FISH and WILDLIFE COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: December 10, 2020

Agenda Item: Voluntary Guidelines to Reduce Bat Mortalities from Wind Energy Development

Division: Wildlife **Action Needed:** Informational

Time Needed on Agenda for this Presentation: 10 Mins

Background: MFWP has developed recommendations to answer common questions on the potential impacts of wind energy facilities to bat populations and to provide consistent recommendations on how to minimize this risk. The recommendations are based on our knowledge of bat ecology and the best available science.

Implementation of these recommendations is voluntary. MFWP nor the Fish and Wildlife Commission have regulatory authority for bats as they are nongame species classified as Disease Vectors under Department of Health and Human Services statute (MCA 50-23-101).

The recommendations have been endorsed by the multi-agency Montana Bat Working Group. MFWP staff that worked diligently on these recommendations include Kristina Smucker, Allison Begley, and Renee Lemon. Northwest Energy assisted with data collection and provided expertise.

Basics of the recommendations:

1. Conduct pre and post construction surveys in order to assess impacts from infrastructure.
2. Avoid placing turbines near potential roost sites, including rock outcrops, cliffs and talus slopes.
3. Place turbines at least 3.5 km away from forested areas that may be used for roosting or as swarming sites.
4. Prevent rotor blades from spinning during periods of low wind and during the most active bat season (May 1 – September 30). Research shows that even small increases in the speed at which electricity starts to be generated from the turbine, can substantially lower bat fatality.
5. Minimize lighting at operation and maintenance facilities.

Public Involvement Process & Results: Outside entities and agencies were involved in development of these recommendations.

Alternatives and Analysis: None, these are simply voluntary recommendations on ways to reduce risk to bats.