protect rural lifestyles, private property, and the natural environment. To that end, the project is providing an independent analysis and outreach to affected MSTI counties that will ultimately lead to better planning outcomes from a variety of perspectives that are often seen as mutually exclusive.

Among its tasks, the review project will utilize a modeling process to identify a variety of possible corridors for the MSTI line that incorporate important values such as private property, hunting, fishing, agriculture, viewshed, building density, wildlife habitat, and many others--and how these values may be protected through the siting of a transmission line.

“Montanans have always respected our rich natural resources as a source of prosperity and their benefit to our quality of life,” said Dave Schulz, Madison County Commissioner. “We look forward to working with other counties to pursue the thoughtful development of responsibly sited transmission lines in a way that protects the values that Montanans share with our neighbors in Idaho.”

In addition to possible corridor analysis, the project also will conduct an economic analysis of the impacts of the MSTI line on property values and county revenue while examining the underlying need for the proposed transmission line.

“Better understanding the tax issues associated with the MSTI line is a huge benefit in assisting with decision-making for local county governments. The MSTI Review Project is providing a much needed process and independent voice for Montanans and Idahoans,” said Leonard Wortman, Jefferson County Commissioner.

The effort, called the MSTI Review Project, is a unique independent partnership of county commissioners and non-governmental organizations in southwest Montana. The first task of the project will be to reach out to counties along the entire 400 miles of the MSTI line to join in the effort and establish a Liaison Group, appointed by county officials, to help define the process.

The MSTI Review Group includes: Madison County, MT; Jefferson County, MT; Western Environmental Law Center; Headwaters Economics; Sonoran Institute; Craighead Institute and Future West. MSTI is a 500kv line being planned by NorthWestern Energy between Townsend, Montana and Twin Falls, Idaho.

Funding for the project is expected to come from a variety of sources, in-kind and cash, including counties, states, individuals, foundations, and Northwestern Energy.

For more information on the newly formed group, visit www.MSTIReviewProject.org.

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