



National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners
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P R E S S R E L E A S E

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**THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REGULATORY UTILITY COMMISSIONERS
WELCOMES FERC UTILITY VEGETATION MANAGEMENT ORDER**

Washington, DC – On April 5, 2004, the U.S.-Canada Power System Outage Task Force released recommendations based on their finding that tree contact with transmission lines was a precipitating factor in the August 14 blackout that affected a significant segment of the United States. Today, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) responded to those recommendations by voting to approve an order directing electricity transmission providers to report on their vegetation management practices by June 17th. These reports are to be provided to the FERC, State regulatory commissions, the North American Electric Reliability Council, and relevant reliability coordinators. Before voting on the order, FERC Commissioner Nora Brownell emphasized that the FERC looks forward to working with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners' (NARUC) Ad Hoc Committee on Critical Infrastructure to develop appropriate and effective ways to regulate transmission line vegetation management.

In response, NARUC President, Georgia Commissioner Stan Wise, said: "NARUC, through its Ad Hoc Committee on Critical Infrastructure, is looking forward to the opportunity to work with the Commission to assist in ensuring reliable and adequate power supply for all of our constituents."

New Jersey Commissioner Connie Hughes, Chair of NARUC's Ad Hoc Committee on Critical Infrastructure, added: "The Task Force's recommendations conclude that had the rights of way been properly maintained for three 345kV transmission lines that tripped due to tree line contact, the August 14 Blackout would likely not have occurred. However, it also suggests that the utilities responsible had vegetation management programs in place that are consistent with current industry standards. This an area where we need to join in a cooperative effort with our federal colleagues to seek solutions."

Indiana Commissioner Judy Ripley, Vice Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee, said: "This committee has been concerned about and discussing both vegetation management issues and related ongoing State initiatives for some time. I'm pleased that the FERC Report and this most recent order provides an opportunity for us to coordinate more closely with our Federal colleagues."

The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners is a non-profit organization founded in 1889. Its 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 and the Independent Federal agencies.

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