



Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

April 17, 2020

Readout from FERC COVID-19 Pandemic conference call with NARUC, NASEO, NGA

Today, FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee and FERC senior staff members convened their second conference call with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners, the National Association of State Energy Officials, and the National Governor's Association.

This call provided FERC's state partners an update on FERC's efforts and Commission actions since the COVID-19 pandemic forced most of the country into telework status in early March. The Directors of FERC's Office of the Executive Director (OED), Office of Energy Market Regulation (OEMR), Office of Electric Reliability (OER), Office of Enforcement (OE), and Office of Energy Infrastructure Security (OEIS) and staff from the Office of Energy Policy and Innovation (OEPI) provided updates on actions taken to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chairman Chatterjee and the President of NARUC, Commissioner Brandon Presley, provided opening remarks during today's call expressing their gratitude for the work of those involved in the regulation and production of energy and highlighted the continued collaboration between state and federal regulators and the importance of maintaining flexibility in responding to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Anton Porter, FERC's Executive Director, stressed that FERC remains fully functional via its telework capabilities with more than 1,400 employees nationwide working remotely. Commission leadership continues to provide employees as much flexibility as possible in regard to workplace accommodations and, despite drastic changes in the work environment, employee morale remains high. Porter also highlighted the utilization of virtual meetings, including hosting the first virtual open meeting in FERC's history.

Caroline Wozniak, FERC's Pandemic Liaison and Senior Policy Advisor with the Office of Energy Market Regulation, highlighted the continued work of the Pandemic Liaison team and several actions the Commission has taken in response to industry concerns. To date, the Pandemic Liaison team has provided timely responses to more than 60 email inquiries and also continues to respond to inquiries received by phone.

Anna Cochrane, Director of the Office of Energy Market Regulation, discussed recent actions taken by the Commission to facilitate social distancing by granting a blanket waiver of in-person meeting requirements and the requirement to provide notarized documents. Cochrane also emphasized other actions such as the Commission's recent policy statement on the prioritization of filings made for the purpose of assuring the reliable operation of the grid and the delegation of authority to act on certain uncontested requests, noting that the first of these delegated orders issued today.

Aileen Roder, Attorney Advisor to the Director of the Office of Energy Policy and Innovation, indicated that the office continues to work on rulemakings, engage with market monitors and plans to continue to host technical conferences, albeit virtually. We will act expeditiously on any extension requests that we receive.



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Andrew Dodge, Director of the Office of Electric Reliability, noted the significant nationwide reduction in electricity demand and that no significant reliability impacts resulting from the pandemic are currently anticipated. FERC continues to stay in close communication with the RTOs and ISOs and continues to collaborate with NERC to identify opportunities of regulatory flexibility that will minimize the impacts of the coronavirus on operations while maintaining the reliability of the grid, highlighting that FERC today approved NERC's request to delay the implementation of several reliability standards.

Joseph McClelland, Director of the Office of Energy Infrastructure Security, highlighted the collaborative efforts that FERC has taken in conjunction with its federal, state and industry partners during this pandemic. McClelland focused on the challenges that the industry faces including: work being done under COVID-19 protocols, ensuring that essential workers in the energy industry are able to continue to access restricted areas to ensure the continued availability of reliable energy services, the need to remain fluid in responding to the ever-changing challenges presented by the pandemic and the importance of prioritizing cyber security.

Larry Parkinson, Director of the Office of Enforcement, noted that all of FERC's enforcement capabilities remain fully functional, and we continue to engage with the market monitors to ensure that competitive energy markets are properly functioning. OE also has taken measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus by cancelling in-person audits and testimony, declining to initiate any new audits until after July, and has acted expeditiously to grant requests to extend reporting deadlines.

FERC Chairman Chatterjee expects to do more of these calls as the pandemic continues, to provide further updates and to discuss areas of mutual interest.