

1. New Mexico has the potential to be a leader in the region, delivering low-cost renewable resources to serve its citizens and the rest of the West, benefiting New Mexico's economy, ratepayers, and supporting grid reliability. What do you see as the role for a New Mexico Commissioner as it relates to regional discussions on power markets and interstate transmission; how are you best suited to engage in these regional forums?

Response:

There are various regional establishments, e.g. Western Electric Coordinating Council ("WECC") that New Mexico Commission should continue to work with in order to maintain grid reliability, resiliency, safety and stability. There might be a need to establish Regional Transmission Organizations ("RTO) and Independent System Operators ("ISO"). Increased coordination and communication is key for successful regional discussions on power markets and interstate transmission. Coordinated efforts in planning, forecasting and scheduling between the different balancing authorities, reliability coordinators, and regulators help in efficient operation of the grid. To ensure stability, reliability, safety and resiliency of the grid, the role of a New Mexico Commissioner in addition to setting "fair, just, and reasonable rate", needs to includes a periodic (annually or biennially) assessment of the state's transmission system. Anyone who plans on building infrastructure in New Mexico should file a plan (e.g. 10-year plan), with the NMPRC. Staff should perform a complete review of all plans and the impacts to the existing and planned transmission system. This multi-facet review should include: outputs from the utility studies; relevant issues in the region which impact grid reliability and operations; planned resource acquisitions and retirements; and load forecasts.

Based on my professional experience working over the years, in positions of increasing responsibility; my education; testimony and exhibits in utility proceedings; attendance at regulatory training programs; attendance at various National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners ("NARUC") sponsored, affiliated or endorsed education conferences, programs and meetings; attendance at industry-sponsored conferences, seminars and roundtables; engagement with peers in certain states ; personal study and readings; and having served on NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Consumer and Public Interest, Staff Subcommittee on Water, and Staff Subcommittee on Telecommunication , I believe I am best suited to engage in these regional forums.

By inter-cordiality working with staff and Commissioners of the region, I have developed very strong professional/personal relationship with Commissioners and staff from various states and federal regulatory agencies, such as the FCC and the FERC. I am already engaged with Western Conference of Public Service Commissioners, becoming a Commissioner will be building on the relationship and contacts. I know the players and needs and have historical perspective, have in-depth solutions that have been tried and the experience makes me uniquely suited for the regional forum.

In addition, I periodically worked side by side with the Commission's Legal Division and Hearing Division to prosecute rate cases, Certificate of Convenience and Necessity, Interconnection Agreements, etc.

2. Competition between generators, whether utility- or Independent Power Producer-owned, helps ensure the lowest cost, best suited resource is procured by electric utilities, ultimately resulting in the best deal for customers. What do you see as the role of a Commissioner in ensuring fair and transparent competition in resource procurement?

Response:

The primary role of a Commission such as NMPRC is to balance the interest of the ratepayers, the regulated entity and all the stakeholders, that should translate into "fair, just and reasonable" rates that will accord the regulated entity the opportunity to earn a fair rate of return on their investment in order to provide safe, affordable and reliable electricity services. The Commissioner has to be transparent, communicate clearly the expectations, how they can be met and consequences if not met. The state regulatory commission may disallow costs if purchases are determined to be imprudent.

3. What is the "public interest" in the context of utility regulation?

Response:

The Commission based on either the statutory or constitutional authority/power has broad discretion on what can be considered as public interest. In considering what public interest is, the Commission may consider geographical, economic, environmental, financial, and other factors in making its decisions, in order to balance the interests of utility investors, consumers, and the entire economy. Such decision has to comply with the law.

4. What is the role of electric utilities in decarbonizing the economy and what is the Commission's role in overseeing that process?

Decarbonization is the process of reducing carbon emissions. In an attempt for the regulated industry to help with decarbonization it should: (1) Have a transition plan. A plan to transition from conventional generation such as coal, especially to renewables and other source of energy . Such plan should include alternative generation whether it is solar or wind energy. In addition it should include energy efficiency, demand response, and interruptible services. (2) Embark on training for its employees and the community as a whole. (3) Organize community outreach efforts. (4) Increase the supply of carbon-free energy by adding new renewable sources, such as solar and wind. (5) Help decarbonize other industries by electrifying their operations i.e. electrifying transportation, such as electric vehicles. (6) Reduce their own carbon emissions through a variety of initiatives, including operational changes and customer engagement. (7) Improve grid-scale storage to balance out low output from renewable sources. (8) Become experts in carbon capture, utilization, and storage (CCUS). (9) Improve demand and frequency response solutions to ensure a secure energy supply. (10) Purchase natural gas with lower emissions to incentivize cleaner upstream practices.

