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New NARUC-DOE Nuclear Energy Partnership Enables State Energy Regulators to Explore Key Nuclear Power Issues

WASHINGTON (March 8, 2021) – The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners has launched a new five-year Nuclear Energy Partnership with support from the U.S. Department of Energy. Through this educational partnership, NARUC will provide opportunities for state public service commissioners and commission staff to better understand barriers and possibilities related to the U.S. nuclear fleet, the nation’s largest source of zero-carbon power.

In 2020, 94 nuclear reactors produced approximately 20 percent of U.S. electricity. On average, plants are nearing 40 years of operation. Understanding the reliability and environmental attributes of the existing fleet as well as growth pathways for advanced nuclear technologies, such as small modular reactors, will be key focus areas for the partnership. By building institutional networks and relationships between state and federal decision-makers, who will affect both the retention of the existing nuclear fleet and the deployment of advanced nuclear energy technologies, this partnership will coordinate on technical, environmental and economic issues relating to the use of nuclear energy and the options available to maintain its competitiveness in a diverse, reliable, environmentally friendly and affordable energy mix.

“The Office of Nuclear Energy aims to advance nuclear power as a resource capable of meeting the nation’s energy, environmental and national security needs by resolving technical, cost, safety, proliferation resistance and security barriers through research, development and demonstration,” said DOE Acting Assistant Secretary for Nuclear Energy Dennis Miotla. “This partnership with NARUC elevates the experience and needs of state energy regulators, helping the Office achieve its mission.”

The partnership, which will hold its kick-off meeting in March, is supported by the DOE Office of Nuclear Energy through the NARUC Center for Partnerships and Innovation.

“The NARUC Center for Partnerships and Innovation successfully manages multiple educational partnerships with DOE, and we are pleased to add nuclear energy to our growing portfolio,” said NARUC Executive Director Greg White. “This partnership is important to providing unbiased resources not only for the 28 states with an existing nuclear plant but also for states that are interested in exploring the deployment of new, advanced nuclear technologies.”

Commissioner Anthony O’Donnell of the Maryland Public Service Commission and Commissioner Tim Echols of the Georgia Public Service Commission will co-chair the partnership. O’Donnell and Echols are also the chair and vice chair, respectively, of the NARUC Subcommittee on Nuclear Issues – Waste Disposal.

“I am eager to serve as a co-chair of this partnership with Commissioner Echols,” said O’Donnell. “Building on the important work accomplished by the Subcommittee and Staff Subcommittee on Nuclear Issues – Waste Disposal, this educational partnership will enable state energy regulators to improve their understanding of the role and value of nuclear energy in our changing generation mix.”

Throughout the partnership, members will engage in programming such as stakeholder dialogues, peer sharing calls, site visits, educational webinars and briefing papers for NARUC’s state members.

“Nuclear energy currently provides almost a quarter of Georgia’s electricity, and the anticipated completion of two new units at Plant Vogtle will cement nuclear power’s role in our energy portfolio,” said Echols. “I look forward to sharing nuclear regulatory strategies with other states, as well as collaborating with federal and industry stakeholders to recognize and advance opportunities for emerging technologies.”

The Nuclear Energy Partnership will initially include commissioners and staff representing 18 states and territories from coast to coast. Additional NARUC members may join on a rolling basis. Along with O’Donnell and Echols, other members include

- Brent Bailey, Mississippi Public Service Commission
- Michael Carrigan, Illinois Commerce Commission
- Kim Duffley, North Carolina Utilities Commission
- Gary Hanson, South Dakota Public Utilities Commission
- Mary-Anna Holden, New Jersey Board of Public Utilities
- David Hughes, U.S. Virgin Islands Public Services Commission
- Stefanie Krevda, Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission
- Katherine Peretick, Michigan Public Service Commission
- Ann Rendahl, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
- Michael Richard, Maryland Public Service Commission
- Katie Sieben, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission
- Eric Skrmetta, Louisiana Public Service Commission
- Ted Thomas, Arkansas Public Service Commission
- Becky Valcq, Wisconsin Public Service Commission
- David Ziegner, Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission

NARUC CPI Senior Manager Kiera Zitelman is the primary coordinator and point of contact for the partnership and Program Officer Jasmine McAdams will provide additional support. To see the complete list of Nuclear Energy Partnership members and NARUC staff support, visit bit.ly/38dtUuK.

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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.