

1

Chris Murray

From: Ron Binz [rbinz@rbinz.com]
Sent: Sunday, July 07, 2013 12:58 PM
To: Chris Murray; John Peschke
Cc: Miller Chris; Anderson Kai; Meehan Michael; kiely pam; Doyle Carrie; Baker Matt
Subject: Monday's meeting

Hi, Chris and John. Hope you had a good weekend.

Welcome back, John. I look forward to meeting you on my next trip to Washington.

I have decided not to come to DC this week. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] I should be back the following week, though.

So Chris, I'll need to ask you to arrange at least a conference line bridge. There will likely be two other callers in: Pam Kiely from Denver and Michael Meehan from DC, who will be traveling somewhere. You also mentioned the potential for a WebEx connection. That would be great if you can set it up in time, but not essential.

You should send out the call-in info to everyone copied on this email.

Thanks very much. I'll speak with you tomorrow.

My best,

Ron

Ron Binz
Public Policy Consulting
720-425-3335
www.rbinz.com
rbinz@rbinz.com

Sent from my iPad



Andrea Spring <andrea.spring@ferc.gov>

Nomination Mtg - UPDATED INFO

2 messages

Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>

Mon, Jul 8, 2013 at 10:11 AM

To: Ron Binz <rbinz@rbinz.com>

Cc: Leonard Tao <Leonard.Tao@ferc.gov>, Andrea Spring <andrea.spring@ferc.gov>, John Peschke <John.Peschke@ferc.gov>, Jehmal Hudson <Jehmal.Hudson@ferc.gov>, Mary O'Driscoll <Mary.O'Driscoll@ferc.gov>, Sandra Waldstein <sandra.waldstein@ferc.gov>, Chris Miller <cmiller@ajw-inc.com>, Anderson Kai <kanderson@cassidy.com>, Meehan Michael <michael@vennsq.com>, klely pam <pam@pkstrategiesllc.com>, Doyle Carrie <carrie@ef.org>, Baker Matt <MBaker@hewlett.org>, "Stephens, Jeff" <Jeffrey_M_Stephens@who.eop.gov>, Miriam Clayton <miriam.clayton@ferc.gov>

Here is the logistical information for today's meeting:

Time: 1:15 pm - 3:00 pm (eastern)

For those attending in person:

FERC headquarters

888 1st Street NE (Near Union Station/CNN)

Room 11J-7

When you arrive have security call x 8004 and someone will come down to escort you up.

For those on WebEx:

You should have received your log-in info in a separate email.

For those on the phone (WebEx participants should dial in as well):

internal phone x 6888

within DC area 202-502-6888

Outside DC area 1-877-857-1347

Phone Meeting ID: 2973

Stephens, Jeff <Jeffrey_M_Stephens@who.eop.gov>

Mon, Jul 8, 2013 at 1:29 PM

To: Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>, Ron Binz <rbinz@rbinz.com>

Cc: Leonard Tao <Leonard.Tao@ferc.gov>, Andrea Spring <andrea.spring@ferc.gov>, John Peschke <John.Peschke@ferc.gov>, Jehmal Hudson <Jehmal.Hudson@ferc.gov>, Mary O'Driscoll <Mary.O'Driscoll@ferc.gov>, Sandra Waldstein <sandra.waldstein@ferc.gov>, Chris Miller <cmiller@ajw-inc.com>, Anderson Kai <kanderson@cassidy.com>, Meehan Michael <michael@vennsq.com>, klely pam <pam@pkstrategiesllc.com>, Doyle Carrie <carrie@ef.org>, Baker Matt <MBaker@hewlett.org>, Miriam Clayton <miriam.clayton@ferc.gov>

Per our call, I wanted to send around my contact information:

Jeffrey M. Stephens

Senior Confirmations Advisor

7/30/13

FERC Mail - Nomination Mtg - UPDATED INFO

Office of Legislative Affairs

The White House

jstephens@who.eop.gov

202-456-7878 (desk)

202-503-5407 (cell)

From: Chris Murray [mailto:chris.murray@ferc.gov]

Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 10:12 AM

To: Ron Binz

Cc: Leonard Tao; Andrea Spring; John Peschke; Jehmal Hudson; Mary O'Driscoll; Sandra Waldstein; Chris Miller; Anderson Kai; Meehan Michael; kiely pam; Doyle Carrie; Baker Matt; Stephens, Jeff; Miriam Clayton