The Commission's role in overseeing that process is to: (1) educate the ratepayers by organizing or holding townhall meetings and to educate the community, (2) direct and instruct the regulated entities to engage and educate their customers on the benefit of transitioning from conventional generation to other sources of generation; (3) provide incentives that will allow the regulated entities to transition from conventional to other sources of generation; and (4) provide disincentives/penalties for regulated entities that do not comply with the transition plan.

5. What is the PRC's role in ensuring broadband is universally available?

Response:

Pursuant to The Telecommunication Act of 1996, as amended, which grants all Americans access to Broadband no matter where they reside, the role of the PRC is to make sure that the Telecommunication Companies comply with the Act and New Mexico rules and regulations. As part of the Telecommunication Act and Statute, there are programs such as Eligible Telecommunication Carrier ("ETC"), Lifeline, and Link-up, that are in place to ensure that all Americans have access to telecommunication services regardless of where they reside, rural or urban at affordable rates whether it is telemedicine, education, libraries, or otherwise. There are also low interest or zero interest loans available to Telecommunication Service Providers from Rural Utility Services ("RUS") and also grants from various federal agencies for the deployment of broadband to schools, libraries and hospitals.

6. Should providers of broadband be regulated as a utility? Why or why not?

Response:

Yes, they should be regulated. It should be light regulation because the technology is constantly evolving or changing. Light regulation means streamline certification process, streamline tariff, and having consumer protection in place.

7. To what extent, if any, should rate-setting decisions of the PRC consider social, cultural, and environmental externalities? When, if ever, should social, cultural, and environmental externalities lead the PRC to approve rates higher than could be approved if such externalities were not considered?

Response:

Rate-setting decisions of the PRC considering social, cultural, and environmental externalities are part of the Commission's discretion when it is determining what is in the public interest.

Although the Commission has discretion when it comes to public interest, the Commission by law is obligated to make decisions based on what is on the record. In other words, the decision must be supported by the record.

8. Please discuss your views on governance and the appropriate roles of Commissioners and staff, appropriate levels of delegation and your expected level of involvement in the administration of the agency.

Response:

Governance should be fair, transparent, and anti-discriminatory, have integrity, clearly state the expectation, and how to meet the expectation.

The appropriate roles of the Commissioners and staff have to be transparent, independent, ethical, legal, respectful, high moral and integrity.

In reference to appropriate levels of delegation, the Commissioners and staff have different roles and responsibilities as defined by rules and regulations.

Regarding my expected level of involvement in the administration of the agency, the Chief of Staff is responsible for the day to day activities of the Commission staff and the Chief of Staff under the authority of the Commissioners.

9. As you evaluate issues before the PRC, which factors do you view as most important and why?

Response:

It is important to have a Commission that will balance the interest of all the stakeholders in order to have a decision that is "fair, just and reasonable". Also, it is important to have highly committed and ethical Commissioners, unimpeachable ethical standards because their decision impacts everybody's day-to-day life. Effective communications within the agency is important. The flow of information among Commissioners (open/closed meetings), from Commissioners to staff (via Chief of Staff, directly to lower staff) and from staff to Commissioners (advice, testimony, memos, reports). The Commissioners need not be experts, but must have sufficient knowledge or background to be able to confidently evaluate expert opinions.

10. Is there a state whose energy regulatory policies that you believe New Mexico should emulate? If so, which one and why?

Response:

Yes, Colorado's strong focus on guidelines for third party access and energy efficiency research development makes the state a great model for New Mexico.

