



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, August 21, 2009

**NEW MEXICANS PLEAD FOR RENEWABLES TO BE PART OF ENERGY MIX**

*Santa Fe, NM* —332 letters were delivered Thursday, August 20, 2009, 10:30 a.m. to the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) concerning New Mexico's public utilities claim to have monopolies on the energy mix in the state. The letters from hundreds of New Mexican voters pled to state government to expand New Mexico's renewable energy industry.

New Mexico utilities PNM, El Paso Electric, and Xcel Energy have filed a motion with the PRC stating that third-party arrangements are illegal and must be regulated as public utilities. All three of these companies have been consistently raising rates and providing energy from dirty coal plants.

The letters urge New Mexico government to lead on clean energy options with its unique wind and solar potential and allow third-party purchase agreements. New Mexico is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> in the U.S. in terms of solar potential, and 12<sup>th</sup> for wind.

Numerous states have turned to third parties for renewable energy projects from installation to operating the system and selling the energy to a commercial customer in order to transition to renewable energy.

In a report released this month by Interstate Renewable Energy Council, the six states that allow third-party ownership account for 87% of installed, grid-connected capacity from photovoltaic systems. According to the Energy Trust of Oregon, more than 80% of commercial solar installations in Oregon involved third-party ownership arrangements in 2008, representing approximately \$35 million in private investment in clean energy resources.



L to R. Interns Daisy Bond, Grace Martinez, Noah Gapsis, Ryan Shaening Pokrasso, New Energy Economy Interns delivering the letters they've collected throughout the summer. Photo by Seth Roffman.

Patrick Griebel, spokesman for the Renewable Energy Industries Association, expressed his frustration with the utilities' moves to the PRC:

“The Governor, the Legislature, the PRC, Mayors Chavez, Coss, Miyagashima and many more have bent over backwards in the past few years to provide clear pro-renewable direction for this state and its communities,” says Griebel. “PNM seems to oppose anything solar unless they own it. New Mexico has an opportunity to build a vibrant, diverse solar marketplace. That’s a recipe for delivering economic, environmental and energy benefits to all. We hope PNM will choose to work with all stakeholders and develop a common solution rather than standing in the way of that brighter future.”

New Energy Economy interns authored several letters describing why it is important that third-party power purchase agreements be permitted by the PRC. In a matter of days, 332 letters signed by New Mexican voters were received. The letters were delivered to the PRC yesterday and filed as public comment in the case.

“Other states have been developing their renewable industries rapidly in the last few years,” commented Ryan Shaening Pokrasso, Intern Director, New Energy Economy. “With the vast untapped resources in New Mexico, we should be at the forefront of this effort and be creating jobs for communities that need them. We have a huge opportunity and it is time that the utilities step up and help position New Mexico as a leader.”

New Mexico utilities PNM, El Paso Electric, and Xcel Energy’s attempt to obstruct the transition from coal-based energy sources that cause global warming to clean, locally produced renewable energy is detrimental to the health, economy and welfare of New Mexicans. New Mexico has abundant renewable energy resources and could become a leading exporter of clean renewable energy and new energy technologies like solar and wind.

*New Energy Economy is dedicated to creating green jobs, boosting the economy and solving global warming.*

[www.newenergyeconomy.org](http://www.newenergyeconomy.org)

**INTERVIEWS AND IMAGES ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST**

Contact:



Jennifer Marshall

505-231-1776

[jennifer@jmarshallplan.com](mailto:jennifer@jmarshallplan.com)

[www.jmarshallplan.com](http://www.jmarshallplan.com)