

128th Annual Meeting

This agenda is subject to (and will most likely) change.

Sunday, November 13

8:00 - 6:30	Registration Open
9:00 - 11:45	Staff Subcommitte on Consumer Affairs
9:00 -11:45	Staff Subcommittee on Critical Infrastructure
9:00 -11:45	Staff Subcommittee on Electric Reliability
9:00 -11:45	Staff Subcommittee on Gas
9:00 -5:00	Staff Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety (closed)
9:00 -11:45	Staff Subcommittee on Rate Design
9:00 -5:00	Staff Subcommittee on Telecommunications
9:00 -11:45	Subcommittee on Utility Marketplace Access
10:15 - 10:30	Networking Break
10:30 - 1:00	New Commissioner Forum (for New Commissioners)
10:30 -11:45	Washington Action (closed)
11:45 - 1:00	Lunch Break
1:00 - 3:00	Committee on Consumer Affairs
1:00 - 3:00	Staff Subcommittee on Electricity
1:00 - 5:00	Staff Subcommittee on Law
1:00 -3:00	Subcommittee on Pipeline Safety (closed)
1:00 - 2:45	TEAM (closed)
2:15 - 2:45	Networking Break

3:00 - 5:00	Task Force on Transportation
3:15 - 5:00	Committee on International Relations
3:15 - 5:00	Committee on Critical Infrastructure
3:45 -4:00	Networking Break
5:00 - 6:30	Welcome Reception
Monday, November 14	
7:30 - 8:45	Board of Directors Breakfast Meeting
8:00 - 5:00	Registration Open
9:00 - 11:45	Committee on Telecommunications
9:00 - 11:45	Committee on Water
9:00 - 11:45	Committee on Gas
9:00 - 11:45	Committee on ERE
9:00 - 11:45	Committee on Electricity
9:00 - 11:45	Staff Subcommittee on Law
10:15 - 10:30	Networking Break
11:45-1:30	Regulators Luncheon (Commissioners, Staff and Commissioners Emeritus)
1:30 - 3:00	Opening General Session
3:00 - 3:30	NETWORKING BREAK
Section A	

3:30 - 4:45	#A1	The Architecture of Modern Telecommunications & What It Says About Competition	What is regulated (or not) in the world of communications depends on whether there is sufficient competition for the service in question. Some services (long-distance) are obviously competitive; others (special access on which business data service relies) perhaps less so. This informative tutorial walks through the architecture of the modern telecom world and identifies the places that are wide open for competition and those which are bottlenecks.
3:30 - 4:45	#A2	A Wholesale Market for Water: Do we need an ISO?	As water scarcity becomes an increasing issue, especially in the western states, new and creative ideas to address the cost of water resources. Wholesale rates for water can differ widely especially between urban drinking water and rural agricultural uses. In the electric industry RTO/ISOs create a market for pricing the commodity. Participants will discuss the applicability of locational marginal pricing to the water industry to ensure that increasing water scarcity can be managed at least cost, for the benefit of all customers. Attendees will learn what adaptations from electricity market design would be necessary to model the hydrological, environmental and legal constraints of water supply.
3:30 - 4:45	#A3	Market Darlings: Understanding the Appeal of Regulated Utilities in Today's Capital Markets	Utilities are trending hard on Wall Street and are red hot for investors seeking to mobilize capital. Just how sweet of a deal are utilities getting? Debt has never been cheaper, but utilities resist the opportunity to debt-finance big investments, maintaining a capital structure that is still heavier on equity than their peers in Canada. Meanwhile, authorized returns on equity have fallen only slightly, and not as much as treasury rates have. Participants will learn what the underlying economics are and hear why financial players are responding with such interest
3:30 - 4:45	#A4	Charging Ahead: Rate Design & Electric Vehicles	Electric vehicles are on the street and charging all around us, so what are the rules of the road? This session will review the role of the commission, utilities, and the stakeholders when it comes to electric vehicle rate design. State Commissioners will highlight proceedings which have discussed the appropriate role of the utility in investing in electric vehicle charging infrastructure and whether it will be rate based, or 'below the line' as an unregulated enterprise. Attendees will hear about the year-long investigation the State of Oregon initiated as well as pilot projects California has underway. Attendees will learn about 6 factors the State or Oregon used for consideration when determining whether to grant cost recovery.

