

July 14, 2022

**ITEM 201-2001-R0722**

**Request for Authorization to Grant a Utility Easement to Northwestern Energy; Montana State University**

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**THAT**

Consistent with the Board's authority to manage and control the Montana University System and in accordance with Board of Regents Policy 1003.6, the Board of Regents of the Montana University System authorizes Montana State University to grant a utility easement to Northwestern Energy through Montana Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) land at the Fort Ellis Research Farm.

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**EXPLANATION**

1. Montana State University (MSU) is requesting authorization to grant a utility easement to Northwestern Energy so they can extend electric service through Montana Agricultural Experiment Station (MAES) land at the Fort Ellis Research Farm.
  2. This easement will allow Northwestern Energy to bring electrical power to one location of an entirely upgraded signal system across the Montana Rail Link (MRL) mainline track. This is part of a larger project by MRL to install Positive Train Control (PTC), a signal system designed to prevent train-to-train collisions, over-speed derailments, incursions into established work zones, and movements of trains through switches left in the wrong position.
  3. The broader Montana community, including MSU, will benefit from this electric service extension in terms of reliable and safe rail transport. This section of MRL mainline track is near the Fort Ellis Research Farm and any collisions or derailment would have significant impact to ongoing operations at the research farm. This benefit satisfies the requirements of BOR Policy 1003.6.
  4. No state funds are requested as part of this easement.
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**ATTACHMENTS**

Attachment 1: Easement and map of proposed easement