

**De Vargas**  
Funeral Home

Family Operated  
Available 24 Hours a Day

505-747-7477

**Public Notice**

Public Notices in Newspapers. Your Right to Know, Delivered Right to Your Door.

about us | contact us | advertise | subscribe  
Saturday, February 06, 2010 Edition



Search the Site

HOME NEWS ABOUT US CONTACT US

CLASSIFIEDS JOBS CARS HOMES

- News
- Sports
- Briefs
- Arts
- Community
- Classifieds
- Opinion
- Obituaries
- Calendar
- Photo Gallery
- Special Sections
- Search Archives
- Submit Your News
- Our Newspaper
- Our Government
- Our Communities

Archives > Briefs

Print | E-mail | Comment (No comments posted.) | Rate | Text Size

## Co-op Opposes Greenhouse Gas Limits

By Joe Crawford  
SUN Staff Writer

Published:  
Wednesday, February 10, 2010 2:52 PM MST

2/4/10

Half a year after renewable energy was a buzzword in the Jemez Mountains Electric Cooperative Board election, Board members are protesting a limit on the use of fossil fuels in the state.

Board members said at a meeting Jan. 22 that greenhouse gas limits to be considered March 11 by the state Environmental Improvement Board are too strict and would drive up electricity rates for Co-op members. Trustees Kenny Borrego, Elias Coriz, Ron Lovato and Patrick Montoya voiced opposition to the proposed limits, and no Board members spoke up in favor of the limits.

The proposal is the result of a petition from the Santa Fe-based group New Energy Economy, which would set a cap on greenhouse gas emissions in New Mexico. The rule would affect operations such as coal-burning power plants, which provide most of the Co-op's electricity. Trustees said they expected the changes to increase rates.

"I just think that the price issue is the biggest hindrance to this renewable energy stuff," Lovato said.

Lovato and Coriz beat incumbents last summer running as allies on a "New Energy" campaign for local production of renewable energy. Coriz said in July that he and Lovato planned to hold public meetings about how the Co-op should use renewable energy, but those meetings haven't happened yet.

Coriz and Lovato both said Jan. 22 they wanted the Co-op to pursue renewable sources of energy that would cause less pollution, but they said the Co-op is not ready for the proposed cap. Coriz said he worried the public might not believe the Co-op was actually working on finding those new energy sources.

"What they're seeing is we're laying back and reacting to these things instead of being proactive," he said.

Representatives from the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative Association and the Tri-State Generation and Transmission Association, where the Co-op buys its electricity, spoke to the Board Jan. 22 about the proposed cap on greenhouse gas emissions. Both organizations are parties to a lawsuit filed Jan. 13 seeking to stop the Environmental Improvement Board from considering the proposal.

"This is not an issue that can be done on a state by state basis because air movement does not stop at state borders," Keven Groenewold, executive vice president of the New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperative Association, said.

The petition by New Energy Economy asks the state to cap greenhouse gas emissions at 25 percent below 1990 emissions levels by 2020. That is the limit recommended by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, a body established by the United Nations Environment Programme and the World Meteorological Organization. New Energy Economy Executive Director John Fogarty said his group based its petition on the Panel's recommendations.

But the limit is also significantly tougher than the caps now being considered by the federal government. President Barack Obama submitted a non-binding pledge last week to the United Nations stating the U.S. would reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by approximately 4 percent below 1990 levels by 2020. The federal government has not passed any laws capping greenhouse gas emissions.

Groenewold said any cap specific to New Mexico would hurt the state's economy and force electric utilities to buy from out-of-state coal-burning plants, which would not be affected by New Mexico's law. Lovato asked Groenewold how much the cap might increase electricity costs, but Groenewold said he didn't have an estimate.

**If You're Reading Us Online, Live in Santa Fe and Want A Real Hard Copy, Here's Where You Can Find It:**

- Both Smiths Foods
- La Fonda
- Allsup's on Guadalupe & Cerrillos
- Book Mountain

**RIO GRANDE SUN**

**Today's Weather**

Española, NM

**34°F**  
forecast...

**Today's Front Page**

**Online Poll**

**Top Homes**

**\$160,000**

4Beds, 2Baths

[More Top Homes](#)

Introducing unlimited calls around the world and the U.S.

---

Only \$24<sup>99</sup>/MO

Vonage  
START SAVING

"Sometimes those numbers are hard to pin down, and if you give them a worst case scenario, you're called an alarmist," Groenwold said.

Fogarty said there's no scientific basis for the claims his group's proposal would increase electricity costs. He said the group is in favor of federal legislation also, but since that doesn't seem likely to happen soon, it is pushing the state to act first.

"We think that New Mexico, with the wealth of renewable energy resources here, if we create a market for renewable energy by putting a cap on fossil fuel energy, we could attract hundreds of millions of dollars in investment in clean energy," he said.

Fogarty pointed to a paper by Michael Livermore, executive director of the Institute for Policy Integrity at the New York University School of Law, which argues for charging companies that emit carbon dioxide.

Livermore claims laws making greenhouse emissions more expensive are the best tools for spurring innovation in renewable energy.

"When prices of a commodity are low, there is less incentive to invest in innovation to reduce use of that commodity," Livermore states.

At the end of the presentation Jan. 22, General Manager Ernesto Gonzales asked Tri-State Government Relations Analyst Rhonda Mitchell what the Co-op could do to oppose the proposed rule. Mitchell suggested the trustees write letters to the Environmental Improvement Board and speak against the cap at a March 1 hearing.

"We know that the environmental movement is very organized," she said.

[« Previous Article](#)

[County Grader Wrecked](#)

[Next Article »](#)

[Soph. Designs Gala Cover](#)

### Article Rating

Current Rating: 0 of 0 votes! Rate File:

### Reader Comments

The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of riograndesun.com.

### Submit a Comment

We encourage your feedback and dialog, all comments will be reviewed by our Web staff before appearing on the Web site.

Name:

Email:

(optional)

Comments:

Image Verification: (Case sensitive)

 

Return to: [Briefs](#) < | [Home](#) < | [Top of Page](#) ^

#### Sections

- Homepage
- News
- Sports
- Briefs
- Community
- Cops/Courts
- Arts
- Classifieds
- Opinion
- Obituaries

#### Online Features

- Calendar
- Guestbook
- Special Sections
- Online Photo Gallery
- Syndicated Features

#### Services

- About Us
- Advertise on Our Site
- Contact Us
- Subscriber Services
- Make us your Home Page



**RSS Feeds** - RSS is a format set up for sharing content on the Web. [Click here to view available feeds »](#)

Copyright © 2010 Rio Grande Sun.

All rights reserved. This material may not be broadcast, published, rewritten or redistributed without written permission.

Powered by [TownNews.com](#)