Subject: Nomination Mtg - UPDATED INFO

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Phone Meeting ID: 2973

Sandra Waldstein

From: Stephens, Jeff
Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 1:29 PM
To: Chris Murray; Ron Binz
Cc: Leonard Tao; Andrea Spring; John Peschke; Jehmal Hudson; Mary O'Driscoll; Sandra Waldstein; Chris Miller; Anderson Kai; Meehan Michael; kiely pam; Doyle Carrie; Baker Matt; Miriam Clayton
Subject: RE: Nomination Mtg - UPDATED INFO

Per our call, I wanted to send around my contact information:

Jeffrey M. Stephens
Senior Confirmations Advisor
Office of Legislative Affairs
The White House

jstephens@who.eop.gov
202-456-7878 (desk)
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From: Chris Murray [<mailto:chris.murray@ferc.gov>]
Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 10:12 AM
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Phone Meeting ID: 2973

E&E Daily

FERC: Clean energy group taps PR firm to advocate for Binz amid mounting attacks

Hannah Northey, E&E reporter

Published: Tuesday, July 23, 2013

Clean energy advocates have hired a Washington, D.C.-based public relations firm to advocate for President Obama's pick to head the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and thwart increasing attacks from Colorado's coal industry and free market groups.

Green Tech Action Fund, a San Francisco group that describes itself as a nonpartisan grant-making organization, has hired VennSquared Communications to advocate for Ron Binz as the next chairman of FERC.

If confirmed by the Senate, Binz would have a five-year term and replace Jon Wellinghoff at the helm of the commission, which regulates the electric grid, gas pipelines, liquefied natural gas export terminals and hydroelectric projects.

Sarah Elliott, senior vice president of VennSquared, said in a statement that the action fund believes Binz's regulatory approach when he chaired the Colorado Public Utilities Commission from 2007 to 2011 was "sound" and that the group supports his nomination.

Binz was not aware that the group had hired the firm and was not involved in selecting VennSquared, she added.

"Our support includes helping to make sure accurate information about Ron and his record are in the media as the Senate considers this important nomination," Elliott said.

Clean energy advocates are ramping up their efforts amid increasing criticism from Colorado's coal industry, Denver-based libertarian think tank Independence Institute and Washington, D.C., think tank American Tradition Institute, which have accused Binz of promoting the Obama administration's "war on coal" (E&ENews PM, July 16).

Those groups have pointed to Binz's work on Colorado's contentious "Clean Air, Clean Jobs" legislation while leading the Colorado PUC, an effort that prompted Xcel Energy Inc. to shutter coal plants in the Denver area on then-Gov. Bill Ritter's (D) watch.

Just how much muscle the Green Tech Action Fund has is unclear.

The group was most recently involved in pushing a proposal on Michigan's state ballot that would have raised the state's renewable energy standard to 25 percent by 2025. The proposal, which has since failed, pitted utilities, chambers of commerce and their allies against environmentalists, public health advocates, faith groups and national organizations like the action fund (ClimateWire, Oct. 12, 2012).

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FERC Mail - July 23 newsclips

It also remains unclear how the groups' messaging wars will play out on Capitol Hill and at Binz's hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which will likely take place after the August break.

Binz has secured the support of a number of large utilities and Democrats, but Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, the ranking Republican on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, has vowed to "carefully consider" his qualifications.

"Binz has been a public figure since 1984, so there's plenty of material to review," Robert Dillon, a spokesman for the senator, said in a statement. "The chairman of FERC must have a record of balance, fairness and judicial temperament. And he must be willing to recognize and accept the commission's distinct role."

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The Energy Daily

July 24, 2013

Utility CEOs on board for PR push for FERC chair nominee

BY JEFF BEATTIE

In an unusual effort that may signal anxiety about potential opposition in the Senate to the nomination, a clean tech advocacy group has hired a Washington, D.C.-based public relations firm to highlight support for the nomination of former Colorado energy regulator Ron Binz for chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Minutes after Binz was nominated for FERC chairman June 27, Venn Squared Communications shot emails to reporters with several endorsements of Binz, including from the chief executive officers of Xcel Energy, which has extensive operations in Colorado, and New Jersey-based Public Service Enterprise Group—both big utilities that routinely have business before FERC.

