



# NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

FROM THE OFFICE OF DISTRICT THREE COMMISSIONER VALERIE ESPINOZA

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## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### PRC's Espinoza Promotes 'Safe Digging Month' in Northern New Mexico

SANTA FE, N.M. — The Public Regulation Commission (PRC) has officially dubbed April “Safe Digging Month” in New Mexico, and Commission Vice-Chair Valerie Espinoza (District 3) has embraced the safety-driven spirit of the occasion by taking part in several pipeline inspections in the Santa Fe area.

With PRC Pipeline Safety Bureau (PSB) staff alongside, Espinoza explored several transmission lines and took notes as inspectors performed routine checks on several of New Mexico Gas Company's transfer stations.

During routine inspections, the PSB conducts safety compliance reviews and enforces state and federal pipeline safety regulations for intrastate gas, hazardous liquid, and CO2 pipeline facilities, which can include private and municipal gas distribution systems, master meter gas systems, LPG systems, transmission systems and jurisdictional gathering lines.

According to Espinoza, the PSB is one of the state's most essential departments. Federal regulators seem to agree.

Last year, an evaluation of the PSB's enforcement of state pipeline safety laws conducted by the United States Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) shows the bureau received quality performance ratings of 99.1 percent in its hazardous liquid program and 100 percent in its natural gas program.

PSB performance determines how much federal grant money can be allocated to support pipeline safety regulation in the state.

“The Pipeline Safety Bureau's dedication to ensuring the safety of our state's pipelines and what they carry is tantamount to the PRC's statutory duty to provide consumer protections to the citizens of New Mexico,” Espinoza said. “This noteworthy success should be praised inside and outside this office.”

Now that she has seen the bureau's team in action with her own eyes – protected by safety glasses and a hard hat – Espinoza says it's certainly no surprise to her the department has received such high praises.

“Witnessing first-hand the professionalism and dedication these employees have in maintaining the quality our state's pipelines has been an incredible learning experience,” she said. “Of particular importance to me is the detailed checklist the PSB uses on inspections, which truly reflects the accountability of both the utility and the bureau. All consumers should be fully aware of what intricate measures go into service delivery.”

Espinoza said she has requested a copy of the PSB's District 3 annual pipeline safety report, which is also typically available to the public through the PRC's website.

Finally, Espinoza said she wants to remind all New Mexicans to “call 811 before you dig!”

For more information on the PRC's Pipeline Safety Bureau and the programs it administers, visit [www.nmprc.state.nm.us](http://www.nmprc.state.nm.us).

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