

Co-op, critics negotiate rate hike

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Kit Carson Electric Cooperative has come to the negotiating table to find a compromise for an ongoing rate case.

Last week, the co-op sent an email to the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) and to members arguing against the rate hike. The ostensive goal was to sit down and discuss a potential settlement on the rate hike. According to PRC spokesman Gerald Garner, email delivery problems meant only one member, or “intervenor,” replied.

On Friday (June 17), Link Summers discussed a potential compromise on the contentious rate hike issue with co-op management. Though the terms of the discussions are kept private, Summers filed an “alternate proposal” with the PRC outlining some suggestions.

His written proposal suggests that any rate increase affect only those who use more than the average amount, that the co-op renegotiate its contract with Chevron Mining, that the co-op sell off the affiliated propane and Internet businesses, and that all pay and benefit increases for co-op employees be frozen. CEO Lu's Reyes said the details of the negotiation are confidential, but he did say the co-op is interested in “keeping the dialogue going.”

The rate case is scheduled to go before the PRC starting July 6, but an extension was requested. Reyes did suggest the co-op is considering incentivizing conservation by charging those who use fewer kilowatt hours less for their energy. Even if a deal is struck with some of the intervenors, Garner said a hearing would need to be held to give all those involved with the case a chance to address the commissioners. The commission will determine the final outcome of the case, Garner said.