Also endorsing Binz was Lola Spradley, former Republican speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, who said Binz's "expertise and leadership proved critical to advance a balanced approach in Colorado. He will be an excellent addition to FERC."

The endorsements could be useful to Binz—a green-leaning Democratic appointee—in warding off attacks from GOP and coal-friendly senators who might be unhappy with Binz's efforts in Colorado supporting closure of some of Xcel's coal plants.

No senator has raised any questions about the PR effort for Binz, but it surprised some FERC watchers, who say they do not recall such visible public relations work backing a FERC nominee. Some have also wondered who is footing the bill for the work of Venn Squared Communications on behalf of Binz's nomination.

Turns out it is the Green Tech Action Fund (GTAF), which calls itself a non-partisan, tax-exempt grant-making organization "affiliated with" the Energy Foundation, a San Francisco-based partnership of several large foundations that back green energy and energy efficiency initiatives.

While the Energy Foundation is a 501 c(3) non-profit under Internal Revenue Service rules, which limits its ability do advocacy work, the Green Tech Action Fund is a 501c(4) organization, a class of non-profits that can advocate more freely.

In a statement Monday, the Green Tech Action Fund said it "believes that Ron Binz's regulatory approach as chairman of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission was sound and we support President Obama's decision to nominate him to be the next chairman of FERC.

"Our support includes helping to make sure accurate information about Ron and his record are in the media as the Senate considers this important nomination. GTAF is a 501c (4) organization that supports clean energy policy."

Among the Energy Foundation's board members are Mark Burget, executive vice president and North American regional director of The Nature Conservancy; William Ruckelshaus, Environmental Protection Agency administrator under President Ronald Reagan; and former Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter (D), who appointed Binz to the Colorado PUC and later hired Binz at the Center for the New Energy Economy at Colorado State University, where Ritter is the director.

It is routine for companies, trade groups and interest groups to lobby quietly for favored government nominees. What could spark questions, however, is support for a nominee from a firm or interest group that might later be subject to regulatory rulings by the nominee.

Binz has been nominated to replace current FERC Chairman Jon Wellinghoff, and the two share strong support for renewable energy and energy efficiency. Binz also has been outspoken on the need for U.S. policymakers to begin curbing greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change—a goal President Obama pledged to pursue in a major June speech.

However, there are signs that Binz could face tough questioning from some Republicans and coal-country senators at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which will likely take place in September, a spokesman for committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) said Tuesday.

Binz angered the coal industry in 2010 by helping shape a state law requiring Xcel Energy and other utilities in the state to retrofit, repower or shutter much of their coal-fired generation to reduce regional haze pollution. Although the Colorado Mining Association moved to have Binz recuse himself from subsequent related PUC proceedings, the PUC rejected the motion and the decision was upheld by a state appeals court.

However, that criticism could be substantially undercut by the endorsements given to Binz by Xcel Energy Chairman, President and CEO Ben Fowke. In the press release issued by Venn Squared Communications, Fowke said Binz as Colorado PUC chairman "demonstrated his leadership with foresight and a willingness to evolve regulatory compacts to deliver pragmatic solutions."

Ralph Izzo, chairman and president of Public Service Enterprise Group, praised Binz in the Venn Squared press release for his work in Colorado, saying he "showed a willingness to work with diverse groups and elected officials of both parties to develop and implement commonsense legislation."

However, Binz may be grilled by Republican senators over his outspoken support in the past for government action to cut carbon emissions.

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FERC Mail - July 24 newsclips

In a 2010 op-ed in IHS The Energy Daily, Binz called for a "cap-and-innovate" system to cut carbon dioxide (CO2) emission from electric utilities. His proposal would allocate CO2 allowances to utilities for free and then slowly reduce the allowances to force utilities to find cost-effective ways to lower emissions.

He also suggested creating a \$4 per metric ton "research tax" on CO2 emissions to generate about \$10 billion for research and development on carbon capture and sequestration technology, renewables and energy storage. The research tax would raise U.S. electric rates by less than 3 percent, Binz wrote.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), ranking Republican on energy committee, issued a decidedly cool statement on Binz' nomination after it was announced, saying she would "carefully consider the nominee's qualifications and fitness to serve – not only as commissioner, but also as chair."

