

June 7, 2004

Representative Alan Olson
Chairman, Interim Committee on Energy and Telecommunications
18 Halfbreed Creek Rd
Roundup, Montana 59072-6524

Representative Olson:

As you are aware, the Governor's Consumer Energy Protection Task Force (GTF) was directed to address three main issues, one of which was to mitigate high energy costs for low income energy consumers. Another of the charges given to the GTF was to address reliable, affordable and stable electricity supply costs. As part of its mandate, the GTF has provided mw with recommendations on residential energy codes and the self-certification of new residential construction.

On the matter of residential energy codes, the GTF recommended the adoption of the 2003 IECC (International Energy Conservation Code) with additional two measure upgrades; 1) insulation of R30 under floors over unheated spaces, and 2) R19 in basement walls. It is my understanding that this recommendation was based upon the results of a joint study conducted by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality. In addition, it is my understanding that the GTF has been working with the Interim Committee on Electricity and telecommunications (ETIC) on an informal basis, as a working group for the residential energy codes. I support the above recommendation and the joint study upon which it is based. That study is provided as an attachment to this letter for you and your committee's use in its work on the SJ13 study bill.

The state of Montana requires that all new residential construction conform to the State Energy Code. Homes built outside of municipal jurisdictions that exercise code enforcement are required to be self certified by the homebuilder. Only about 40 percent of new residential construction is currently being self-certified by the homebuilder. The GTF recommended one mechanism for increasing the awareness of the requirement to self-certify would be to require the state electric inspector to place self-certification labels at the time of inspection. To be clear, the state electric inspector would not fill out the label, but would simply post the label to increase awareness to the homebuilder and for the homebuilder's convenience. I agree with the GTF's recommendation and respectfully request that you and your committee consider this issue because as it may require legislation for it to be implemented.

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I appreciate the work of the Interim Committee on Energy and Telecommunications and respectfully request that you and your committee consider above recommendations. Additionally, I hope that the attached energy code study proves useful to you and your committee.

Sincerely,

JUDY MARTZ
Governor

Attachment