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## **Report Outlines Road Map to Lower Energy Costs for Ratepayers**

The Powder River Basin Resource Council joined today with the Civil Society Institute (CSI) in releasing a report that outlines a roadmap to cheaper, cleaner energy for consumers. The report documents how the implementation of energy efficiency measures along with the use of renewable energy sources will actually lower electricity costs for consumers with the added benefits of cleaner air and less demand on scarce water resources.

Prepared by Synapse Energy Economics, the report documents that transitioning to a cleaner energy future would result in nationwide net savings of \$83 billion over the next 40 years. These savings, along with health benefits for the general population, point towards a future where renewable resources are the right choice for energy production.

A live, phone-based news conference (with full, two-way Q&A) is scheduled for 11:30 am MST on November 16, 2011. Please access by dialing 1 (877) 270-2148 and ask for the “sustainable energy future” news event.

Synapse Energy Economics President Bruce Biewald said, “Information has emerged over the past year suggesting that the cost of replacing coal with clean energy is falling. The current and projected price of coal has increased, and the price of photovoltaic systems has fallen sharply since 2009, a result of unprecedented growth in this sector globally.”

“As recent rate hikes across Wyoming have shown, coal power is no longer cheap,” said Gillian Malone, a Resource Council member and MDU ratepayer. MDU recently imposed a double-digit rate hike on its ratepayers to partially fund the Wygen III coal plant. “Our organization has been working to help utilities make the right choices for ratepayers and the environment by investing in energy efficiency and clean energy technologies,” Malone added.

CSI President Pam Solo said, “The evidence is all around us that America needs to move to a cleaner energy future.

The Resource Council has also been working to make sure PacifiCorp’s upgrades to its coal plant fleet are the right choice for ratepayers. Like most utilities in the Western U.S., PacifiCorp manages a fleet of coal plants that are aging and in need of expensive upgrades to keep them running. “Spending money on these coal plants is like taking your old car to the shop. After a bunch of repairs, eventually you are going to want to just go ahead and buy a new car,” stated Shannon Anderson, Resource Council organizer. “This report shows that utilities like PacifiCorp are better off trading their old coal plants for newer, cleaner, cost-effective power generation.”

This report is the third in a series by Synapse Energy Economics prepared for CSI showing that there are viable alternatives to the mainstream energy production. The report demonstrates that the transition to renewables dramatically reduces the health and environmental impacts of coal-fired electricity, and, by 2050, eliminates those impacts when all such facilities are retired.

Synapse Energy Economics (<http://www.synapse-energy.com/>) provides research, reports, and regulatory support on energy, economics and environmental topics. Synapse works for a wide range of clients throughout the US, including the Department of Energy, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and the EPA.

The Powder River Basin Resource Council is a membership conservation organization based in Wyoming. A grassroots organization of individuals and affiliate groups dedicated to the stewardship of Wyoming's natural resources, Powder River seeks the responsible use of those resources for future generations.

The Civil Society Institute is a think tank that serves as a catalyst for change by creating problem-solving interactions among people and between communities, government and business.

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