

A BLUEPRINT FOR ENERGY SELF-RELIANCE: HOW ALL OF MONTANA'S ENERGY NEEDS CAN BE MET USING CONSERVATION AND CLEAN, RENEWABLE ENERGY WHILE CREATING JOBS, SAVING MONEY, AND REVITALIZING RURAL AND URBAN COMMUNITIES

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Montana stands at a crossroads. Right now, in 2007, efficiency combined with renewable, clean sources of energy cost less, and can be brought on line faster than any new sources of fossil energy. AERO's vision is that Montana can prosper with an energy policy based entirely on conservation and renewable resources. It is both technically and financially feasible to do this. We can grow our economy without damaging our air, water, land or quality of life and without spewing further greenhouse gases into Earth's atmosphere. Doing this right means developing diverse and decentralized energy systems, creating meaningful work for our citizens, broadening local ownership of production and distribution systems, reducing our vulnerability to natural or human-caused disasters, and enhancing the resilience and well-being of our rural and urban communities. The first and by far the cheapest thing to do is efficiently manage energy demand, do more with less. Then do the rest with renewable sources of energy. AERO wrote the blueprint document to catalyze citizen participation in creating a sound statewide energy policy. The choices we face are political, not technical. It is our money and our environment. We can use Montana's renewable resources effectively to supply all of our state's internal energy requirements now and into the future. We prefer this to the conventional scenario of continuing as an energy colony, extracting non-renewable resources and shipping them out or, in the case of coal, burning it here and polluting our air, water and soil in order to create electrons to be transmitted elsewhere. We believe Montana's best contribution to the nation will be to assume a new role, as a regional model of clean energy, self-reliance and true "homeland" security.