

LTE Messaging

Our goals:

- To stop NorthWestern Energy's proposed methane plant in Laurel.
- To keep NorthWestern Energy accountable and transparent to Montana ratepayers.

Background:

In May, NorthWestern Energy (NWE) announced that it planned to build what it called the Laurel Generating Station in response to the statewide need for more power capacity. The station would be fueled by so-called "natural gas." Natural gas goes by another name – methane -- which is one of the leading pollutants driving the climate crisis.

Initially, NorthWestern had sought preapproval from the Public Service Commission. While the request was concerning, it allowed the public a chance to speak out and voice their concern.

On September 21, NorthWestern withdrew their preapproval application. While this was initially greeted as good news, NWE quickly announced their plans to build the methane plant on an accelerated schedule. It claimed that the decision came from "the need to make commercial decisions outside of the timelines of the approval docket to ensure that we maintain the most favorable supply and labor prices for this project." This move effectively cut the public, the ratepayers, from having a say in whether they want this plant to supply power to the state.

Our Main Message:

NorthWestern Energy (NWE) is recklessly pushing forward a methane power plant which creates financial risks for energy customers while jeopardizing our health and future. Montanans deserve a fair, reliable, and sustainable source of power that protects the people and places we love. The time to act is now!

Don't be fooled. The Laurel gas plant will create tons of pollution over its lifespan, harming our health and degrading our climate.

Other Points:

- Air pollution from fossil fuels leads to cancer, heart attacks and respiratory diseases like asthma.
- Laurel is already dealing with air quality problems, and a new methane plant would only exacerbate this public health problem.
- NorthWestern Energy is abusing its position as a monopoly utility company by ducking its responsibility to provide energy in a clean and healthy way.

- Instead of embracing the more affordable, clean energy solutions Montanans want, NWE is trying to stick with the energy sources of yesterday that allow them to generate unearned profits for executives and shareholders.
- The fuel for methane plants is a commodity that can be manipulated to maximize profits at the expense of customers. Wind and sun are *not* commodities, which makes the costs to customers more transparent and affordable.
- NWE is rushing a dangerous and reckless methane plant with NO public input. The company is keeping customers in the dark about the complete cost of the plant, as well as its impacts and costs to public health.
- NWE's proposed methane plant will exacerbate the climate crisis while threatening our wildlife, outdoor recreation, agriculture and the health of local residents.
- Methane is especially dangerous to the climate crisis because its polluting effects are more immediate than CO₂.
- *The time to act is now.* NorthWestern Energy is recklessly fast tracking a methane power plant, pushing financial risks on energy customers while threatening our health, our future and the climate.
- Montanans want cost-effective, reliable, and clean sources of power that protect the people and places we love.
- https://northernplains.org/donate/#join_renew