

Jason Marks (D-Alb.), Reelection Kick-Off Speech, October 10, 2007, Ladera Golf Course Banquet Room.

I want to begin by thanking the volunteers who helped tonight at this event; Ken Sanchez, my campaign treasurer, and most especially my wife Maxine, without whose hard work and unflagging support, I wouldn't be able to do this.

This whole journey started almost exactly 4 years ago today when I shared my idea of running for office with my good friend and neighbor, Chris Saiz

Four years ago, we had a Public Regulation Commission with a nominal 3 person democratic majority that was chaired by a Republican.

Four years ago, we had a Public Reg Comm'n that took every opportunity to seek out controversy about such things as district offices, state cars, and personal attacks against each other.

Yet, when it came to the real work for which they were elected, regulating utilities and phone companies, insurance and so forth, I saw a Commission that was afraid of controversy, afraid of taking positions.

My predecessor, good man - who was not the source of the infighting, but not able to control it either - was so unfamiliar with the nitty gritty of the regulatory process, that our district - Albuquerque - would have been given a new area code in 2002 so that rural areas, with less people, business, and phones could keep the 505. The implementation of that mistake was only averted when more phone numbers were found, pushing the day of reckoning forward a few years.

Four years ago, I began asking voters for their support. I told them I had the qualifications, would work hard, and I promised, if elected to:

- Hold Qwest accountable
- Promote renewable energy
- Keep utility rates as low as possible
- and Keep the 505 area code

With support from people here today, (and many some who had to send regrets) four years ago we ran a old-fashioned grass roots campaign. And lo and behold, on an election night when Bush beat Kerry, nationally and here in NM, and R's kept congress, Jason Marks "political nobody" won a Republican district by over 6,000 votes.

I was fortunate that at the same time, Northern New Mexico was electing to the PRC, Ben Ray Lujan, who I quickly found out was a kindred spirit, with a similar vision of what the PRC could do for New Mexico. I am proud to have his support here tonight, as well as Commissioner

Sandy Jones, who joined us this year.

This new Commission is 33 months old. And I am proud to say, in that time, I have kept those promises I made when I stood on doorsteps with my clipboard:

- We have held Qwest accountable to New Mexico. Qwest has been forced to make up their entire \$225 million investment shortfall and then some and to pay over \$20 million in bill credits to its customers for poor quality service.
- Qwest is subject to a three year rate freeze that I sponsored and drafted.
- Utility rates, in a time of rising energy costs, have been kept lower than they otherwise would have been. For example, PNM's 16% gas rate increasee knocked down to 6.5% on a plan that I put forward.
- New Mexico got a new area code over the past weekend, and this time it was a non-event, because I was able to secure a plan that allowed the center of the state, including Albuquerque metro area and Santa Fe, to keep "505." And for those portions of the state having to change, we provided a year advance warning, and then another year for the transition period.
- The PRC's public safety functions SFMO, pipeline safety, and motor carrier bureau have beefed up and enforcement cases have been carried out for the first time in recent memory
- We've lowered title insurance rates by more than 11% in the past two years and are in the middle of developing a major reform plan for that industry.
- We have worked with our union brothers and sisters from CWA, the Electricians, and AFSCME to have a preference for N.M., union labor on utility projects.
- Remembering all the Republicans who I represent, and especially those whose votes put me over the top, I have found market based solutions when possible, and opposed regulations with real burdens and unclear benefits.
- And, last, but certainly not least, I have raised the bar for utilities on renewable energy and greenhouse gas mitigation strategies.

None of this fell into my lap - it took hard work and a vision of what the PRC could be for New Mexico.

We started by putting an end to the pettiness that had consumed the commission. We cleaned up the ethical lapses and abuses afflicting our Insurance Division, forcing former Super Serna into "retirement" and firing his chief deputy.

We worked harder, holding more hearings and meetings, and we opened dockets ourselves,

instead of merely waiting for someone to bring them, when it was necessary to shine a bright light into issues that were being overlooked.

