

PRC says 'no' to SEC's request

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New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) said Socorro Electric Cooperative (SEC) must adopt the new recommended rate structure sooner rather than later.

On October 30, the PRC issued its ruling affirming its decision to have the local cooperative adopt the new recommended rate structure it adopted on September 11, 2019.

SEC contended that its members would suffer irreparable harm if a stay was not granted because if the Supreme Court ruled in its favor, SEC would have to undo the adjusted rates. That, says the SEC, would cost the coop a substantial amount of money. In addition, SEC noted no harm would ensue if the stay was granted.

On October 24 and 25, the City of Socorro, New Mexico Tech and Socorro resident Donald Steinnerd filed responses to SEC's request to not implement the new rates.

As noted in the PR filing, New Mexico Tech will benefit from the decrease in its electric bills as a result of the 1.9 percent decrease in the large commercial rate and the economic development rate. The City of Socorro also indicated it would be harmed by rate implementation delay because it expects to see benefits from the PRC's final order in the form of new, cost-based LED rates as well as the economic development rate and relief from SEC's improper collection practices.

The PRC found the joint response from the city, Tech and Steinnerd persuasive, thus SEC's request for delay implementing the new rates was denied.

"The Commission further finds allowing the Final Order to take effect will not irreparably harm SEC, however, the stay of the Final Order would harm both the city and Tech," the PRC order noted. "...the Motion should be denied because there is not a likelihood that SEC will prevail on the merits of its appeal and the evidence in the record demonstrates SEC will not suffer irreparable harm unless the stay is granted."

Voting in favor of the ruling were Chair Theresa Becenti-Aguilar, Cynthia Hall, Jefferson L. Byrd and Stephen Fischmann. Vice-Chair Valerie Espinoza voted no.