

Andrus terms Lenaghan ouster raw politics

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WASHINGTON— The governor and now secretary of interior who first appointed Robert Lenaghan to the Idaho Public Utility Commission, Saturday characterized the Senate Republican ouster of Lenaghan as "raw politics."

"The Republicans have been after him, but it finally took eight years to get him," commented Secretary of Interior Cecil D. Andrus in a Post-Register telephone interview Thursday.

Andrus noted he had first appointed Lenaghan to the IPUC "because he was tough. He would make decisions and he wasn't a 'yes' man. Bob was never a favorite of politicians."

Andrus, who served six years as Idaho's governor before being picked by President Carter two years ago to head the Department of Interior, said he had first appointed Lenaghan to direct the Division of Administration, which needed a shakeup.

He observed Lenaghan revamped the division to make it a viable agency and his performance was so impressive that he then appointed him to the IPUC, which had been little more than a pawn of the public utilities.

"It's regrettable the Senate Republicans refused to confirm him because of politics," said Andrus. "He was a consumer advocate and he did the role very well. Lenaghan was a

hard-working public servant. He understood that politics was the name of the game, and I don't think anybody is going to complain.

"It is a loss to the people. The people have lost their champion."

Andrus said it will take two more years to train a new IPUC member, adding "I just hope the individual who is named to replace him will represent the people and ask the right questions."

He observed that Lenaghan always asked the right questions at public hearings, adding he was on the side of the Idaho ratepayers.

Andrus also backed Lenaghan in ousting some of the IPUC

staff members, saying they were lazy and incompetent.

"The IPUC needed some

rattling," said Andrus. "Lenaghan did the job and he listened to the people."



Republican senators

BOISE — Two East Idaho Republican senators from left are Dane Watkins, Idaho Falls, and Vearl Crystal, Rigby.