



N A R U C  
National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners

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## **Iowa's Nick Wagner is 'Leading the Way' as NARUC's New President** *New Leadership Installed, Resolutions Approved and Awards Highlight Annual Meeting*

ORLANDO—The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners installed Iowa Utilities Board Member Nick Wagner as its new president during the 130<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Education Conference held in Orlando, Fla., November 11-14. President Wagner follows the successful 15-month term of Commissioner John ('Jack') Betkoski III, of the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Board.

### **Spirited Dialogues**

The annual conference convenes utility regulators, industry, consumer groups and others each November, where key issues across the energy and telecom sectors are addressed. In addition, the board of directors review and approve a host of substantive and honorary resolutions. General sessions and concurrent panels provide more in-depth discussions on current matters facing state regulators.

Spirited discussions and solutions-focused conversations marked this year's general sessions. Betkoski moderated a discussion on Monday focused on the energy-water nexus. The Tuesday session, moderated by Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission Chair Gladys Brown, looked at ways to improve the nation's critical infrastructure, which included physical and cyber challenges. The closing general session, led by Montana Public Service Commission Vice Chair Travis Kavulla, unpacked varying opinions of the Environmental Protection Agency's Affordable Clean Energy Rule proposed in August, which replaces the Clean Power Plan, advanced by the Obama Administration.

### **New Officers; Leading the Way**

Betkoski served an extended term after then-President Robert Powelson was tapped to join the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission before his NARUC term ended. Before the installation of new officers, Betkoski reflected on many highlights of his term, including the focus on water, making personal connections and taking pride in the civility demonstrated by NARUC members, even when discussing contentious issues.

"State and federal government can take a page from our book," he noted.

The new officers for 2018-2019 are:

- Nick Wagner (Iowa), President
- Edward Finley, Jr. (North Carolina), First Vice President
- Paul Kjellander (Idaho), Second Vice President

His installation remarks—which included an illustrative and often humorous slide deck—led to his theme, *Leading the Way: Exploring Opportunities*. Although not focused on a particular sector, President Wagner intends to create a platform for NARUC to provide the resources for state commissioners and staff to develop their regulatory skills, expand the new commissioner trainings and help state regulators transition from commissioner to non-commissioner roles. This is a platform that can be sustained over the long term, allowing Wagner's successors to build upon the foundation he has established.

Wagner's first official act was to announce the formation of a new partnership with The National Association of State Energy Officials on the formation of a joint partnership. Joint Task Force on Comprehensive Electricity Planning will be a two-year collaborative initiative of NARUC and NASEO to provide a forum for participants from 12 to 15 states to examine key planning process intersections to test concepts, learn from national-caliber experts and outline policy and technical needs. Read more about this endeavor at [bit.ly/2qHz9wt](http://bit.ly/2qHz9wt).

## Resolutions

Several new resolutions were approved by the Board of Directors, which included:

**CPI-1[TC-1]** Resolution Urging the FCC to Extend and Reform Process for Creating the MF -II Eligibility Map. Urges the FCC to extend Mobility Fund Phase II process until March 15, 2019, and to create an improved process in the interim that is transparent and will ensure that areas of the United States represented by NARUC members receive the universal support required to fulfill the purpose of the fund. (Committee on Consumers and the Public Interest and the Committee on Telecommunications)

**EL-4 [ERE-1]** Resolution on Modeling Energy Storage and Other Flexible Resources. Recommends six principles to guide NARUC member states in modeling energy storage and other flexible resources. (Committee on Electricity and the Committee on Energy and the Environment)

**WC-1** Resolution on Accountability for All Water and Wastewater Systems: Recommends that all water and wastewater systems develop and/or maintain (1) an asset management plan that requires the utility to inspect, maintain, repair, and replace aging infrastructure in a timely, prudent, and cost-effective manner; (2) a security plan to protect against cyber and physical attacks; (3) an emergency response plan for natural disasters and other unplanned events; (4) a mitigation plan for water quality issues, including those that result in a Notice of Violation; (5) an annual certification that the system is in compliance with all federal and state laws and regulations; and (6) a plan to address short- and long-term water supply issues, if any exist; and that state and federal lawmakers consider and adopt any appropriate laws and regulations to assist regulators in addressing these challenges. (Resolution Passed by the Committee on Water)

See the [substantive](http://bit.ly/2018AnnualResolutions) resolutions at [bit.ly/2018AnnualResolutions](http://bit.ly/2018AnnualResolutions).

## Awards

Two important awards programs were held during the meeting. The Terry Barnich Award, which recognizes state commissioners and staff who promote international cooperation among utility regulators and the development of professional regulation, was given to Elijah Abinah of the Arizona Corporation Commission and Dr. Udeozo Ogbue of the District of Columbia Public Service Commission. The award is named in honor of former Chairman of the Illinois Commerce Commission Terrence "Terry" Barnich. He was killed on Memorial Day, May 25, 2009, while working as the deputy director of the State Department office overseeing U.S. reconstruction projects in Iraq. The Terry Barnich Award is the highest honor bestowed by NARUC's Committee on International Relations. More details on the recipients and the award are at [naruc.org/barnichaward](http://naruc.org/barnichaward).

Innovation was celebrated during the meeting, with the presentation of Innovation Awards. The Innovation Awards reflect NARUC's commitment to promoting the exchange of knowledge and information that will benefit innovation in regulatory issues and recognized innovators in the various utility sectors, in the following categories:

- **Regulatory and Policy Innovation:** Chairman Asim Haque, Public Utilities Commission of Ohio; Member, NARUC Executive Committee and Board of Directors.
- **Technical Innovation**
  - **Electricity Industry:** Antenna Group for Green Lots
  - **Water Industry:** San Jose Water for their Montevina Ultrafiltration Plant
- **Gas Industry:** Gas Technology Institute for their Voluntary Information-Sharing System

Read more about this year's awards program at [bit.ly/NARUCInnovation2018](http://bit.ly/NARUCInnovation2018).

## Next Meeting

The NARUC Winter Policy Summit will be held in Washington, D.C., February 10-13, 2019, at the Renaissance Washington Hotel.

Photos from the Annual Meeting are online at [bit.ly/NARUCAnnual18Pics](http://bit.ly/NARUCAnnual18Pics).

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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.***