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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Washington Electric Co-op Meets State Goals for Renewable Energy Standard

East Montpelier, Vt: Washington Electric Co-op (WEC) surpassed state goals for electric utilities in providing renewable energy and reducing its members' fossil fuel use, according to the Public Utility Commission (PUC). The December announcement from the PUC comes after the commission completed a review of state electric utilities' filings to show compliance with Vermont's Renewable Energy Standard (RES). The state's announcement, which covers the year 2017, states that WEC and all of Vermont's electric distribution utilities met their goals – a laudable conclusion in a year when many nations and global alliances missed prominent climate goals.

The RES is mandated through Act 56, which was passed by the Vermont legislature in 2015. Act 56 formalizes Vermont's goal to use 90 percent renewable power, in all forms of energy use, by 2050. The RES creates incentives and markers to guide electric utilities toward this goal. Electric utilities must increase the amount of their power that comes from renewable sources and help electric consumers reduce carbon use in their households or businesses. The requirements for each tier increase annually until 2032. It is important WEC meets the annual requirements, as the order carries penalties for utilities that fail to meet the levels set out by lawmakers.

WEC and other Vermont utilities are required to invest in “energy transformation projects,” supporting their consumers in switching from fossil fuel use in transportation and home heating in favor of renewable options. “It took hard work and innovation, and we are very proud WEC was able to meet all tiers of the Renewable Energy Standard in 2017,” said WEC General Manager Patty Richards. “Our core values as an electric cooperative are aligned with the RES. We seek to lower our members' carbon footprints while we provide power that is from affordable and clean renewable resources.”

WEC is one of two electric utilities in Vermont to have a 100 percent renewable energy portfolio, and is the only utility in the state with a policy position against climate change. “The state's goals fit with WEC's mission. With WEC's already renewable power sources, and our position on climate change, the RES incentives help us work with our members to transition away from fossil fuels in home heating

and transportation, and switch to our 100 percent renewable electricity instead,” said Richards. “We’ve installed electric vehicle charging stations and helped weatherize homes. We give members cash for purchases like cold climate heat pumps, and we’re changing our rate structure to favor renewable power over fossil fuel use.”

“It’s also important that the choices we make to meet the state’s standards don’t harm our low-income members,” Richards continued. “As a co-op, we’re democratic by nature and we listen to our members. We can offer extra incentives and support to folks who want to lower their carbon footprints – by weatherizing their homes or switching to an electric vehicle, for instance – but that may also need help with the upfront cost to make those purchases.”

Washington Electric Co-op is a member-owned, not-for-profit electric utility founded in 1939. WEC serves approximately 10,800 member-owners in 41 towns throughout Washington, Orange, Caledonia and Orleans counties with power generated from 100 percent renewable sources. WEC is an equal opportunity provider and employer. For more information please visit washingtonelectric.coop or call 802-223-5245.

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