



## Your Cooperative Needs Your Vote to Make Things Better

Dear Socorro Electric Cooperative Member:

Socorro Electric Cooperative recently retained Aaron Christensen, a North Carolina attorney with national experience in working with co-ops, to help us reach a higher level of operations. As an independent advisor, he has no stake in the issues causing controversy at Socorro Electric. Mr. Christensen responded by helping us develop new bylaws to replace our sadly outdated bylaws currently in effect. While it's challenging to please all the people all the time, if you lay the current bylaws side-by-side with the proposed bylaws, most fair-minded people will find the proposal a vast improvement.

As you make your own decision on these critical issues, please don't be misled by half-truths and outright false claims you might hear. Read the bylaws for yourself or view the videos explaining the bylaws at [www.socorroelectric.com](http://www.socorroelectric.com). The proposed bylaws provide a comprehensive platform for ending the in-fighting and restoring our focus to the important issues: better service, accountability, affordability, and member control.

Below are a few key points in the proposed bylaws as explained by Mr. Christensen.

### Amendments by Member

Section 10.01 *specifically* allows members to amend the bylaws. The petition requirement is standard industry practice. It protects the majority of members from having small, non-representative groups igniting expensive conflicts. If there is a serious issue, members can petition and implement change. It is there in black and white. To say otherwise is *false*.

### Cap on Trustee Expenses

Section 5.11 specifically ties Trustee per diem compensation to the average Trustee compensation in the state. Compensation *cannot* get out of hand, like it did several years ago. The section also prohibits the Cooperative from paying a Trustee's insurance premiums and prohibits any compensation or benefits for former Trustees. (Members can always review Trustee compensation at [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org)).



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## **District Meetings**

The proposed bylaws abolish district meetings because these meetings are *expensive*, *counterproductive*, and fuel continuing *conflict*. In 2013, the Cooperative wasted \$60,036 on district meetings. In 2014, that number hit \$63,064. It is time to bring Socorro *into the mainstream* of industry practices and restore *democratic control* by allowing all members vote in every Trustee election.

## **Trustees Residing Throughout System, Accountable to All Members**

The proposed bylaws spread Trustees geographically and among communities of interest, while allowing every member to vote in every election for every Trustee. Every Trustee will be accountable to every member—so every Trustee becomes one of your Trustees. The problems at Socorro prove that district-only elections are enormously expensive, counterproductive, and encourage divisiveness. It is time to start doing what actually works and that is what the proposed bylaws would accomplish.

## **Term Limits**

The proposed bylaws replace term limits with actual democratic control by all members. Every member will have the opportunity to vote for the candidate they want or against the candidate they don't like. That's how our democracy works. On the other hand, if the Cooperative maintains the current term limits, Trustees will never have enough time to learn enough about the industry to exercise effective control over management.

## **Open Meetings Act**

Section 6.07, Open Meetings, of the proposed bylaws gives the *exact same* broad access that the Open Meetings Act would give, but translates this access to a private corporation. The Open Meetings Act is crafted for governmental bodies, not private companies. The Cooperative is also posting videos of every Board meeting on the website, making access convenient for the entire membership. There is no way to argue that the proposed bylaws would somehow restrict Member access to meetings. The plain language of the proposed bylaws proves that is not true. Please do not be misled by people who cannot, or will not, see this basic truth.



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### **Inspection of Public Records Act**

Section 10.13, Member Inspection of Cooperative Records, allows the exact same access that citizens have when inspecting public records, but again, the provisions are tailored to a private corporation. Under New Mexico law, the burden would be on the Cooperative to prove why some particular record should not be available for inspection and publishing by the members.

### **Vote by Mail**

The proposed bylaws specifically mandate that mail-in balloting is required for every Trustee election and every proposed bylaw amendment. The proposed bylaws also require an outside firm to manage the logistics of voting and put a member-only Credentials and Elections Committee in charge of ensuring the integrity of the process. Section 4.12 gives the rule in black and white: there “*shall*” be mail-in voting for *every* election.

Now is the time for you to lend your support so Socorro Electric can change, grow, and improve. Please join me in voting YES for the proposed bylaws at the April 25 election meeting.

Sincerely,

Anne Dorough, District V  
Board President  
Socorro Electric Cooperative



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