3:30 - 4:45	#A5	Into Darkness: The Use of Interactive Exercises to Reduce Unknowns for Commissions	Many infrastructure challenges come from preparing for events that have never happened before. These “unknown unknowns” may be impossible to predict until after they’ve happened. A number of State Commissions have used tabletop exercises to help prepare for unpredictable events like earthquakes, cyber-attacks, terrorism, and even more mundane threats like rapid changes in technology and markets or renewable energy adoption. Commissions will learn how other states have learned from the interactive approach of using tabletop exercises. Commissions will hear about success stories and how they can replicate this preparedness. Stakeholders will learn how interactive exercises can contribute to building strong partnerships between public and private sectors, which is an essential precursor for effective communication in emergencies. A mini-interactive demonstration will be produced to illustrate some of the ways this approach can help your Commission navigate the unknown.
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Tuesday, November 15

8:00 - 5:00		Registration Open	
9:00 -10:15		General Session	
10:15 - 10:45		NETWORKING BREAK	
Section B			
10:45 - 11:45	#B1	A Roadmap for a Successful Stakeholder Process	Before that thorny issue becomes a full-blown contested case before your Commission, consider engaging in a stakeholder process. But what does that mean? What does a successful one look like? Failure to engage a stakeholder process could lead to negative consequences such as protests and disruptions that detract from the issues. How do you prevent stakeholder engagement from just being a talk-a-thon leading up to a whole lot of nothing? Hear from stakeholders who will present their ideas about how to make the process work. Learn what tools are needed and how to map successful implementation. Also, learn how to evaluate the effectiveness of the process.
10:45 - 11:45	#B2	Methane Regulation: The Achilles Heel of Natural Gas?	In May, the EPA released sweeping rules targeting methane emissions from new or modified oil and gas wells, as well as equipment that transports and stores oil and natural gas. The regulations drew sharp criticism as costly and unnecessary. EPA says the new rules will cost operators at least \$530 million – adding more financial burdens to a stressed industry laboring under comprehensive oversight. The EPA also signaled plans to apply similar rules to existing rigs/equipment and sought more data from industry to study how to further contain emissions. PHMSA already has three pending proposed rulemakings on safety issues. It all adds up to a suite of new or planned regulations by the outgoing and possibly the new administration that will help determine how durable a future natural gas has as the default fuel for American electric generation.
10:45 - 11:45	#B3	Exploring Performance-Based Regulation	Some jurisdictions have moved away from the model of a return-on-rate-base/cost-of-service regulatory model, and have instead targeted utility revenues to establish measures of performance, such as customer satisfaction and reliability. This panel presents a few case studies on what has worked—and what hasn’t. In this session, participants will learn what experiences States and other countries have had in using performance-based regulation, as well as exploring what recommendations exist for implementing it at pilot or scale in your jurisdiction.

10:45 - 11:45	#B4	Catch Me if You Can! Can New Technologies Stop Spoof Callers?	Consumers are increasingly inundated (and annoyed) by robo calls. While there are many legitimate robo calls, the ease with which phone numbers can be faked, or “spoofed,” has led to a proliferation of scam calls. Rampant spoofing has undermined State and federal “do not call” lists and this makes identification of culprits and enforcement action difficult. Attendees will learn about new technologies that allow consumers to block unwanted calls. Attendees will understand the enforcement efforts at the State and federal level.
10:45 - 11:45	#B5	Is Bigger Better? What You Need to Know about Mergers and Acquisitions	With a few high profile deals already done, another rejected, two recently announced and at least another ten utility companies looking ripe for takeovers, now is a good time to ask whether bigger is better. Experts will discuss why they are happening and how commissions should review them. Attendees will learn the reasons why - despite the time and controversies involved - utilities seek to merge with or acquire other utilities. Commissioners and staff will gain insight on different approaches to reviewing proposals and will learn how to spot the salient issues at stake.
11:45 - 12:00 NETWORKING BREAK			

