

Honorable President Macic,

Dear Kirk House,

Dear Michael Metzler,

Dear AERS and PA PUC staff,

I am honored to be here to celebrate the extraordinary successful partnership between the Energy Agency of Serbia and the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission in exchanging of experience and information between the two partnering institutions with the goal of improving regulatory practices, capacity-building measures, and fostering sustainable relationships.

We mark the completion of a 5-year program and I am proud to say that this partnership will be remembered for its remarkable achievements, and for how it was demonstrated that AERS and PAPUC are not only good partners (regulators), but good friends.

The Serbia-Pennsylvania partnership program is NARUC's most advanced bilateral partnership program, using innovative learning and information exchange approaches. It has shown how two active partnering institutions can engage each other on challenging regulatory issues in evolving energy sectors. Both partners work very closely and through multiple channels of communication as they exchange timely feedback on future activities and most appropriate formats to maximize their experience and resources.

What our partnership has achieved is extremely impressive. 18 out of 28 AERS staff members have participated in technical training. The partnership program has allowed the AERS staff to improve their technical knowledge of various regulatory issues through participation in a formal internship program and an intensive one-week utility rate school. Each of these opportunities has allowed them to improve significantly their technical understanding and expand their regulatory experience with international comparative knowledge and networking. The Serbian regulators have demonstrated their keen interest in fully utilizing the partnership resources

and the long-standing experience of the Pennsylvania Commission in introducing and monitoring the operations of competitive retail services in the power and natural gas sectors. The Serbian regulators have gained comparative knowledge about U.S. wholesale and retail market operations. These results are a remarkable base, which, I am convinced, Energy Agency of Serbia will continue to leverage in the future.

Honorable President Macic –I want to thank you for leadership and your aspiration towards training your staff members. My contacts at both commissions - Petar Maksimovic and Karen Moury - your strong support has been vital and I highly appreciate your support. AERS staff – you have set the standard for dedication and effectiveness. Kirk, Darren and Erin and in your name all PAPUC's staff members – thank you for your commitment and expertise you were always ready to share with during these years. You did your best for the successful implementation of the program. Thank you all.

My appreciation goes to Bob Archer from USAID/Washington for his long-standing support and guidance in NARUC's international work.

Also I would like to extend our thanks to USAID Mission in Belgrade for funding this program. We appreciate the Mission's support of our regulatory program in Serbia.

I am delighted to have an honor on behalf of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners to present the Recognition Awards to both Commissions.