

Sep 11, 2013, 8:52pm MST

## Arizona Corporation Commission shuts the door on possible deregulation

**Patrick O'Grady**

Managing Editor-*Phoenix Business Journal*

Arizona won't have deregulated electric markets any time in the near future after the [Arizona Corporation Commission](#) decided late Wednesday to close the discussion. The move quickly ends a foray into possibly allowing customer choice in the state, and a debate that had placed businesses squarely in the fight.

Some companies and utilities, such as [Arizona Public Service Co.](#), said the state didn't need deregulated energy markets. APS officials said they were pleased with the ACC's decision in a statement Wednesday night.

"We agree with the Arizona Corporation Commission's decision today to close its docket concerning deregulation of the retail electric market in Arizona," the company said in a statement. APS said the Four Corners Power Plant could now move forward as a result of the decision. APS had planned to buy two power units at the northern Arizona plant from Southern California Edison, but [put it on hold in the spring](#) because of the deregulation discussion.

"The Commission's action is a positive development for the future of the Four Corners Power Plant," the company said in its statement. "APS and the other owners of the plant are now working to complete the internal processes necessary in order to finalize their approvals of the Four Corners transactions."

A group of businesses and consumers, called the Arizona Power Consumers Coalition, also welcomed the decision.

"We would like to thank the corporation commissioners and their staff for all of the hard work and time spent on this issue," said [Jay Heiler](#), Chairman of the AZ Power Consumers Coalition. "The decision by the commissioners provides economic certainty going forward for consumers and electric providers alike. We believe the current regulatory structure can always be improved and look forward to a dialogue focused on improving service, reliability and affordability here in Arizona."

Several large Arizona businesses supported the chance to deregulate, including Freeport-McMoRan Copper & Gold Inc., [Intel Corp.](#) and the [Arizona Technology Council](#). The move also was pushed by Direct Energy, which [announced a call center in Tempe](#) earlier this year to serve the needs of its electric customers in other states.

Patrick O'Grady is managing editor of the Phoenix Business Journal.