Binz also faces the risk of losing key Democratic senators on the energy committee, most notably Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W. Va.), who has been among the loudest voices assailing Obama for climate policies and regulatory actions hurting the coal industry.

However, Manchin will feel pressure to support his party's nominee for FERC chair, and he has stayed mum on Binz's nomination thus far.

Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.), another Democratic committee member who generally supports fossil fuel industries, also has not tipped her hand on Binz's nomination.

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Re: URGENT -- please review Binz bio for any final changes

John Peschke <john.peschke@ferc.gov>
To: rbinz@rbinz.com, chris.murray@ferc.gov

Wed, Jul 10, 2013 at 6:28 AM

Thanks.

From: Ron Binz [mailto:rbinz@rbinz.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 10, 2013 12:28 AM
To: Chris Murray (chris.murray@ferc.gov) <chris.murray@ferc.gov>; John Peschke (john.peschke@ferc.gov) <john.peschke@ferc.gov>
Subject: FW: URGENT -- please review Binz bio for any final changes

Chris and John, both Chris Miller and Kai Anderson signed off on the Binz Bio document. Apparently we will have no further edits. Please convey everything to the Committee whenever you're ready.

Thanks,

Ron

Ron Binz
Public Policy Consulting
333 Eudora
Denver, CO 80220-5721

720-425-3335

rbinz@rbinz.com

www.rbinz.com

From: Ron Binz
Sent: Tuesday, July 09, 2013 10:09 PM
To: Anderson, Kai (WAS-CAS)
Subject: Re: URGENT -- please review Binz bio for any final changes

8/13/13

FERC Mail - Re: URGENT -- please review Binz bio for any final changes

Thanks, Kai.

Ron Binz

Public Policy Consulting

720-425-3335

www.rbinz.com

rbinz@rbinz.com

Sent from my iPad

On Jul 9, 2013, at 9:45 PM, "Anderson, Kai (WAS-CAS)" <kanderson@cassidy.com> wrote:

Good here.

From: Ron Binz <rbinz@rbinz.com>

Date: Tuesday, July 9, 2013 4:07 PM

To: Carrie Doyle <carrie@ef.org>, Chris Miller <cmiller@ajw-inc.com>, Kai Anderson <KAnderson@cassidy.com>, "MBaker@hewlett.org" <MBaker@hewlett.org>, Michael Meehan <michael@vennsq.com>, Pam <pam@pkstrategiesllc.com>

Cc: "MBaker@hewlett.org" <MBaker@hewlett.org>

Subject: RE: URGENT -- please review Binz bio for any final changes

And now for the attachment.

Ron Binz

Public Policy Consulting

333 Eudora

Denver, CO 80220-5721

720-425-3335

rbinz@rbinz.com

www.rbinz.com

From: Ron Binz

Sent: Tuesday, July 09, 2013 2:07 PM

To: Carrie Doyle (carrie@ef.org); Chris Miller; Kai Anderson; MBaker@hewlett.org; Michael

8/13/13

FERC Mail - Re: URGENT -- please review Binz bio for any final changes

Meehan; pam kiely (pam@pkstrategiesllc.com)

Cc: MBaker@hewlett.org

Subject: URGENT -- please review Binz bio for any final changes

Importance: High

Team, attached is the proposed one-page bio that will be sent to the Senate ENR Committee. Please look this over quickly TODAY and give me any feedback. Chris Murray and John Peschke at the FERC need a final version for inclusion in my package, which should go to the Committee tomorrow.

Thanks. Sorry for the short notice.

Ron

Ron Binz

Public Policy Consulting

333 Eudora

Denver, CO 80220-5721

720-425-3335

rbinz@rbinz.com

www.rbinz.com



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Re: Wed Hill mtg

Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>
To: rbinz@rbinz.com
Cc: John.Peschke@ferc.gov

Mon, Jul 8, 2013 at 7:10 PM

Yes, possible. Sean said if you are interested to email him directly and he'll make the Denver arrangements for you.

sean_babington@bennet.senate.gov

From: Ron Binz [mailto:rbinz@rbinz.com]
Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 07:05 PM
To: Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>
Subject: RE: Wed Hill mtg

I haven't checked with Bennet's office yet. Do know that's a possibility? Did Sean offer that?