Guidelines for Third Party Access

In decision R15-0406 from 2015, the Colorado Commission modernized its rules for utilities to provide customer information (including energy use) to third parties with customer consent. A 2-page standardized consent form was authorized, and 4 CCR 723-3 Section 3027(d) was modified to read: “As part of basic utility service, a utility shall provide to the customer’s standard customer data in electronic machine-readable form, without additional charge, to the customer or to any third party recipient to whom the customer has authorized disclosure of the customer’s customer data. Such access shall conform to nationally-recognized open standards and best practices.” New Mexico has no policies in place that require utilities to release energy use data to customers or third parties.

Energy Efficiency Research & Development

The Engines and Energy Conversion Lab (EECL) at Colorado State University conducts research on smart grid technology and engine efficiency, primarily in advanced ignition systems and after-treatment systems.

The Institute for the Built Environment (IBE) at Colorado State University engages faculty and industry partners in healthy and sustainable building issues including energy efficient construction, integration of clean energy technologies and sustainable built environments.

The Renewable and Sustainable Energy Institute (RASEI) at the University of Colorado at Boulder is a joint institute with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory with a mission to research and develop ways to produce energy at a lower cost, with higher efficiency, and with reduced emissions.

The Research in Delivery, Usage, and Control of Energy (ReDUCE) research group at the Colorado School of Mines includes energy efficiency projects such as the Cyber-Enabled Efficiency Energy Management of Structure (CEEMS), sponsored by the National Science Foundation, which conducts research on the sensing and control of energy flow in buildings, as enabled by cyber infrastructure.

The Center for Renewable Energy Economic Development (CREED) is a catalyst for economic development in Colorado through clean energy and energy efficiency innovation and entrepreneurship. Its stakeholders support the creation and growth of clean tech companies throughout the State of Colorado and represent economic development, academia, incubators, industry associations, and government.

CREED is a product of National Renewable Energy (NREL) and partners with state government agencies such as the Colorado Energy Office and the Office of Economic Development and International Trade, and industry groups such as the Colorado Cleantech Industry Association. NREL consistently works with Colorado universities on energy efficiency projects and plays a role in a number of collaborations throughout the state. Besides RASEI and CREED, NREL also partners with state universities as part of the Colorado Energy Research Collaboratory, a research consortium that works with industry and public

agencies to create and speed the commercialization of renewable energy technologies and energy efficiency.

The Energy Research Collaboratory is a consortium of three state institutions of higher education the University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado State University, the Colorado School of Mines, and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

No public research centers have a focus on energy efficiency in New Mexico.

11. Briefly describe your experience with regulatory topics including: utility rate setting, promulgating regulations, and the New Mexico Energy Transition Act.

Response:

I have over 20 years of professional experience from the Arizona Corporation Commission and five years from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, in positions of increasing responsibility. (See Response to Question 15(b)(i) below and my resume submitted with the initial application.) The two State Commissions regulate rates, services and facilities of public utilities. I reviewed numerous applications and/or filings for both Commissions recommending thoroughly researched, sound regulatory policy and rate recommendations to the Commissioners, which were based on balanced analysis of the benefits and impacts on all stakeholders and are consistent with the public interest.

Promulgating Regulations

Based on the enabling laws, the Commission promulgates rules or regulations (“rulemaking”). I have participated in rulemaking proceedings, relating to: the competitive telecommunications services, the restructuring of the electric utility industry, Certificate of Convenience and Necessity for Water and Wastewater Services, Termination of Service, Interconnection, etc. The Commission makes three types of rules: Procedural rules (guides how the regulatory system works), legislative rules (governs how utilities must offer service to customers) and interpretive rules (provides guidance on how utility actions will be viewed in future economic regulation). Rulemaking activities are more interactive with informal contacts and meetings with the regulators allowed. There is normally an opportunity for public comment when rules are proposed or amended. After the proposed rule is drafted, it has to go before the legislature for approval.

