

My name's Monica Tranel and I'm running for Public Service Commission District 4 to make Montana an energy leader in today's economy. I grew up on a ranch in eastern Montana with my nine siblings where my dad always told us to "contribute something positive." I've aimed to do this throughout my life, from raising my three children to competing with Team USA in the Olympics to fighting for consumers as an attorney.

Thank you for the opportunity to address the importance of Montana's organic agriculture industry, as we share a common value of promoting sustainability. It's clear that even beyond the health benefits of organic products, the organic businesses are of increasing economic importance to Montana families and communities. While the Public Service Commission (PSC), a five person agency that regulates the rates and quality of privately owned utility companies in MT, does not create legislation related to this industry, there are two key areas of impact.

First, the PSC is all that stands between you and the rates and service of monopoly utility companies. In the last ten years, electric rates have increased by more than 20% as the commission has been asleep at the wheel. I'm committed to making sure Montanans don't feel the impacts of a dysfunctional and partisan PSC. I'm committed to working hard and fighting for fair rates for Montana families and businesses.

Second, reliable, affordable internet services are key for increasing economic development across Montana. The PSC should be taking a proactive leadership role, rather than holding Montana back.

As a Commissioner, I will further strong, working relationships with key stakeholders in broadband development, including but not limited to co-ops, investor-owned utilities and satellite providers, city and county officials, the Montana Legislature, labor leaders, and health care providers. When I was a staff attorney at the PSC, the Commission would write letters of support for the local coops to the FCC for expanded broadband. In contrast over the last ten years the commission has inhibited support for Montana's co-ops, resulting in reduced access. This is unacceptable.

Thank you for letting me address how fair rates and better internet service can grow under solid leadership at the Public Service Commission.