Ron

Ron Binz

Public Policy Consulting

333 Eudora

Denver, CO 80220-5721

720-425-3335

rbinz@rbinz.com

www.rbinz.com

From: Chris Murray [mailto:chris.murray@ferc.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 5:04 PM
To: Ron Binz
Cc: John.Peschke@ferc.gov
Subject: Re: Wed Hill mtg

To clarify, you'd like to call-in, vs. videoconference at 9:30 your time from Bennet' Denver office?

From: Ron Binz [mailto:rbinz@rbinz.com]
Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 06:53 PM
To: John Peschke <john.peschke@ferc.gov>
Cc: Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>; Chris Miller <cmiller@ajw-inc.com>; Kai Anderson <KAnderson@cassidy.com>
Subject: RE: Wed Hill mtg

Thanks, John. I will call into the meeting on Wednesday. I'll watch for the call-in info.

Assuming we can get some member meetings next week, I will be in DC Monday PM – Thursday PM. I'll send you and Chris my itinerary once it's final. I plan to book other meetings, but will obviously work around anything you arrange with the Committee members. So please schedule at will.

Where is the OGE letter? Anything I can do to move this along?

Thanks,

Ron

Ron Binz
Public Policy Consulting
333 Eudora
Denver, CO 80220-5721

720-425-3335

rbinz@rbinz.com

www.rbinz.com

From: John Peschke [mailto:john.peschke@ferc.gov]
Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 3:29 PM
To: Ron Binz

Cc: Chris Murray
Subject: Re: Wed Hill mtg

Ron, the Wednesday meeting/call is at 11:30 am EDT.

As far as member meetings next week, we might be able to get some meetings with your supporters. As far as the Committee is concerned I am hoping to get the letter from OGE which will complete our package and get it to the Committee ASAP. I plan to ask for prompt meetings with Chairman Wyden and Ranking member Murkowski. If I can nail those down then I'll start working on meetings with other members of the committee. We'll keep you posted on progress.

On Mon, Jul 8, 2013 at 5:08 PM, Ron Binz <rbinz@rbinz.com> wrote:

Hi, Chris and John. Sorry I had to jump off the call. I accidentally hit the switch on my phone, not intending to leave without thanking you for the call.

I thought the call went well. We probably will need to do a similar call now and then to ensure that all information is shared around.

Do you know the time of the Wednesday meeting? I've got a luncheon meeting scheduled with three folks from Xcel and I'd really like to keep that. It's at 2:15-3:30 Eastern.

I need to make travel plans, assuming I'm returning to DC next week. What are the prospects that we will get some meetings on the Hill? I've got another list of visits I need to make next week, as well.

Ron

8/9/13

FERC Mail - Re: Wed Hill mtg

Ron Binz

Public Policy Consulting

333 Eudora

Denver, CO 80220-5721

720-425-3335

rbinz@rbinz.com

www.rbinz.com

From: Chris Murray [mailto:chris.murray@ferc.gov]

Sent: Monday, July 08, 2013 3:01 PM

To: Ron Binz

Cc: John Peschke

Subject: Wed Hill mtg

Sen. Bennet's staffer Sean Babington is hosting the Wed. meeting and he has invited Wendy (Udall) and Alex (Reid) along with Kai, Michael Meehan, and FERC staff (me, John, maybe Len).

If you are interested and able, Sean would likely be able to videoconference you into the DC office if you go to Sen. Bennet's Denver office, which is near the State Capitol. That way everyone could see one another during the meeting.

If you are interested, send Sean an email at sean_babington@bennet.senate.gov to get the ball rolling on both the DC and Denver ends.

-Chris

P.S. How did you think today's meeting went? Do you need anything from us before Wednesday?

