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NARUC
National Association of
Regulatory Utility Commissioners

NARUC Extends Charter for GEAR Task Force
*Group Unanimously Recommends the
Creation of a Natural Gas Readiness Forum*

Anaheim, Calif. (November 11, 2024) —The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners Executive Committee has approved a 9-month extension of the Gas-Electric Alignment for Reliability Task Force and has endorsed the formation of a new Natural Gas Readiness Forum.

GEAR, launched in 2023 under the leadership of NARUC President Julie Fedorchak, of the North Dakota Public Service Commission, was established to develop solutions to improve the reliability of the natural gas and electric energy systems. GEAR is comprised of seven state regulators from across the United States and seven energy industry representatives from across the natural gas and electric value chains and is chaired by NARUC First Vice President Commissioner Tricia Pridemore of the Georgia Public Service Commission and Vice Chair Dwight Keen of the Kansas Corporation Commission. At its October meeting, GEAR Task Force members unanimously recommended the creation of a Natural Gas Readiness Forum, dedicated to the enhancement of U.S. natural gas value chain reliability via the promotion of communication, connection, collaboration and education across relevant stakeholders.

The Natural Gas Readiness Forum will be an industry-led voluntary effort aimed at improving the communication, preparation and readiness of the energy sector. This will be achieved through a multi-state forum of stakeholders from the various elements of the natural gas and electric value chains, as well as federal and state regulators. The Forum will be administered by the American Gas Association, as recommended by the GEAR Task Force and will include an annual readiness summit in advance of the winter season. Participants in the Forum will include representatives from across the natural gas value chain, e.g., natural gas transportation, storage and distribution operators; natural gas producers; state regulatory utility commissioners; and Regional Transmission Operators. The Natural Gas Readiness Forum will foster an environment that encourages discussion of operational readiness across the entirety of the U.S. natural gas value chain and critical end users.

“The Natural Gas Readiness Forum, created by state public utility commissioners and the natural gas industry, is an important and necessary step forward that marks a new beginning for reliability while also serving as a platform to protect customers,” said Fedorchak. “I thank all of the members of the GEAR Task Force for their exceptional work advancing this initiative.”

“I appreciate all the efforts of those on the GEAR Task Force to reach consensus on this first recommendation to improve communication and readiness across the energy industry,” said Pridemore. “This illustrates a critical step forward and shows what can be accomplished when state regulators and industry come together with a common mission to address energy needs of consumers in the United States. I am also very pleased that the NARUC Executive Committee has approved extending the charter for GEAR, which demonstrates their confidence in the work we are doing.”

“AGA is ready, willing and able to spearhead the Natural Gas Readiness Forum in this important effort to help promote the reliability of the U.S. energy system,” said AGA President and CEO Karen Harbert. “We appreciate the hard work put forward by the GEAR Task Force Chair Commissioner Pridemore and NARUC President Fedorchak and all of the Task Force members, and we look forward to partnering with NARUC and other stakeholders who will provide a platform for the entire energy sector to focus on the imperative of reliability.”

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About NARUC

NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the federal government.