

**FOR IMMEDIATE
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PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS, ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP

*James Brown elected as PSC Chair, Brad Johnson elected as Vice-Chair.
Commissioners united in desire to set agency back on course.*

HELENA, Mont. - The Montana Public Service Commission today unanimously elected Commissioner James Brown (R-Dillon) to serve as the Commission's Chairman. Brown succeeds former Commission Chair Bob Lake (R-Hamilton), who was term-limited after serving eight years on the Commission. Commissioner Brad Johnson (R-East Helena) was unanimously re-elected to the post of vice-chair.

Brown and his fellow newly-elected commissioner, Jennifer Fielder (R-Thompson Falls), joined the Commission yesterday, after having been elected to four-year terms. Commissioner Tony O'Donnell (R-Billings) was also re-elected to a second four-year term.

"It is an honor to represent the people of Montana on the Commission, and I very much look forward to helping this agency become a model of good governance that serves the people of Montana well," said Fielder.

Brown said the position of chair is really a "chairmanship among equals" adding that he looks forward to working with his fellow commissioners in a respectful and collaborative fashion.

"It's an honor to have the confidence and support of my peers as a newly elected commissioner," said Brown. **"The PSC is unique in that it is not run by a single agency head, but five dedicated public servants who bring unique life experiences and skillsets to the office."**

Brown said he believes he and his fellow commissioners are united in their desire to steer the Commission away from personality conflicts and toward the agency's legal responsibilities.

"Job number one is making sure we are fulfilling the important regulatory and public safety functions entrusted to us," Brown said. **"The PSC's job is to strike a just and reasonable balance between utilities and their Montana consumers. To do that, we need to**

create an environment in which commissioners and staff can deploy their unique talents in service of the public interest.”

Brown is a fourth-generation Montanan who grew up and went to school in Beaverhead County. Brown graduated from the University of Montana in 1994 with a double major in History and Political Science. Brown is a lawyer by profession, and operates his own law firm with offices in Dillon and Helena. Brown is licensed to practice law in Montana and Washington.

Fielder previously served eight years in the Montana State Senate. She also brings to the Commission two decades of professional planning, design, and project management experience with the types of industries regulated by the Commission, including railways, pipelines, electric generation, telecommunications, water works, solid waste disposal, and federal energy regulatory proceedings. Fielder has also served as the CEO of the American Lands Council, a national nonprofit dedicated to improving public access, environmental quality, and economic productivity on federally controlled public lands.

The Commission regulates private investor-owned natural gas, electric, telephone, water, and sewer companies, certain motor carriers, and oversees natural gas pipeline safety and intrastate railroad safety. The Commission works to ensure that Montanans receive safe and reliable service from regulated public utilities while paying reasonable rates. For more information, visit psc.mt.gov or contact the Commission at 1-800-646-6150. Follow the Commission at [Twitter.com/@MT_PSC](https://twitter.com/MT_PSC) or visit [Facebook.com/MontanaPSC](https://facebook.com/MontanaPSC).

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