

Friday, February 4, 2011

*Santa Fe, NM – Congressman Ben Ray Luján of New Mexico's Third District sent a letter to the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) today requesting that FERC review the cause of the gas outage throughout the state and take any necessary action to prevent a future crisis.*

*Below is the text of the letter:*

Chairman Jon Wellinghoff  
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
888 First Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20426

February 4, 2011

Dear Chairman Wellinghoff,

I am writing to alert you to an energy crisis New Mexico is experiencing, and to ask for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Yesterday New Mexico faced a disruption in its natural gas supply after extreme temperatures caused a significant rise in peak demand. This disruption resulted in gas outages affecting over 32,000 homes, leaving thousands of families without the ability to heat their home in what was one of the coldest days in the history of the state. Emergency demand reduction measures had to be taken immediately and emergency warming shelters were made available for families suffering from the power outages.

In my district in New Mexico, over 105,000 homes are powered with natural gas. Natural gas transmission systems must be capable of meeting peak demand, even during unexpected and extreme weather conditions. As the federal agency charged with regulating the interstate transmission of natural gas, I ask that FERC exercise its regulatory authority to address this crisis by conducting a thorough review of the incidents that occurred and by identifying any causal factors leading to these incidents. Most importantly, I urge FERC to do everything in its power to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

Thank you for your continued commitment to ensuring the reliability of natural gas transmission systems, and please do not hesitate to contact me or my office if we can be of any help.

Sincerely,

Ben Ray Luján  
Member of Congress (NM-03)

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