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401 Washington Street
Missoula, MT 59802

December 8, 2021

Jason Brown
Montana Consumer Counsel
Helena, MT 59620-1703
Via email: JBrown4@mt.gov

RE: Preservation of Evidence Request

Dear Mr. Brown:

PRESERVATION OF EVIDENCE REQUEST

In accordance with the investigatory powers of your office as well as your duties to represent the consuming public in Montana under Title 69, Chapter 2 of the Montana Code Annotated, we request that all evidence related to the West Wind Fire in Judith Basin and Fergus Counties, as well as the Hebgen Dam gate failure, be preserved and maintained for any necessary and appropriate third-party inspection.

Specifically, we request that NorthWestern be required to preserve all evidence related to the NorthWestern Energy power line that was involved in the West Wind Fire; preserve any and all evidence related to the pole; preserve all electricity instruments, including poles, conductors, guys, insulators, and any other thing that was involved in the ignition of the fire; as well as not disturbing any place on the ground from which a pole or guy may have become detached, and not disturbing the guys.

In addition, we request that NorthWestern be required to produce all maintenance and installation records for the poles and any infrastructure that was involved in the fire, and that all such records be maintained and not modified.

We also request that you retain an independent and competent investigator to ensure that there is a complete and accurate investigation of these incidences, appropriately trained to investigate the

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specific issues that are involved, and to provide a report that will protect the interests of the ratepayers of Montana. We request that NorthWestern maintain the scene of the ignition of the West Wind Fire until that investigator arrives and completes their work.

You are requested to immediately forward this communication to NorthWestern Corporation, The Montana Attorney General, The Montana Public Service Commission, as well as all individuals or organizations that are responsible for any of the items referred to in this letter.

If this request is in any respect unclear, please call me immediately.

Regards,

TRANEL LAW FIRM, P.C.

By: /s/ Monica J. Tranel

MONICA J. TRANEL

Copy: NorthWestern Corporation
James Brown, Chair, Montana Public Service Commission
Austin Knudsen, Montana Attorney General
Chris Dorrington, Director, Montana DEQ
Amanda Kaster, Director, Montana DNRC