Certainly, I think we'd all like to see another four years of this kind of active, ethical, and effective good government at the PRC

But there's more at stake.

The PRC has - under the right leadership - a key role to play in the challenge of our generation - the transition from fossil fuel dependence to an energy future that is based on clean and sustainable technologies.

Fossil fuels have been very good to our country, our world, and for New Mexico. Exploiting fossil fuel energy has made possible our modern standard of living. Here in New Mexico, oil and gas have been important sources of economic growth and development.

But today, continued reliance on fossil fuels presents more risks than opportunities. We've all experienced the doubling of gasoline costs, and we've seen natural gas for home heating, that used to be around \$3 per 1000 BTUs go past \$14 with Hurricane Katrina and never go back, staying in a range of \$6 to \$10. Even coal prices have increased dramatically. Fossil fuel prices will continue to rise, and expose us to financial risks we don't want to bear.

At the same time, fossil fuel use is the main driver for catastrophic environmental risk. Climate changes is already occurring, we are already seeing slightly warmer winters and slightly hotter summers. A respected climate scientist at UNM has projected that we will see 2 to 3 degree temperature increases over the next 20 years, no matter what we do now. And, if we do nothing, temperatures in our region will go up by 6 to 7 degrees by the end of the century. Climate shift of that magnitude will decimate New Mexico's agriculture, our outdoor recreation economy, our hunting, fishing, skiing. Our children and grandchildren won't have the opportunity to enjoy the New Mexico that we love. Residents of coastal areas would have it even worse, losing their homes and livelihoods to rising sea levels.

Forty percent of the greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. are produced from electric generation, most of that from the burning of coal, like we do out in the Four-Corners. Commission Lujan and I have made public commitments that we will do everything possible to prevent New Mexico electric utilities from building new pulverized coal plants! (The proposed Desert Rock plant is directed at selling power outside of New Mexico, so it's not in our jurisdiction.) We will look at advanced coal technology that sequesters carbon dioxide emissions, and we push the deployment of solar, wind, and other renewables.

Last year, the PRC adopted a proposal I made that requires utilities to use standardized prices for carbon dioxide emissions in their long range resource plans. I borrowed this idea from Oregon, where their utility commission has used it to reject the construction of new coal power plants.

This past legislative session, Commissioner Lujan and I lobbied for an extension of the state's

renewable portfolio standard law. The RPS had been 6% now, and 10% in 2011. This new law takes us to 15% by 2015 and 20% by 2020. We had to fight hard against utility opposition to keep from having the standards watered-down with loopholes. Please join me in thanking the legislators here tonight, all of whom supported and passed this bill.

Most recently, the Commission adopted rules for the RPS that I proposed which create diversity targets for solar energy and distributed generation. New Mexico's solar resource has the potential to take over a large portion of our electricity needs over time, but we have to start developing it. The new rules require utilities to actually build large scale solar plants, instead of merely offering vague plans for the future. We believe that we can do this without big rate increases, and the rules establish rate impact caps at 2% for 2011.

These rules were controversial. We got strong support from scientists, engineers, environmental advocates, and ordinary citizens, but the utilities did not think it was our role to tell them what kind of plants to build.

Unfortunately the group that believes utility execs are best positioned to make decisions for the public would love to roll-back the progress we've made. That cannot be allowed to happen.

I already have one opponent for the general election in November 2008. But you and I know, that if I work as hard as I did last time, I can hold this seat and continue our progress. But I also can't get there without your strong support. I need your help with volunteering, gathering nominating petitions, and qualifying me for public financing.

Four years from now, I want to be able to say, that with your support for my reelection, we are now firmly on the path to that clean and sustainable energy supply that makes jobs, not environmental liabilities, and that makes it possible for us to continue to enjoy our way of life and standard of living without denying that same opportunity to future generations.

[Give explanation of public financing]

Thank you.