



## An Open Letter to Members of Continental Divide Electric Cooperative

Dear Continental Divide Member:

We'd like to clarify the position that we, CDEC, took on legislation that was voted down by the New Mexico House of Representatives this past legislative session.

CDEC lobbied state legislators to EXCLUDE electric cooperatives from the proposed New Mexico Family and Medical Leave (FML) Fund (Senate Bill 3), because:

- We provide essential services (electricity and internet) to our member-owners.
- We provide a robust Leave Policy, and our employees are already covered under the federal Department of Labor's Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA).
- A large sum of the financial burden to fund the proposed additional state FML would have fallen on the co-op and our employees, even if they never use it.

An electric distribution utility cannot simply hire a temporary worker or contractor to step into specialized and safety-related positions. We are bound by federal regulations and legal obligations to ensure electrical system reliability and public safety. Workers who can readily step in, when called upon, are few and far between in rural New Mexico, compared to urbanized areas.

To that end, Continental Divide is very fortunate to have the talented workforce we do. We boast a very low turnover rate because we value every co-op employee, and they are compensated well for their expertise and dedication to keep the lights on for our membership.

Our employee benefits in addition to the federal FMLA are:

- Sick leave
- Short-term and long-term disability
- Medical (the co-op pays 80% of the medical cost)
- Life insurance (up to \$50,000, per employee)
- Defined pension plan
- Vacation and paid holidays

Additionally, we've gone above and beyond our base benefits to assist dedicated employees, when needed, because they are "the co-op family."

When the decision was made not to exclude electric cooperatives, we then asked state legislators to vote "no" on the bill, so it could be reworked to hopefully exclude us and other essential service providers.

In addition, we lobbied against Senate Bill 43 and Senate Bill 45, which would have required electric co-ops and our members to grant for-profit utilities and telecommunication providers access to our poles (for equipment attachments) and easements without fair compensation.

Our efforts were successful and in the best interests of Continental Divide and our members. In no way were our efforts intended to give the impression that we don't value our employees, our members, or our integrity.

Thank you for your time and support.

The Board of Directors  
Continental Divide Electric Cooperative

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