

TESTIMONY OF CHERYL LAFLEUR

NOMINEE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE

FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND NATURAL

RESOURCES

UNITED STATES SENATE

APRIL 27, 2010

Thank you, Chairman Bingaman, Ranking Member Murkowski, and members of the Committee. I am deeply honored to be here today as a nominee for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. I would like to thank President Obama for nominating me, and thank the Committee for their consideration and for scheduling this hearing so quickly. I would like to thank Senator Shaheen for her very generous introduction, and for all that she has done for the citizens of New Hampshire and New England as both Governor and Senator. Finally, thank you to my home state Senators, Senator Kerry and Senator Brown, for all that they do for the people of Massachusetts.

I know that FERC is faced with substantial responsibilities, and Congress is considering adding even more as it takes up energy bills including the one this Committee reported out last year. Issues before FERC in the coming years will be critical to strengthening electric and gas infrastructure for greater reliability, security, and economic growth; facilitating environmental improvement through greater reliance on new sources of energy; and promoting fair and efficient markets to reduce costs to consumers. I would welcome the opportunity to apply myself diligently to these efforts.

I believe my background is well-suited to meet many of the challenges FERC will be facing should I be confirmed. I was fortunate to have a wonderful education through the sacrifices of my parents and the availability of public and private financial aid. I was trained as a lawyer and practiced law for several years, but have spent the last twenty plus years of my career in the electric and gas industry. I have leadership experience both in a vertically integrated electric company with a diverse fossil, hydro and nuclear portfolio, and in a restructured electric and gas company that provided transmission and distribution services and bought power in a competitive wholesale market.

Much of my career has been spent at the distribution customer level, and I understand that everything FERC and other regulators do affects real customers. I was closely involved in the restructuring of the electric markets by statute and regulation in the New England states, and in helping customers to understand and benefit from the competitive marketplace. I also led a major effort to improve distribution reliability and safety through infrastructure investment.

Earlier in my career, I spent four years leading energy efficiency and demand response programs for business and residential customers in Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. I know that demand-side efforts can save money for homes and businesses, help markets meet energy needs, and contribute to environmental improvement.

I come from a part of the country that has been an early leader in the development of robust competitive markets, in sustainable demand-side programs, and in efforts to boost renewable energy, and I am proud to have been a part of those efforts. At the same time, the Northeast has struggled with a lack of indigenous energy resources and historically high energy prices. If confirmed as a FERC Commissioner, I would work to understand and be sensitive to the unique situations and needs of different geographic regions and markets across the country and to approach all issues with an open mind. I would look forward to working closely with state utility commissions, whose work complements FERC's in many areas. I would also be honored to work with the members and staff of this Committee.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify this morning, and I would be happy to answer any questions you have.