



FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

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NEWS MEDIA CONTACT
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FERC, NRC Commissioners to Discuss Grid Reliability April 8 in Washington, D.C.

Commissioners and staff from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) will meet at FERC headquarters in Washington, D.C., April 8 to discuss and make presentations on bulk power system (wholesale electricity grid) reliability activities affecting nuclear power plants, planning for new reactors and cyber security.

This will be the fourth time the two commissions have met to discuss issues of mutual concern to their respective agencies and it underscores the commitment of these two agencies to the safe and reliable operation of the bulk power system.

The blackout of Aug. 14, 2003, was the largest in the history of the United States, interrupting power to more than 50 million people and causing nine U.S. nuclear power plants to shut down. Similar to non-nuclear facilities, when the bulk power system goes down or is significantly degraded, nuclear reactors and turbine generators have protective circuits that automatically shut down to protect equipment. Nuclear facilities have backup power sources, typically emergency diesel generators, to provide power to essential safety systems. During the blackout, diesel generators kept the nine plants in a safe condition.

Both NRC and FERC participated in a joint U.S.-Canada task force that reviewed the blackout. The agencies signed a Memorandum of Agreement on Sept. 1, 2004, to facilitate their collaboration concerning the nation's bulk power system reliability, as well as addressing the task force's recommendations. In the Energy Policy Act of 2005, FERC was granted oversight authority of the reliability of the nation's bulk electric power system.

During the April 8 meeting, commissioners from the two agencies will discuss the status of new reactors, the regional planning process to address the new reactors, reliability standards activities affecting nuclear power plants and grid operations, cyber security and future FERC/NRC coordination.

The meeting will run from 10 a.m. to noon in FERC's Commission Meeting Room at 888 First St. NE, Washington, D.C.

Anyone with questions should contact R. Michelle Schroll, NRC Office of the Secretary, at 301-415-1662, or Sarah McKinley, FERC State Relations, Office of External Affairs, at 202-502-8368. The public is invited to attend the meeting, which also will be available on FERC's Web site, <http://www.ferc.gov>.

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