



NARUC
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners

For Immediate Release

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NARUC Creates Emergency Preparedness, Recovery and Resiliency Task Force *With a Special Subcommittee to Review State and National Response to COVID-19*

WASHINGTON (June 18, 2020) — In response to the coronavirus pandemic and weather emergencies, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners President Brandon Presley has established a new task force focused on emergency preparedness, recovery and resiliency and a special subcommittee to examine the national response to COVID-19. Arkansas Commissioner Kimberly O’Guinn will chair the new task force and Washington Commissioner Ann Rendahl will chair the subcommittee.

The Presidential Task Force on Emergency Preparedness, Recovery and Resiliency is a response to recent extreme weather events, natural disasters and the national emergency from the COVID-19 pandemic. These events have heightened the nation’s collective awareness of the need for access to energy and the importance of ensuring the continued delivery of essential energy services. The intensified focus on protecting the reliability of our vulnerable energy systems and creating a more resilient infrastructure will enable the nation to better respond to future large-scale and catastrophic events. The task force is comprised of a balanced, diverse group of NARUC members, stakeholders and experts who will consider policy issues facing the regulatory community related to emergency preparedness, recovery and resiliency.

The task force will lead NARUC’s efforts in responding to and educating members about existing and emerging issues and opportunities associated with emergency preparedness, recovery and resiliency, including best practices, funding opportunities, resources and collaborative efforts. Considerations for the task force include available federal funding, the meaning of resiliency; the critical connections that exist between regulatory policy and implementation; the relationship between preparedness, response, and resilience; and the future of resiliency as it relates to a diverse and changing energy future.

The task force will include a Special Subcommittee comprised of and chaired by members of the task force to study the COVID-19 pandemic response. Specifically, the Special Subcommittee will gather, examine and analyze regulatory and industry actions, responses and lessons learned from COVID-19.

“As state regulators, we are uniquely aware of how these events affect our utilities, which includes electric, gas, water and telecommunications companies,” said Presley, a commissioner with the Mississippi Public Service Commission. “Anything that affects utilities affects the people and businesses in our communities. Establishing this task force and its special subcommittee will enable us to better identify and address a host of relevant issues.”

The primary goals of the Task Force on Emergency Preparedness, Recovery and Resiliency are to:

1. Conduct research and provide ongoing education on federal funding to support recovery;

2. Support NARUC member preparedness in the event of a Black Sky event;
3. Seek to build consensus on construction standards for FEMA reference in recovery; and
4. Provide education on COVID-19 lessons learned and best practices for the path forward.

The task force will convene sessions with the NARUC community via conference calls, webinars and at each of NARUC's three annual national meetings, organize educational efforts within NARUC and serve as a resource for the association's leadership on these programs.

Along with O'Guinn, members of the task force include Julie Brown (Florida), Gladys Brown-Dutrieuille (Pennsylvania), Diane X. Burman (New York), Jay Griffin (Hawaii), Odogwu Obi Linton (Maryland), Lillian Mateo-Santos (Puerto Rico), Charlotte Mitchell (North Carolina), Ellen Nowak (Wisconsin), Sadzi Oliva (Illinois), Dan Scripps (Michigan), Genevieve Shiroma (California), Eric Skrmetta (Louisiana) and Justin Williams (South Carolina). President Presley will serve as an ex-officio member of the task force. An announcement of participating stakeholders will be forthcoming.

"We appreciate the efforts of each member of the task force. Individually and collectively, they will be responsible for contributing to the body of knowledge on this critical issue and creating an essential roadmap for state regulators," said Presley. "I am pleased that the task force and subcommittee will have the effective, capable leadership of Commissioners O'Guinn and Rendahl."

"I am grateful for the opportunity to lead the task force in our efforts to substantively address utility-related issues such as service reliability and disruptions during extended periods of sheltering in place, inadequate or nonexistent broadband service for distance learning, eligibility for federal funds, compliance matters, and more," said O'Guinn.

"In our review of the national response to COVID-19, the Special Subcommittee will specifically review issues related to impacts on customers, utility and state commission workforce, utility financial approaches to the pandemic response and other key challenges," said Rendahl. "This information will help guide our members and the broader regulatory community as we manage our response to COVID-19 and plan for future crises."

Importantly, to help ensure that NARUC members have tailored resources available, and maintain the institutional knowledge gained through these efforts, the task force will publish policy papers, manuals and reports with actionable policy recommendations for the future, along with a *NARUC Emergency Preparedness, Recovery and Resiliency Manual* and/or other materials to support information sharing.

The task force, which will be in effect for two years [under its charter](#), will convene its first meeting around the NARUC Summer Policy Summit [virtual conference](#), July 19-22.

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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.