NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 14, 2008

NEW MEXICO PUBLIC REGULATION COMMISSION
REMINDS CONSUMERS THAT WINTER MORATORIUM STARTS NOVEMBER 15, 2008

SANTA FE, N.M. – The New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (“NMPRC” or “Commission”) would like to remind consumers that protection from winter shut-off begins this Saturday, November 15, 2008. Utility customers who may be eligible for Low Income Heating Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) will be protected, by state law, from disconnection of services during the period beginning November 15, 2008 through March 15, 2008. Please check with your local utility company for information and availability.

To be protected, the customer must be eligible to receive LIHEAP and have no past due amounts on their billing statements. Or if the consumer has made an agreed upon payment plan with their utility company they will also be protected from shut off. This protects customers from disconnection for non-payment during the winter’s coldest months of the year. However, this protection does not eliminate the obligation for customers to pay their utility bill. Customers should try making payments continuously so they will not be faced with a larger balance at the end of the protection period.

In relation to the prohibition on discontinuance of utility service during the winter heating season set forth in NMSA 1978 § 27-6-18.1, the Commission this week issued its Notice of Proposed Rulemaking for changes to its rule 17.5.410 NMAC. The proposed changes to this rule includes new language and required forms of notice relating to the prohibition on discontinuance of utility service during the winter heating season set forth in NMSA 1978 § 27-6-18.1. In addition, other revisions being proposed are made for the general purpose of updating, reorganizing and clarifying the current rule.

To avoid potential disconnection of services please contact the New Mexico Human Services Department for LIHEAP eligibility information at 1.800.283.4465. Customers should also contact their electric and natural gas providers to verify their eligibility for LIHEAP and the protection from disconnect during this winter heating season.

For more information, please contact the NMPRC Public Information Office at 505.827.4446 or by cell phone at 505.699.7991.

1 888 4 ASK PRC
www.nmprc.state.nm.us