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**Arizona Corporation Commission Approves Moving Forward with a
Gas Utility Energy Efficiency Standard
*Will result in lower gas bills and lower emissions***

Phoenix, AZ - Today, the Arizona Corporation Commission acted to save consumers and businesses money by approving a Gas Energy Efficiency Rule and Standard.

“Increasing energy efficiency as proposed in this Gas Energy Efficiency Rule will save money for consumers and businesses through lower gas bills, resulting in lower total utility costs for gas ratepayers,” said Jeff Schlegel with the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET). “Increasing energy efficiency will also create local jobs and improve the Arizona economy.”

The Energy Efficiency Standard established in the Rule will achieve 6 percent energy savings in 2020, at least three-fourths of which must be achieved through energy efficiency programs. Utilities can also get credit for more efficient building codes and appliance standards, if they demonstrate they have supported and advocated for them.

“Adopting this new gas energy efficiency standard will help reduce air pollution, including oxides of nitrogen, which are a factor in ozone pollution, and carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas,” said Sandy Bahr, Chapter Director of the Grand Canyon Chapter of the Sierra Club. “Reducing these pollutants will benefit public health as well as help to reduce emissions contributing to global climate change.”

Arizona’s utility customers benefit from this standard as they will have better access to energy efficiency measures that will reduce energy consumption and lower their utility bills. Arizona natural gas and propane utilities are expected to expand existing programs and launch new programs to assist residential consumers, small businesses, and large commercial and industrial customers as a result of the Rule.

“For example, customers in existing homes can expect to see rebates and technical assistance to reduce gas utility costs for heating, water heating, and cooking. Businesses – including restaurants and hotels – will see expanded rebates and other services to reduce their gas utility bills,” said Schlegel.

“The Commission should be applauded for delivering a one-two punch for energy efficiency – knocking down electric and then gas bills for residential and business customers,” stated Diane E. Brown, Executive Director of the Arizona PIRG Education Fund.

This is a key step in moving the process forward to final rule adoption and certification.

For more information on the Gas Energy Efficiency Rule and Standard and other energy efficiency issues, please go to the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET) website at <http://www.swenergy.org/>

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