Section C			
12:00 - 1:00	#C1	Clear Skies and the Cloud: What to Know about Big Data and the Public Interest	<p>Big data is becoming an invaluable tool to power, water, gas, and telecommunications companies. The power of the Cloud and of predictive analytics are opening up services and markets that were unimaginable five years ago.</p> <p>Participants will answer the tough questions: What are the most promising leads? What are the trade-offs, cautions, and wait-and-see areas? Do regulatory structures create barriers, and if so, what can we do about it? What can we do to get out of the way? All attendees will learn about accounting and ratemaking implications of utility expenditures on remotely hosted software. Commissioners and staff will learn what opportunities can be realized for utilities and rate payers from big data analytics, what regulatory structures create barriers to this and how to remove them, and how to judge which investments are prudent in terms of preserving optionality for future innovative issues? Stakeholders will learn how to navigate those regulatory barriers.</p>
12:00 - 1:00	#C2	Is There a Federal Infrastructure Package in Our Future?	<p>For years Congress has been discussing new ways to fund investment to upgrade and repair aging infrastructure across the country. The recent events in Flint, Michigan have shed new light on the infrastructure challenges facing our nation. ASCE issues grades for the different infrastructures: Energy – D+; Drinking Water – D; Waste Water – D. Overall ASCE estimated that \$3.6 trillion in investment is needed by 2020 to bring all our infrastructure up to a passing grade. The question is how to pay for it? Presidential and congressional candidates are increasingly talking about the need to invest in America’s infrastructure. With a new President and new Congress the initiative may get some traction in 2017. If so what form would this federal funding take? What priorities would States and the utility sector be looking for in such funding?</p>
12:00 - 1:00	#C3	RTO/ISO Governance: When Should States lead, Follow or Get Out of the Way?	<p>States are all over the map in terms of their involvement in the decision-making process of ISOs and RTOs. Should they be in the driver’s seat on certain questions, like transmission cost allocation and resource adequacy, or should they tend to their knitting back home? State representatives will share their experience on the regional state committees that do everything from making decisions to providing advice to the multi-state organized markets. Commissioners and staff will learn about different approaches to the RTO/ISO stakeholder processes, the most effective ways to participate; how regional RTO/ISO committees differ from and interact with regional NARUC organizations; and what actions within and outside the stakeholder process can have the most impact. Stakeholders will hear about Commission priorities and learn about best methods to engage with Commissions on RTO/ISO issues.</p>

12:00 - 1:00	#C4	Battery Storage: A Power System Game Changer	Energy storage is being viewed as a capable alternative in grid-supporting functions. Participants will discuss the latest research on battery storage. Specifically, what are the tradeoffs- siting challenges and solutions, environmental impacts and the related economics. Commissions will learn how to assess, review, and implement storage technologies. Stakeholders will learn what information Commissioners and commission staff need to know, such as more accurate valuations of the benefits, to determine cost-effectiveness.
12:00 - 1:00	#C5	The Price of Privacy	This panel will look at privacy practices and policy issues in the telecom, water, and electric sectors. It will explore what each sector can learn from the experience of the other. It will examine current policy debates at the federal and state level. In addition, the panel will look at “pay for privacy” plans – are they being seen in other utility sectors, or just Telecom? Will the “Market” be effective in “regulating” utility privacy practices? What are the marketing and education needs of consumers to make an informed choice on allowing the use of their personal data by utilities?
1:00 - 2:15	Installation Luncheon		
2:15 - 4:30	NARUC Board of Directors Meeting		
2:30 - 4:00	NRRI Colloquium		

Wednesday, November 16

8:00 - 11:00

Registration Open

Section D

8:30 - 9:45

#D1

Opening the Door on Open Records Requests

With an increased trend for transparency and information sharing from state, local, and federal governments come an ever-increasing number of Freedom of Information Act requests. Although the Act itself pertains to federal government, there are related guidelines or statutes in place for each state. This session is designed to help states better understand and manage these requests and decrease the chilling effect associated with communicating internally and externally. Attendees Will: Learn more about the rules of FOIA and open records requests; Share and hear best practices for effective responses; Understand the exemptions and; Understand how state regulations on releasing public records differ from federal law.

8:30 - 9:45

#D2

A Square-Off on Nuclear Policy

The Headlines tell the story: ***These Two Huge States Are Both Going Green. But Only One Is Trying To Save Nuclear Energy, Nuclear's Decline Will Raise Clean Power Plan Compliance Costs, Climate Scientists Urge California To Reconsider Diablo Canyon Closure Plans , Current Plant Closures Expected To Increase US Carbon Emission By 46 Million Metric Tons.*** The debate on this issue will unfold live at NARUC! New York and California have taken different policy paths – each with merit. Ralph Cavanagh, NRDC and others will argue which state took the better alternative and why. Commissions and stakeholders will hear varying views on the most efficient way to migrate to a reduced carbon generation portfolio, including how to handle nuclear generation going forward. This problem is front and center before a large number of State Commissions and of interest to all stakeholders in the energy sector.

8:30 - 9:45

#D3

Rate Design

Abstract in design phase.

9:45 - 10:00

NETWORKING BREAK

10:00 - 11:00

General Session & NARUC Business Meeting