8/9/13

FERC Mail - Re: Wed Hill mtg

-

John Peschke

Senate Liaison

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

202-502-6714



9
Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>

Fwd: FW: Ron Binz Nominated as Chairman of FERC - Supporter Statements

1 message

Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>
To: Craig Cano <craig.cano@ferc.gov>

Wed, Jul 24, 2013 at 12:49 PM

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Mary O'Driscoll** <mary.o'driscoll@ferc.gov>
Date: Thu, Jul 18, 2013 at 3:02 PM
Subject: Fwd: FW: Ron Binz Nominated as Chairman of FERC - Supporter Statements
To: Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>

Here's what Jeff Beattie of The Energy Daily sent to me. [REDACTED]

I'll let you know if I hear from Jeff that he's pursuing this story.

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Beattie, Jeff** <Jeff.Beattie@lhs.com>
Date: Thu, Jul 18, 2013 at 1:56 PM
Subject: FW: Ron Binz Nominated as Chairman of FERC - Supporter Statements
To: "Mary O'Driscoll (mary.o'driscoll@ferc.gov)" <mary.o'driscoll@ferc.gov>

Just FYI, here is the sort of stuff this PR firm has been distributing, this came a couple hours after the nomination.

From: Sarah Elliott [mailto:sarah@vennsq.com]
Sent: Thursday, June 27, 2013 7:53 PM
To: Sarah Elliott
Subject: Ron Binz Nominated as Chairman of FERC - Supporter Statements

Today, President Obama nominated Ron Binz, the former Chairman of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, to serve as the Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Below are statements from supporters about this nomination:

Statement on Nomination of Ron Binz as FERC Chairman from Ralph Izzo, Public Service Enterprise Group chairman, CEO and President

The electric industry is experiencing rapid change and technological advances and Ron Binz is a strong and timely choice to lead FERC. Ron has both the experience and intellect to hit the ground running and ensure thoughtful consideration of emerging opportunities.

In Colorado, he showed a willingness to work with diverse groups and elected officials of both parties to develop and implement commonsense legislation. His work on the Utilities 2020 project, as well as his diverse experience as a regulator, consumer advocate and policy expert will serve the country well as he leads FERC.

Statement on Nomination of Ron Binz as FERC Chairman from Lola Spradley, former Republican Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives

During my years as Speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, there were times I called on the Public Utilities Commission to be involved in policy issues and legislation so that the public interest was served. As Chair of the PUC, Ron's expertise and leadership proved critical to advance a balanced approach in Colorado. He will be an excellent addition to FERC.

Statement on Nomination of Ron Binz as FERC Chairman from Ben Fowke, chairman, president and CEO of Xcel Energy Inc.

The nomination of Ron Binz as FERC Chairman is a strong choice in this time of change for the utility industry. His understanding of the regulatory process makes him uniquely qualified to address the diverse set of issues facing utilities in the U.S., from grid modernization to carbon regulation. In Colorado, Binz demonstrated his leadership with foresight and a willingness to evolve regulatory compacts to deliver pragmatic solutions. His broad level of experience will be an asset to addressing these industry issues, and we are looking forward to working with him in this new position.

Statement on Nomination of Ron Binz as FERC Chairman from Elena Nunez, Executive Director of Colorado Common Cause

As board chair of Colorado Common Cause, Ron Binz was a champion for policies to make government more open and accountable to the people. That perspective, coupled with his strong commitment to public service, will serve him well in his new role.

From White House news release: President Obama Announces More Key Administration Posts

WASHINGTON, DC – Today, President Obama announced his intent to nominate the following individuals to key Administration posts:

Ron Binz, Nominee for Commissioner, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and upon appointment to be designated Chair

Ron Binz is the Principal for Public Policy Consulting, a position he has held since 2011. He is also a Senior Policy Advisor with the Center for the New Energy Economy. Previously, Mr. Binz served as Chairman of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission from 2007 to 2011. From 1995 to 2006, he was President of Public Policy Consulting, and from 1996 to 2003, he was President and Policy Director of the Competition Policy Institute. Mr. Binz served as the Director of the Colorado Office of Consumer Counsel from 1984 to 1995. He received a B.A. from St. Louis University and an M.A. from the University of Colorado.

