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## NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT 5 COMMISSIONER SANDY JONES

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### *Public Regulation Commission approves plan to expand natural gas service in rural, underserved communities*

**SANTA FE, NM** – The Public Regulation Commission (PRC) is bolstering access to natural gas service in low-income communities and rural towns that routinely have been left out in the cold.

Commissioners this week approved a request by the New Mexico Gas Company (NMGC) to amend the parameters of a fund established in 2016 to cover infrastructure projects in underserved communities.

Currently, the \$10 million, stakeholder-backed fund provides a revenue stream for mainline extension projects where more than 10 new customers would be created; 1:1 matching funds to existing underserved communities that pitch in money for infrastructure projects; and \$500 to residents to help cover the cost of converting homes and small businesses to natural gas.

Modifications include reducing from 10 to five the number of residential customers needed to trigger qualification for participation as a “community”; doubling the financial match by NMGC from 1:1 to 2:1; and tripling the conversion rebate from \$500 to \$1,500.

To date, only \$925,000 has been disbursed on 12 qualifying projects and commissioners say the amendments will encourage greater activity and participation.

“This is a real boon to consumers in the targeted communities, and shows great commitment on the part of NMGC to serve the citizens of New Mexico,” said PRC Vice-Chair Cynthia Hall, District 1.

“I appreciate NMGC’s investment in New Mexico,” said PRC Chairman Sandy Jones, District 5. “Too many families lack access to basic utilities and NMGC will now be better able to deliver service across the state.”

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*The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) regulates the utilities, telecommunications, and motor carrier industries to ensure fair and reasonable rates, and to assure reasonable and adequate services to the public as provided by law. The PRC promotes public safety through the offices of State Fire Marshal, the Firefighter Training Academy, Pipeline Safety Bureau, and Transportation Division.*