Utility Rate Setting

Based on the rules or regulations, utility proceedings take place to set rates/prices, service quality standards, etc. I am very experienced in rate setting and have handled a few utility rate setting applications, including : Southwest Gas Corp., Valor Telecommunications of Oklahoma, LLC, Eden Water Company, Inc., Rose Valley Water Company, etc. With the exception of small public service corporations, these requests for rate changes must be determined in an evidentiary hearing. Regardless of the size of the public service corporation, all rate changes require approval of the Commission in an

open meeting. Staff preparation for a major rate hearing begins at the time of the utility's initial filing, and takes approximately four to six months before the hearing takes place. Work efforts between the time of filing and a hearing include a review of documents on file with the Commission; an audit of the books and records of the utility; on-site inspections of plants and facilities; discussions with utility personnel and interested parties; formulation of the staff recommendation, and preparation of written testimony and schedules. Significant changes and rate increases are given more detailed review. In the rate setting proceedings, new rate base, new rate of return, and new rates for most or all of the customer classes are determined using the test year. Below are links to samples showcasing my work:

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/0000175100.pdf?i=1727457088295> (See pages 54 thru 83)

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/0000182231.pdf?i=1727465224184>

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/0000173593.pdf?i=1727465051502>

Other Regulatory Topics

I also performed reviews, analysis and made recommendations on various public utility requests and/or topics including: financing applications purchased power and other automatic adjusters revisions; tariff filings (electric, gas, telecommunications, water and wastewater); interconnection agreements; interconnection arbitrations, mergers and acquisitions; debit and equity issuances; transfers of assets; applications for Certificates of Convenience and Necessity ("CC&Ns") for electric, gas, telecommunications, water and wastewater; special contracts (electric, gas, telecommunications, water, and wastewater); energy efficiency; renewable energy; adjudication for not a public service company; Eligible Telecommunications Carrier; Lifeline and Link-up programs; 2-1-1 Implementation; etc. The recommendations were presented to the Commissioners through staff reports, sworn testimony, memos and recommended orders. Below are links to samples showcasing my work:

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/0000194001.pdf?i=1727460306326>

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/0000166725.pdf?i=1727460167782>

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/0000124387.pdf?i=1727460734350>

Also, as the Chief of Compliance and Consumer Services Section, among other things, I participated in the investigations and mediations of complaints from the public regarding operation, billings, terminations and quality of service and facilities of public service corporations to ensure their compliance with the Arizona Constitution, statutes, orders of the Commission, Commission-promulgated rules and approved tariffs. Staff in addition to responding to and resolving complaints and inquiries, conducted public comment meetings relative to rate applications, mediated consumer disputes, conducted field investigations and performed on-site meter testing. I participated in events designed to educate the utility customer of the services offered by the Commission. Actively participated in various stakeholders' meetings. Under my leadership, the Compliance Section staff tracked compliance relative

to annual report filings, filings made pursuant to Commission rules and orders and administered the annual regulatory assessment. Below are links to a sample showcasing my work:

<https://docket.images.azcc.gov/E000010018.pdf?i=1727456236986> (See pages 30 thru 46)

Federal Dockets

I have assisted the legal division in filing comments before federal agencies (FCC and FERC) concerning telecommunications, gas and electric industries to ensure that the public interest of Arizona is considered in the federal proceedings.

New Mexico Energy Transition Act

I have no direct experience when it comes to New Mexico. Through personal readings and study, I learned that New Mexico's Energy Transition Act ("ETA"), enacted in 2019, is a law that aims to move the state toward a clean energy future. The ETA sets a statewide renewable energy standard of 50 percent by 2030 for New Mexico investor-owned utilities and rural electric cooperatives and a goal of 80 percent by 2040, in addition to setting zero-carbon resources standards for investor-owned utilities by 2045 and rural electric cooperatives by 2050. The ETA includes several provisions, such as: renewable energy standards, transition funds, training for workers, and economic benefits.

However, I can use my regulatory experience over the years, with interaction with other regulatory agencies across the United States and utilize it to transition and compliment New Mexico energy policy.

12. New Mexico has 23 distinct sovereign Native American tribes within its borders. Please explain your familiarity with the State - Tribal relationship with an emphasis on how this relationship is applicable to utilities including power generation, right of ways and alternative energy?

Response:

When it comes to New Mexico, I have no familiarity with the State - Tribal relationship. However, when it comes to line siting it is an issue of multiple jurisdictions that includes federal, state, local government agencies, Native American tribes, and public and private land owners. From my point of view, it will involve having a dialogue and interaction with all the parties in order to achieve a common goal. In evaluating investments by utilities, it is important to take seriously and conduct environmental impact studies that may have negative impact on the tribes or sovereign nations.

