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# NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT 4 COMMISSIONER LYNDA LOVEJOY

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

## **Commissioner Lovejoy's Experience, Strategic Thinking Skills Are Assets To PRC's Success for Ratepayers**

**SANTA FE** – In consideration of the State Rural Universal Service Fund (SRUSF), the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (NMPRC) deliberated over multiple aspects and rules pertaining to the SRUSF over the course of countless hours of public meetings held over a period of several weeks.

So what is the Rural Universal Service Fund? If you ever pick up your phone bill and inspect it, you will see a charge that says "Universal Service Fund." There's a universal service fund fee on the federal and state levels. In New Mexico, the fund goes entirely to assist those in rural areas with their phone service, because big phone companies often don't find it profitable to service small numbers of people scattered over vast areas of land. Because New Mexico has many expansive areas that are sparsely populated, small telephone companies get a subsidy from these funds to help defray the costs of offering and delivering phone service to residents living in these locations.

District 4 Commissioner Lynda Lovejoy tirelessly sought the best outcome for her constituents in largely rural northwestern New Mexico.

Perhaps the most disputed piece of the SRUSF proposed rule, in fact, dealt with the definition of the word "rural." The rule before the Commission proposed eliminating all four of the alternative definitions that were already included in the rule, and replacing them with a single definition that simply defined "rural" as any unincorporated area or incorporated place with 15,000 inhabitants or less.

After much discussion and contemplation, the Commission chose to adopt the amendments to the definition of "rural" included in the proposed rule.

In addition to the "rural" definition change, a broadband fund to be managed by the NMPRC was established for companies, including – but not limited to – Frontier Communications and Sacred Wind Communications, both of which operate in District 4.

Commissioner Lovejoy stated that the intent of the NMPRC is to insure that SRUSF funding helps rural areas of the state.

Previously, in 2005, Commissioner Lovejoy worked hard to ensure that tribal customers living on a reservation would be exempt from paying into the State Rural Universal Service Fund by signing an exemption form with the company providing the telephone service.

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