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# Former state Rep. Phil Montgomery named PSC chairman

By Thomas Content of the Journal Sentinel

March 28, 2011

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Former state lawmaker Phil Montgomery will chair the state Public Service Commission, Gov. Scott Walker announced Monday.

Montgomery, a Republican who represented the Green Bay area in the Legislature, worked on utility, energy and telecommunications issues during his 12 years as a state representative. He served as chairman of the Assembly's energy and utilities committee.

Montgomery will join the commission Monday and will replace Commissioner Mark Meyer, a former state senator whose PSC term recently expired. Montgomery will be paid \$120,000 a year.

Remaining on the commission are two members appointed by former Gov. Jim Doyle: former Chairman Eric Callisto and Lauren Azar.

"Phil will help protect ratepayers and ensure our state has a sustainable and economical network of power production facilities," Walker said in a statement. "He has extensive knowledge of energy issues in Wisconsin and his unique leadership qualities will make him an excellent PSC chairman. Holding down the cost of producing energy will be a key part of ensuring Wisconsin has a business climate that allows the private sector to create 250,000 new jobs."

Montgomery's legislative relations at Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce, the state's largest industry group, said.

Montgomery's executive assistant, the governor's office said. He will oversee the commission's regulatory and policy issues, including telecommunications and water utilities, setting rates and voting on whether projects like power plants and power lines are needed.

Montgomery was previously chairman of the Assembly energy and utilities committee. He was a co-author of the state's renewable energy mandate and stopped budget transfers of energy efficiency programs. He also opposed the Clean Energy Jobs Act, an initiative of the Doyle administration that would require utilities to get 25% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2025.

Montgomery relaxed Wisconsin's moratorium on construction of nuclear power plants. He also supported an outright repeal of the state's moratorium on nuclear power plants.

Montgomery said he did not want to discuss specifics on issues that he may soon have to face as commissioner, but he said he looked forward to working to advance the governor's jobs perspective.

Montgomery said he was "able to do it," he said. "It requires a lot more due diligence and a lot more delving into the details, much more from a regulatory than a legislative perspective."

Montgomery received \$24,540 in campaign contributions from utilities and organizations and \$10,800 from the companies in the telecommunications industry, according to statistics from the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign's database. The only industry that gave more to Montgomery than energy was manufacturing.

Montgomery's industry when he was a legislator, and was seen as carrying water for the utility industry and the utilities," said Mike McCabe, executive director of the Democracy Campaign. "Montgomery advocates would naturally have concerns about somebody who seemed so supportive of the industry in a position of overseeing those industries."

Montgomery's financial backing he received as a legislator would not pose any concern for him now or in the future.



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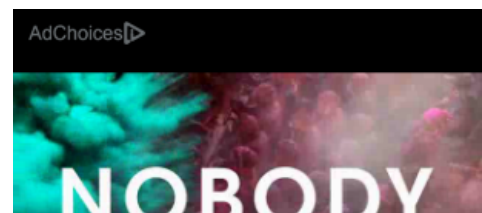
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"No," he said. "It's about moving the state forward. It was not a concern in the Legislature; it's not a

concern now. It's about moving policy forward."

Until January, Montgomery served on the board of directors of the American Legislative Exchange Council, a national organization that works on development of state-level polices that promote limited government, free markets and federalism.

Two customer groups representing energy users said they looked forward to working with Montgomery in his new role.

"Wisconsin's manufacturers need a regulatory environment that promotes job creation with affordable and reliable energy," said Todd Stuart, executive director of Wisconsin Industrial Energy Group, in a statement.

Charlie Higley, executive director of the Wisconsin Citizens' Utility Board, said Montgomery voted in December to oppose higher funding levels for state energy efficiency initiatives.

Despite that, Higley said, "we hope he will support the Focus on Energy program, which is administered by the PSC, and which provides the best defense for households and businesses against rising costs for energy."



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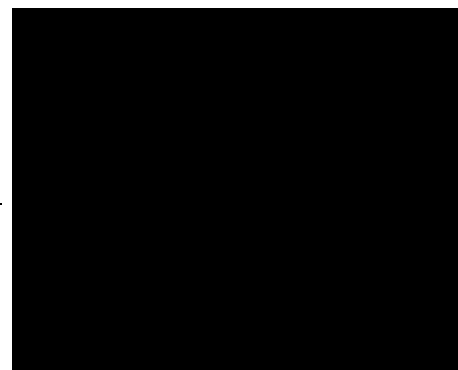
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Thursday, December 4, 2014