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Contact: Caitlin Kelleher  
505.476.2299

## **Legislature Passes Governor's Energy Efficiency Bill** *Bill Sets Aggressive Energy Efficiency Standards for Utilities*

SANTA FE – Governor Bill Richardson's ongoing efforts to make New Mexico the "clean energy state" got another boost last night as the Senate gave final approval to the Governor's latest energy efficiency initiative. The Efficient Use of Energy Act Amendments, sponsored by Speaker Ben Lujan, passed the Senate on a 22-15, mostly party-line, vote, and now heads to the Governor's desk for signature.

"I am pleased that the Legislature has joined me to require utilities to provide more energy efficiency to New Mexico consumers," said Governor Richardson. "This measure complements the Renewable Portfolio Standard increase that was passed last session to address global warming and provide customers with clean energy and clean air."

The new law requires electric utilities to achieve at least 5% energy efficiency savings from 2005 electricity sales by 2014 and 10% by 2020, authorizes the PRC to approve energy efficiency programs designed to reduce the burden of energy costs on low-income consumers, and offers the opportunity for utilities to earn financial incentives for implementing energy efficiency programs that are cheaper than building new power plants.

"This bill represents a tremendous achievement on the part of low income and senior advocates, environmental groups, utilities, and industrial users," said Speaker Lujan. "This is a significant step in the right direction to do our part in addressing the challenging issues associated with energy consumption and the impact to the environment."

The bill was supported by low income and senior advocates, utilities, conservationists, industrial users and groups such as the Coalition for Clean Affordable Energy, Community Action New Mexico, the Natural Resources Defense Council, Sierra Club and Environment New Mexico.