

# NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

## COMMISSIONERS

GABRIEL AGUILERA  
JAMES ELLISON  
PATRICK O'CONNELL, CHAIR



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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Newly appointed PRC commissioners conduct their first open meeting**

SANTA FE, N.M. – The restructured New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) today held its first open meeting, as the new executive-appointed commissioners provided opening statements, chose a chairman to preside at hearings, approved a nationwide advertising campaign to fill vacant leadership and advisory positions, and were introduced to key members of the agency's staff. At future meetings, the commissioners will hear and make decisions on cases relating to the regulation of utilities, pipelines, telecommunications, and motor carrier industries to ensure that customers pay fair and reasonable rates and receive safe and reliable services.

Present at today's open meeting were Commissioners Gabriel Aguilera and Patrick O'Connell, who were nominated last month by Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham. Commissioner James F. Ellison, who was nominated by the governor earlier this week and has not taken the oath of office, attended the meeting via Zoom but did not vote on matters related to the commission.

Commissioner O'Connell was chosen as chairman of the commission. He will initially serve a term of six years. Before coming to the PRC, he was the clean energy program deputy director at Western Resource Advocates. Prior to that, he worked at Public Service Company of New Mexico as an integrated resource planning director and as a senior natural gas supply planner. A registered professional engineer, he holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Civil Engineering from the University of New Mexico.

“I’m thrilled to have this opportunity for public service for the state of New Mexico,” said Commissioner O’Connell. “I’ve dedicated my career to working in and around the utilities that provide the services that are regulated by the PRC. The work we do here at the PRC is crucial to making sure that those fundamentally important things happen in a way that all of us can afford it and is there when we need it.”

Prior to his appointment to the PRC, Commissioner Aguilera spent 15 years in multiple positions at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington, D.C., focusing exclusively on western electric issues. He holds Bachelor of Business Administration degrees in both Economics and Finance from New Mexico State University and earned a Master of Business Administration from the University of Maryland Smith School of Business. He will initially serve a term of four years at the PRC.

“I’m very excited to bring that experience here to the PRC, and I am excited to learn from the staff at the PRC,” said Commissioner Aguilera. “I aim to do this job with integrity and hope to make decisions that are in the public interest.”

Prior to his appointment to the PRC, Commissioner Ellison held multiple positions at Sandia National Laboratories in Albuquerque. He holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Physics and Political Science from Clemson University, Master of Science degrees in Technology and Policy and Mechanical Engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and a Master of Science degree in Management from Stanford University Graduate School of Business. He will initially serve a term of two years.

“I believe that New Mexico is at a critical juncture, that the PRC is tasked with ensuring that the transition to renewable energy takes place and that it takes place while preserving reliability and also ensuring that the cost of power be as low as reasonably possible,” said Commissioner Ellison. “It is certainly an honor to play a role in this transition.”

A voter-approved amendment to New Mexico’s Constitution two years ago changed the formation of the PRC from a five-member elected body to a three-member panel appointed by the governor, beginning on Jan. 1. All three of the newly appointed commissioners’ nominations must be approved by the state Senate.

The next open meeting of the PRC is scheduled for 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, January 18, 2023.

To watch a recording of today’s open meeting, please visit <https://www.nm-prc.org/nmprc-open-meeting-agenda/>

*The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (NMPRC) 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 NMPRC also promotes public safety through the offices of [Pipeline Safety Bureau](#) and [Transportation Division](#).*

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