13. The Public Regulation Commission is a regulatory body. Often the line between regulation and policy can get blurred. Please explain your view as to where the line between regulation and policy is.

Response:

"Regulation" is staying within the boundaries of the enabling act. The regulatory agency is a body of limited jurisdiction. It does not make "policy". It implements legislative law or enabling law. It follows

the policy that is made by the legislature. The line between "regulation" and "policy" lies in the level of specificity: a policy outlines a general principle or goal, while a regulation is a concrete rule with specific requirements that enforces that policy, essentially providing the "how" to achieve the policy's objectives; regulations often have legal weight and enforcement mechanisms, whereas policies may be more flexible in interpretation and application. Regulation is enforceable policy is not.

14. What is the most consequential action or decision of the PRC in the last twenty years? Why?

Response:

The most consequential action or decision of the PRC in the last twenty years is the closure of the San Juan Generating Station in New Mexico, because of the impacts the closure had on the schools, community, economy and environment.

15. Per NMSA 1978 Section 62-19-5 please provide the following:

a. Do you hold a baccalaureate degree from an institution of higher education that has been accredited by a regional or national accrediting body? (If you hold a professional license or a post-graduate degree, skip to subsection b.)

i. Do you have at least ten years of professional experience in an area regulated by the commission or in the energy sector and involving a scope of work that includes accounting, public or business administration, economics, finance, statistics, policy, engineering or law? Please detail how your work experience meets this requirement, including noting the specific number of years in each relevant role.

b. Do you hold a professional license or a post-graduate degree from an institution of higher education that has been accredited by a regional or national accrediting body in an area regulated by the commission, including accounting, public or business administration, economics, finance, statistics, policy, engineering or law?

Response:

Yes, I have a Bachelor of Science (BSc) degree in Accounting and a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree in Finance, from the University of Central Oklahoma, in Edmond, Oklahoma.

i. Do you have at least ten years of experience within the field in which you hold your license or post-graduate degree? Please detail how your work experience meets this requirement, including noting the specific number of years in each relevant role.

Response:

Yes, I have over 20 years of professional experience from the Arizona Corporation Commission and five years from the Oklahoma Corporation Commission, in positions of increasing responsibility, in the field or area regulated by the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission.

Arizona Corporation Commission

I worked for **3½ years** as the **Chief of Compliance and Consumer Service Section**.

- Led the Compliance and Consumer Services Section with responsibilities that include planning, directing subordinates, and interpreting policy.
- Managed the Section's objectives by developing, directing, and implementing procedures that allow Utilities Division Consumer Services and Compliance Staff to process and provide recommendations on applications.
- Led a team of Analysts and Staff and served as a resource for both the Consumer Service and Compliance Sections as well as provided support to the Director's Office of the Utilities Division.
- Developed, supervised, and directed Staff in the obligations of regulatory oversight. Met with Staff to discuss section functions regarding consumer service issues and compliance matters. Attended meetings with Agency leadership and inter-agency coordination. Provided Staff with guidance in handling difficult or complex consumer cases, including reviewing work products from Analysts and Compliance Staff, consultants, and other personnel.
- Provided expertise, leadership, and insight for stakeholders, industry representatives and Director's Office by attending utility related meetings to give and receive information and to participate in consumer service discussions. Oversaw the continuous improvement processes in the activities and overall operations of the section. Oversaw the investigation and arbitration of complaints and compliance with Commission rules and Orders or Decisions.
- Conferred with Agency leadership, utility managers and other related personnel regarding consumer service activities, compliance, and the utility services provided. Served as intermediary between customers, utilities and representatives of other agencies, communities, consultants, and contractors.
- Established and maintained work standards, procedures, methods, and rules. Resolved strategic issues, researched rules and regulations and created operating procedures for both section and the division. Completed detailed reports of investigations and inquiries in prescribed format.
- Participated in legislative, state, and federal agency rule development.

- Monitored utility and compliance filings, regulatory activities, and industry developments. Reviewed the processed complaints, opinions, inquiries relating to utility operations, billings, terminations, quality of service, and facilities of public service corporations. Reviewed work of team members and analyzed Commission Orders, Compliance filings and documents.
- Attended work seminars, meetings, and conferences as representative of the Utilities Division.
- Read and interpreted federal, state, and local codes and regulations to ensure compliance.
- Testified in formal hearings and in courts as an expert witness as needed.

