

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE [letter attached]

August 28, 2020

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House GOP Leadership calls out Governor for retaliatory eviction of PRC

Santa Fe, NM – House Republican Leadership recently questioned the Lujan Grisham administration about their forced eviction of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC), and why the relocation of the PRC has not been resolved.

In March 2020, following the Governor’s attempted takeover to control the PRC ([HB 11](#)), the Lujan Grisham administration gave notice that the PRC would need to vacate their offices, located in the historic PERA office building. The Governor’s administration did not provide alternative locations, and additionally the forced government shutdown impeded the PRC finding a new office location. In the meantime, the PRC has been forced to work remotely, without an office location that they can return to. The state’s Government Services Division has changed the locks on the office and not provided access to PRC employees for equipment or other business needs.

House Republican Leaders blasted the Governor in their letter: “We are writing to express our frustration with your administration’s unwillingness or inability to locate appropriate office space for the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC). The failure to provide this constitutionally established entity with a proper location to conduct its statutory responsibilities is, frankly, incomprehensible.”

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State of New Mexico
House of Representatives
STATE CAPITOL
Santa Fe

August 27, 2020

The Honorable Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor, State of New Mexico
State Capitol
490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 400
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Governor:

We are writing to express our frustration with your administration's unwillingness or inability to locate appropriate office space for the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC). The failure to provide this constitutionally established entity with a proper location to conduct its statutory responsibilities is, frankly, incomprehensible. We encourage your office and the General Services Department (GSD) to work closely with the PRC staff and to immediately identify needed office space within state buildings so that this agency can return to undertaking the People's business.

When reports of your administration's decision to kick the PRC out of their longtime office space in the PERA Building first surfaced in mid-March, many of our colleagues and us assumed that a satisfactory resolution would soon be found and a suitable new location would be provided. However, as it now is late August, yet the PRC still has no office space in which to operate and, as a result, has essentially been forced to cease all regular operations. We find it rather hard to believe that there is not sufficient office space in one of many state-owned office buildings within the Santa Fe area where the PRC could not be relocated.

It is well-known that your administration is less than pleased with the PRC due to its various decisions regarding the implementation of the Energy Transition Act. It is also well-documented your administration is the driving force behind a proposed constitutional amendment that would dramatically change the selection process of PRC commissioners and place the operation of the commission fully within the governor office's authority. Therefore, I most certainly hope that both the initial eviction of the PRC from their offices and the continuing lack of cooperation in helping the PRC find new office space is not some type of retaliation against the agency's commissioners and staff. We should not have to remind you that a constitutionally established entity and its duly elected commissioners deserve the respect of every New Mexico public official, no matter what their personal or policy differences may be.

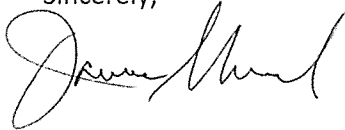
Equally troubling, we have been told the GSD has placed new locks on the PRC's former office space and office equipment, files, and other personal property is not always accessible to staff. If this report is true, we are dismayed as to how the PRC is being treated and it leads considerable credence to our earlier concern that evicting the PRC from their offices is simply nothing more than a vindictive reaction by your administration. Such treatment is inexcusable and we assume your office will take all necessary

action to permit PRC staff to have full access to their former offices and allow them to remove all personal property and other business related materials.

But the most important matter which requires an immediate response by your office and GSD is locating required office space for the PRC and its staff, as well as ensuring sufficient financial resources are available to permit a move to a new location. If a lack of resources within PRC's budget is the cause of this inability to facilitate such a move, we will be pleased to lend our support to any reasonable effort to explore all potential funding sources, both within the purview of the State Legislature and the Executive branch, to ensure the PRC is quickly given appropriate office space. Further, we suggest your office work with PRC commissioners and staff to discuss what steps are necessary in order for the PRC to obtain an emergency loan from the State Board of Finance to provide needed financial resources to pay for any and all moving expenses.

Thank you for your consideration of our various requests associated with finding needed office space for the PRC. Your cooperation and assistance is greatly appreciated. Look forward to your quick response.

Sincerely,



James G. Townsend
House Republican Leader



Rod Montoya
House Republican Whip



Candy Spence Ezzell
House Republican Caucus Chair