If you would like further information please contact:

Sarah Elliott

sarah@vennsq.com

206-678-4023

###

Sarah Elliott, Senior Vice President

VennSquared Communications - Seattle Office

206-678-4023

sarah@vennsq.com

VennSQ.com



-
Mary O'Driscoll
Director, Division of Media Relations
Office of External Affairs
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First St. NE
Washington, D.C. 20045
(202) 502-8680



10



FERCMAIL

Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>

Fwd: Stories on the nominee

1 message

Chris Murray <chris.murray@ferc.gov>

Wed, Jul 24, 2013 at 10:37 AM

To: "Stephens, Jeff" <Jeffrey_M_Stephens@who.eop.gov>

attached are two recent Binz stories



twostories.docx

20K

The Energy Daily

July 24, 2013

Utility CEOs on board for PR push for FERC chair nominee

BY JEFF BEATTIE

In an unusual effort that may signal anxiety about potential opposition in the Senate to the nomination, a clean tech advocacy group has hired a Washington, D.C.-based public relations firm to highlight support for the nomination of former Colorado energy regulator Ron Binz for chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Minutes after Binz was nominated for FERC chairman June 27, Venn Squared Communications shot emails to reporters with several endorsements of Binz, including from the chief executive officers of Xcel Energy, which has extensive operations in Colorado, and New Jersey-based Public Service Enterprise Group—both big utilities that routinely have business before FERC.

Also endorsing Binz was Lola Spradley, former Republican speaker of the Colorado House of Representatives, who said Binz's "expertise and leadership proved critical to advance a balanced approach in Colorado. He will be an excellent addition to FERC."

The endorsements could be useful to Binz—a green-leaning Democratic appointee—in warding off attacks from GOP and coal-friendly senators who might be unhappy with Binz's efforts in Colorado supporting closure of some of Xcel's coal plants.

No senator has raised any questions about the PR effort for Binz, but it surprised some FERC watchers, who say they do not recall such visible public relations work backing a FERC nominee. Some have also wondered who is footing the bill for the work of Venn Squared Communications on behalf of Binz's nomination.

Turns out it is the Green Tech Action Fund (GTAF), which calls itself a non-partisan, tax-exempt grant-making organization "affiliated with" the Energy Foundation, a San Francisco-based partnership of several large foundations that back green energy and energy efficiency initiatives.

While the Energy Foundation is a 501 c(3) non-profit under Internal Revenue Service rules, which limits its ability do advocacy work, the Green Tech Action Fund is a 501c(4) organization, a class of non-profits that can advocate more freely.

In a statement Monday, the Green Tech Action Fund said it "believes that Ron Binz's regulatory approach as chairman of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission was sound and we support President Obama's decision to nominate him to be the next chairman of FERC.

"Our support includes helping to make sure accurate information about Ron and his record are in the media as the Senate considers this important nomination. GTAF is a 501c (4) organization that supports clean energy policy."

Among the Energy Foundation's board members are Mark Burget, executive vice president and North American regional director of The Nature Conservancy; William Ruckelshaus, Environmental Protection Agency administrator under President Ronald Reagan; and former Colorado Gov. Bill Ritter (D), who appointed Binz to the Colorado PUC and later hired Binz at the Center for the New Energy Economy at Colorado State University, where Ritter is the director.

It is routine for companies, trade groups and interest groups to lobby quietly for favored government nominees. What could spark questions, however, is support for a nominee from a firm or interest group that might later be subject to regulatory rulings by the nominee.

Binz has been nominated to replace current FERC Chairman Jon Wellinghoff, and the two share strong support for renewable energy and energy efficiency. Binz also has been outspoken on the need for U.S. policymakers to begin curbing greenhouse gas emissions to combat climate change—a goal President Obama pledged to pursue in a major June speech.

However, there are signs that Binz could face tough questioning from some Republicans and coal-country senators at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which will likely take place in September, a spokesman for committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) said Tuesday.

Binz angered the coal industry in 2010 by helping shape a state law requiring Xcel Energy and other utilities in the state to retrofit, repower or shutter much of their coal-fired generation to reduce regional haze pollution. Although the Colorado Mining Association moved to have Binz recuse himself from subsequent related PUC proceedings, the PUC rejected the motion and the decision was upheld by a state appeals court.

However, that criticism could be substantially undercut by the endorsements given to Binz by Xcel Energy Chairman, President and CEO Ben Fowke. In the press release issued by Venn Squared Communications, Fowke said Binz as Colorado PUC chairman "demonstrated his leadership with foresight and a willingness to evolve regulatory compacts to deliver pragmatic solutions."

