

# PSC Staffer Brings Liberal Influence To Policy Making

/EINPresswire.com/ PSC Commissioner Terry Dunn's recent alliances with activists environmental groups is due in large part to the influence of his staff assistant, David Roundtree.

Montgomery - Sources close the Alabama Public Service Commission say Commissioner Terry Dunn's recent alliances with activists environmental groups is due in large part to the influence of his staff assistant, David Roundtree. A former journalist and long-time assistant to Democratic Commissioner Susan Parker, Roundtree is said to have an unprecedented level of control with Dunn, a first-term member of the Commission.



Terry Dunn, Alabama Public Service Commissioner

Dunn has recently called for hearings on rate policies for the natural gas industry in Alabama. Experts say that the policies Dunn seems to be advocating would increase the costs of capital for the utility industry and therefore would drive up costs for all consumers. The same experts say Dunn's policies could be a serious blow to Alabama's economic development efforts.

Sources within the PSC say that Roundtree has ongoing email communication with activist environmental groups including the Alabama Environmental Council. Some inside the PSC are concerned that Roundtree is providing proprietary information and even strategic suggestions for some of these groups.

Roundtree's long-time relationship with Ben Raines, a former journalistic colleague of Roundtree, is seen by some as a partnership to work on behalf of environmental interests in the state. In recent web-based communication, Raines gave the following strategic advice to environmental groups:

"Get out your pitchfork and poke somebody in power. Lead the charge you say is needed. You wish I'd provided some tips on how to change things? OK. How about starting a petition demanding an investigation? Demand an explanation from the Attorney General. Maybe hold a protest."

Raines promised environmentalists in this communication that if they took the actions he recommends then he would report on it in the Mobile Press Register.

Together, Rountree and Raines provide the environmental community with a dramatic advantage in gaining inside information about PSC policy and access to the news media to report events Raines is actually helping set up.

Insiders say investigations of Roundtree's communications with groups outside the PSC and his interaction with Raines are underway.

Alabama Capitol Press is working hard to fill the gap of investigative reporting by media in the state of Alabama.

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