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# NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT 2 COMMISSIONER PATRICK LYONS

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**NEWS RELEASE**

## Commissioner Lyons: ‘PRC Decision Lacks Common Sense; Targets Small Rural Utility’

**SANTA FE** – After the regular meeting of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (NMPRC) on Wednesday, July 13, Commissioner Patrick Lyons spoke out about a decision from the day’s very first case that the Commission decided – Raton Natural Gas Company’s application seeking approval of their 2016 Energy Efficiency Programs Plan, 2016 Annual Report, and a Program Cost Rate Rider under the Efficient Use of Energy Act.

In the end, Commissioner Lyons was the sole vote to approve that application.

“Four PRC Commissioners went after a small utility in a small, rural town that needs help,” Commissioner Lyons stated. “Four Commissioners denied a common sense approach to help the residents of Raton hold down utility costs for the low-income households in the area.”

After hearing detailed evidence presented by PRC Staff, Commissioners debated their stances nearly an hour and a half after the case was introduced Wednesday morning.

The Commission learned that Raton Natural Gas requested several variances that would allow the company to avoid complying with energy efficiency programs while being unable to provide NMPRC Staff with any record showing compliance with the programs in the past year.

Commissioners were told that with just 3,000 customers, 88 percent of which are residential customers, Raton Natural Gas is – by far – the smallest natural gas provider in business in the state.

“Raton has lost 1,000 residents in the last decade,” Commissioner Lyons stated. “I had hoped that we could keep rates down for low-income residents who depend on natural gas for many things, including heating their homes.”

Commissioner Lyons’ proposal of giving the company 90 days to come up with a plan for addressing the issues raised for 2016 and to file for the 2017 programs simultaneously died for the last of a second, with the remaining Commissioners voting to adopt the Recommended Decision.

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