



**WE MEAN BUSINESS**

TOLL-FREE: 888.442.6668

LOCAL: 406.442.2405

FAX: 406.442.2409

16 May 2018

Brad Johnson, Chair  
Montana Public Service Commission  
1701 Prospect Ave / PO Box 202601  
Helena, MT 59620-2601

Chair Johnson:

The Montana Chamber of Commerce supports the Avista/Hydro One Limited Merger Application currently pending before the Commission in Docket No. D2017.9.71.

As the state's leading business advocate, the Montana Chamber works to foster an optimal business climate that attracts and retains investment. This is one of the core tenets of Envision 2026, our 10-year strategic plan for Montana's future. The presence of major taxpayers like the Avista Corporation, and their consistent investment in our state, is a direct result of the steps Montana has taken to become a better place to do business.

Avista's history in Montana goes back over 60 years to the construction of the Cabinet Gorge and Noxon Rapids dams. I have a personal connection, as the latter adjoins the Brown ranch near Trout Creek. Through these dams and ownership in Colstrip, Avista accounted for more than \$11.5 million in property taxes, licensing taxes, and energy transportation taxes in 2017 - besides coal severance tax paid indirectly by Avista, according to the Montana Taxpayers Association.

Avista has a significant presence in Montana through these taxes, high-paying jobs, and charitable contributions. We are convinced that presence will continue and potentially even grow with the merger, while still maintaining local involvement. We do not anticipate any changes in how Avista serves and interacts with its Montana customers because of this transaction; it is a viable, valuable contributor to Montana's economy.

The Montana Chamber urges the Public Service Commission to give this application favorable consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Webb Scott Brown  
President & CEO

Cc: Commissioner Travis Kavulla  
Commissioner Roger Koopman  
Commissioner Bob Lake  
Commissioner Tony O'Donnell