

PRC to decide validity of Kit Carson protests

By J.R. Logan
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Members of Kit Carson Electrical Cooperative who filed protests against a proposed rate hike will get a chance to have their voices heard at a public hearing Monday (Jan. 10) in Santa Fe.

The hearing is intended to consider the validity of the 317 protests that the Public Regulation Commission received in opposition to the increase. The commission can decide to initiate a formal review of the rate hike if at least 25 of the protests are valid.

However, in documents filed with the commission, the co-op contends that all but six of those protests should be thrown out.

Letters from the co-op were sent to those members whose protests it deemed invalid, and those members can dispute that decision either in writing or at the public hearing.

The commission will make the final call as to the validity of all of the protests.

Gerald Garner Jr., a spokesman for the commission, said there have been no decisions made as to who will be allowed to speak at the hearing and whether they will be subject to time limits.

Garner said the co-op will likely present witnesses to testify, who will then be open to cross-examination. The co-op will also have the opportunity to cross-examine witnesses testifying on behalf of the protesters during the hearing, Garner said.

The hearing starts 9:30 a.m. Monday at the commission's fourth floor hearing room inside the PERA Building, 1120 Paseo de Peralta, Santa Fe. It is expected to draw a packed house, and attendees are encouraged to arrive early.

For those who can't make it to Santa Fe Monday, responses to the co-op's objections can be sent to: New Mexico Public Regulation Commission ATTN: Records Department, 1120 Paseo de Peralta, P.O. Box 1269, Santa Fe, NM 87504-1269.

Garner said e-mail submissions should be sent to commission's associate general counsel, Mary S. Howells, at mary.howells@state.nm.us. Garner said electronic submissions should also be sent to the co-op's attorney at jimmccarthy@cuddymccarthy.com.

Written and e-mailed comments must be received before the start of the meeting Monday. Questions can be directed to Garner by calling (505) 699-7991 or e-mailing gerald.garner@state.nm.us.