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PSC Vice Chair Kent Bernier Won't Seek Reappoint When His Term Ends in November

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Public Services Commission Vice Chair Kent Bernier said Tuesday he would not seek reappointment when his term ends on November 20, leaving the PSC without a quorum if Governor Albert Bryan does not appoint someone in time to fill Mr. Bernier's seat. The PSC needs four members for a quorum and it currently only has four members: Chairman David Hughes, Mr. Bernier, Commissioners Andrew Rutnik and Raymond Williams — all of whom were present at Tuesday's meeting.

“While my service to the PSC will conclude, my dedication to the VI will continue and my public advocacy is assured,” said Mr. Bernier during the meeting. He has served almost three years at the PSC.

The board is supposed to have a total of 7 voting members along with two non-voting or ex-officio members. The seven voting members are each appointed by the governor and confirmed by the Legislature. The two non-voting members are comprised of elected senators and are appointed by the president of the Legislature. Annual elections are held and a chairman and vice-chairman are elected by commission members.

In a letter addressed to Governor Bryan, Mr. Bernier said he announced his decision early to give the governor enough time to choose a successor. Mr. Bernier also highlighted a number of important issues that he believes the governor should keep in mind when selecting a new PSC commissioner. They include:

- The role of the PSC in restructuring the overbearing debt of the Water & Power Authority
- The securitization of WAPA is essential with mandatory PSC regulatory oversight
- The role of the PSC should WAPA go into involuntary receivership or bankruptcy
- The role of the PSC in restructuring, reorganizing the power generation, distribution and billing system of WAPA
- The PSC must move to approve the IRP and a new energy transformation plan
- The oversight and regulation of mobile telephone companies by the PSC
- The oversight and regulation of internet providers, including VINGN, by the PSC.

"As our society traverse the 21st Century, the utilities of telephone, internet and electricity are too important to be ignored, underutilized or mismanaged," said Mr. Bernier. "Lack of basic infrastructure development inhibits our competitiveness in education, research, technology, commerce and other social endeavors."