Ralph Izzo, chairman and president of Public Service Enterprise Group, praised Binz in the Venn Squared press release for his work in Colorado, saying he "showed a willingness to work with diverse groups and elected officials of both parties to develop and implement commonsense legislation."

However, Binz may be grilled by Republican senators over his outspoken support in the past for government action to cut carbon emissions.

In a 2010 op-ed in IHS The Energy Daily, Binz called for a "cap-and-innovate" system to cut carbon dioxide (CO2) emission from electric utilities. His proposal would allocate CO2 allowances to utilities for free and then slowly reduce the allowances to force utilities to find cost-effective ways to lower emissions.

He also suggested creating a \$4 per metric ton "research tax" on CO2 emissions to generate about \$10 billion for research and development on carbon capture and sequestration technology, renewables and energy storage. The research tax would raise U.S. electric rates by less than 3 percent, Binz wrote.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski (Alaska), ranking Republican on energy committee, issued a decidedly cool statement on Binz' nomination after it was announced, saying she would "carefully consider the nominee's qualifications and fitness to serve – not only as commissioner, but also as chair."

Binz also faces the risk of losing key Democratic senators on the energy committee, most notably Sen. Joe Manchin (D-W. Va.), who has been among the loudest voices assailing Obama for climate policies and regulatory actions hurting the coal industry.

However, Manchin will feel pressure to support his party's nominee for FERC chair, and he has stayed mum on Binz's nomination thus far.

Sen. Mary Landrieu (D-La.), another Democratic committee member who generally supports fossil fuel industries, also has not tipped her hand on Binz's nomination.

E&E Daily

FERC: Clean energy group taps PR firm to advocate for Binz amid mounting attacks

Hannah Northey, E&E reporter

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Clean energy advocates have hired a Washington, D.C.-based public relations firm to advocate for President Obama's pick to head the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and thwart increasing attacks from Colorado's coal industry and free market groups.

Green Tech Action Fund, a San Francisco group that describes itself as a nonpartisan grant-making organization, has hired VennSquared Communications to advocate for Ron Binz as the next chairman of FERC.

If confirmed by the Senate, Binz would have a five-year term and replace Jon Wellinghoff at the helm of the commission, which regulates the electric grid, gas pipelines, liquefied natural gas export terminals and hydroelectric projects.

Sarah Elliott, senior vice president of VennSquared, said in a statement that the action fund believes Binz's regulatory approach when he chaired the Colorado Public Utilities Commission from 2007 to 2011 was "sound" and that the group supports his nomination.

Binz was not aware that the group had hired the firm and was not involved in selecting VennSquared, she added.

"Our support includes helping to make sure accurate information about Ron and his record are in the media as the Senate considers this important nomination," Elliott said.

Clean energy advocates are ramping up their efforts amid increasing criticism from Colorado's coal industry, Denver-based libertarian think tank Independence Institute and Washington, D.C., think tank American Tradition Institute, which have accused Binz of promoting the Obama administration's "war on coal" (E&ENews PM, July 16).

Those groups have pointed to Binz's work on Colorado's contentious "Clean Air, Clean Jobs" legislation while leading the Colorado PUC, an effort that prompted Xcel Energy Inc. to shutter coal plants in the Denver area on then-Gov. Bill Ritter's (D) watch.

Just how much muscle the Green Tech Action Fund has is unclear.

The group was most recently involved in pushing a proposal on Michigan's state ballot that would have raised the state's renewable energy standard to 25 percent by 2025. The proposal, which has since failed, pitted utilities, chambers of commerce and their allies against environmentalists, public health advocates, faith groups and national organizations like the action fund (ClimateWire, Oct. 12, 2012).

It also remains unclear how the groups' messaging wars will play out on Capitol Hill and at Binz's hearing before the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, which will likely take place after the August break.

Binz has secured the support of a number of large utilities and Democrats, but Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, the ranking Republican on the Energy and Natural Resources Committee, has vowed to "carefully consider" his qualifications.

"Binz has been a public figure since 1984, so there's plenty of material to review," Robert Dillon, a spokesman for the senator, said in a statement. "The chairman of FERC must have a record of balance, fairness and judicial temperament. And he must be willing to recognize and accept the commission's distinct role."

