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Renewable Energy Ballot Initiative Gets Go Ahead for Mail-In Signatures

Helena, MT—The group promoting renewable energy ballot initiative I-187 has succeeded in its appeal to authorities to collect non-notarized signatures by mail. On May 7, the Montana Secretary of State’s Office issued a Declaratory Ruling to MTCares, LLC (Montana Cares) that jump starts signature gathering from registered voters for I-187. Progress on qualifying the initiative for the November ballot stalled in early March when organizers suspended face-to-face signature collections to help prevent COVID-19 spread.

This groundbreaking ruling allows Montanans to safely download or request petition and verification forms on their own, sign them according to instructions, and mail them in to their county elections office for verification.

On April 8th, MTCares, petitioned for the Declaratory Ruling allowing use of a non-notarized procedure to verify signature authenticity. Members asserted that despite the pandemic and difficulty collecting signatures in-person, Montanans have the right to healthy techniques for petitioning their government for social and policy change.

“It’s a good day for democracy and the voice of people promoting grassroots efforts,” said Dodie Andersen, a Missoula I-187 signature gatherer and MTCares Board member. “We can now move forward and ask folks to simply logon to [MTcares.org](https://mtcares.org), download or request the documents, sign and mail them in to their county elections office to put renewable energy on the ballot.”

The Secretary of State agreed that under Montana law, MCA 1-6-105, an “unsworn written declaration made under penalty of perjury ... may be submitted with the life force and effect of” a notarized affidavit.

The I-187 Montana Renewable Energy Policy calls for 80% renewables by 2034 and 50% by 2027 with no increase in rates and a green energy dividend. Signature gatherers have collected about 11,000 signatures throughout Montana and need about 15,000 more by mid June.

For more information visit the “how to sign” tab at mtcares.org.

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