I worked for **17¼ years** as an ***Executive Consultant III***

- Served as Lead Staff and liaised with consultants on behalf of the Commission on various cases.
- Conducted research, developed, formulated, and recommended policies and procedures for appropriate regulatory oversight of public utilities (telecommunications, water and wastewater utilities, gas and electric).
- Reviewed applications consisting of rate and charges, streamline tariff revisions and requests for Certificate of Convenience and Necessity (“CC&N”) for water, wastewater, telecommunication, electric and gas utilities. Reviewed all Interconnection Agreements (including Arbitrations) between Telecommunication Companies operating within the State of Arizona. Provided researched and balanced analysis and recommendations on the matters.
- Prepared schedules (matrix, charts, tables, etc.), Staff Reports and/or pre-filed or oral testimonies detailing findings and recommendations.
- Presented oral testimonies as expert witness on public utilities matters for the State of Arizona during administrative hearings, arbitrations, as well as Open Meetings, in support of recommendations.
- Participated in rulemaking.

Oklahoma Corporation Commission

I worked for **3¼ years** as the ***Public Utility Regulatory Analyst III*** .

- Team Leader on various regulatory cases; responsible for planning, assigning, and reviewing work involving Telecommunication issues.
- Assembled information regarding revenues, expenditures, services charges, tariffs, cost allocations, other operating data, consumer education or as requested by leadership.

- Developed creative ways to get work completed by using various research tools, data, and methodology. Reviewed and planned work activities (for example assigned cases, draft testimony, and testify on related cases on behalf of the Commission) such that deadlines are met in accordance with the rules and make recommendations to the Commission.
- Prepared Signing Agenda Briefing Forms, prepare data requests and responses, attend Motion Docket/Signing Agenda, submit weekly caseload update and monthly staff report as required. Provide technical guidance,

supervision, and training to other analysts in planning and conducting review of assigned cases, reports and other findings and making recommendations and in determining the economic impact of requested changes and similar matters.

- Maintained a general awareness of National, Regional, and State Telecommunications issues and is able to recommend actions or positions on issues based on analysis, experience and knowledge of the industry and its function such that all relevant information is available to the Commission and Staff. Participates in rulemaking.
- Lead Staff person responsible for the Joint Federal and State Oversight Team on Section 272 biennial audit.

I worked for 1¾ years as the ***Tariff and Cost of Service Analyst***.

- Reviewed, evaluated, and analyzed utility companies (telecommunications) applications and recommended action to assigned supervisor.
- Obtained necessary data and documentation from applicant through discovery process; coordinate review with Staff counsel; research and recommend action regarding National and State issues affecting telecommunications companies.
- Handled and answered inquiries by the public, Commissioners, and Legislators regarding rates, tariff, and practices of telephone companies and Commission policy in general.
- Prepared testimony and exhibits supporting Staff recommendations in assigned cases; coordinated with Staff counsel in preparation for and during hearings. Reviewed and enhanced understanding of OCC policies and procedures and Oklahoma Laws pertaining to utility regulation.

I believe my qualifications meet the requirements of No. 15(a) and/or 15(b). Further, I believe the combination of my education, work experience, professional accomplishments, and personal commitment makes me a desirable and compelling candidate for this position.

c. Do you have a financial interest in a public utility in New Mexico or elsewhere?

Response: No

d. Have you been employed by a commission-regulated entity at any time during the last two years?

Response: No

e. Do you agree that you will give your entire time to the business of the commission and will not pursue any other business or vocation or hold any other office for profit?

Response: Yes, I agree.

16. The two sitting PRC Commissioners are registered to vote with the Democratic Party. The New Mexico Constitution requires that no more than two PRC Commissioners can be registered to vote with the same political party. Please state your registered party affiliation.

Response: I am an independent voter and I am not affiliated to any political party.

Please affirm this statement with your signature below:

I affirm that the above information is true and correct, and I have met the statutory and constitutional requirements, as described in questions 15 and 16 above.

Blessing Chukwu
Blessing Chukwu (Sep 27, 2024 14:10 PDT)

Candidate Signature of Affirmation