

NEWS RELEASE  
MONTANA PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

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PSC Elects New Chairman, Vice Chairman

HELENA - The Montana Public Service Commission voted unanimously Monday to elect Bill Gallagher, R-Helena, as chairman and Bob Lake, R-Hamilton, as vice chairman.

"I am confident that I assume leadership of a Public Service Commission that will not forget it is the public that we are responsible to, and not special interests or their lobbyists," Gallagher said. "It is a new day."

Earlier Monday, Montana Supreme Court Justice James A. Rice administered the oath of office to incoming commissioners Lake, Roger Koopman, R-Bozeman, and Kirk Bushman, R-Billings.

The incoming commissioners join current members Gallagher and Travis Kavulla, R-Great Falls, to form the state's first all-Republican PSC.

Kavulla, who served as chairman for the past 20 months, nominated Gallagher as his successor to the chairmanship.

In their acceptance speeches, both Gallagher and Lake acknowledged and praised the PSC staff.

After serving the last two years on the Commission, Gallagher described the PSC's staff as "a small group of dedicated, hardworking, underpaid employees who provide the underpinning of the work that is accomplished here."

He further pointed to the diverse background of the new Commission, a mix of current or former business owners, state representatives and an engineer.

Gallagher and Lake agreed that they are anxious to work with staff in the coming years to serve all Montanans.

"The message from voters is unanimous: Affordable and reliable power for Montana families and businesses without preference to the kind or source of energy or special interest," Gallagher said.

Commissioner Lake in his acceptance comments said he's honored to serve as vice chairman, adding that the new commission has the team in place to work toward improving the state's economy.

"I think we have the opportunity in this commission to have some very significant changes to the Montana ratepayers as far as the cost of their energy and other services," he said. "I think we have the opportunity to have a fairly significant input to the economic development of the state of Montana."

The PSC generally regulates private, investor-owned natural gas, electric, telephone, private water and sewer companies doing business in Montana. The agency also regulates certain limited transportation service providers.

For more information, contact PSC Communications/Research Director Justin Post at 406.444.6171. Follow the PSC at [Twitter.com/@MT\\_PSC](https://twitter.com/MT_PSC) or visit [Facebook.com/MontanaPSC](https://facebook.com/MontanaPSC).