

RM

Rural Montana

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VIEWPOINT

Dave Wheelihan



Dave Wheelihan

Energy legislation on tap

Energy legislation continues to get attention in Congress as the debate over how best to deal with climate change sparks many different proposals.

In June, the U.S. Senate passed an energy bill that focused primarily on promoting the use of renewable fuels like ethanol, energy efficiency and new mileage standards for automobiles.

An amendment to mandate a nationwide renewable portfolio standard was offered but rejected.

The U.S. House of Representatives has various committees with some jurisdiction over energy legislation.

These committees completed most of their work before the Fourth of July on pieces of energy legislation which will likely be combined with the bill product of the House Energy Committee.

In addition to the focus of the Senate bill, the House version will likely contain tax incentives for

Clean Renewable Energy Bonds, and it is probable that amendments will be offered to mandate a renewable portfolio standard, mandate net metering and mandate carbon sequestration.

What the final bill will look like is not clear at press time, but our national association is working tirelessly with our assistance to make sure energy policy is grounded in reality.

At the state level, the governor's climate change task force has made recommendations to remove interconnection barriers for distributed generation while addressing cross-subsidization issues, carbon capture of 50 percent in five years, 100 percent cost-effective energy conservation by 2025 and a ramp-up of the state's renewable portfolio standard to 20 percent by 2020 and 25 percent by 2025.

For the next year and a half the Energy and Telecommunications Interim committee will

study wind integration costs and benefits, Montana's transmission system, public power, water consumption for energy development, carbon sequestration and the Universal Systems Benefit Program.

This month's Rural Montana continues with reader replies on the global warming issue.

We are featuring a tribute to Wade Sukut of McCone Electric in Circle, one of our linemen who was killed in a tragic accident.

We owe our linemen more than a tribute for the work they do on a daily basis to make our lives easier, but we think it's important to give you an idea of how a lineman's job and life is not your typical nine to five engagement.

We hope you enjoy this month's issue.

We'll visit with you next month.

Dave Wheelihan is CEO of the Montana Electric Cooperatives' Association

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