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# FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION



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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **GOVERNMENTS AND AGENCIES COOPERATE TO ENSURE ELECTRIC RELIABILITY IN NORTH AMERICA**

A bilateral working group from the United States and Canada will address key issues related to electricity reliability in North America. The terms of reference for the Bilateral Electric Reliability Oversight Group (or Bilateral Group) were announced today by Samuel W. Bodman, U.S. Secretary of Energy; Pat Wood, III, Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC); the Honourable R. John Efford, Minister of Natural Resources Canada; and Dwight Duncan, Ontario Minister of Energy.

The Bilateral Group will consult on the establishment of an international framework for reliability and issues related to international aspects of mandatory reliability standards in North America. It commits to the following actions:

- developing principles to guide the establishment of a reliability organization that can function on an international basis;
- coordinating on the electric reliability standards process; and
- consulting on policy and regulatory issues surrounding reliability.

“We have one North American grid, and it is essential that all participants in bulk power operations know and adhere to the rules,” said U.S. Energy Secretary Bodman. “The affected government agencies have a special burden to speak in a coordinated way on reliability matters to the industry and its reliability organizations. The Bilateral Group will help us do that.”

U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chairman Pat Wood said, “Amid the growing energy interdependency between the United States and Canada, the August 2003 blackout painfully reminded us that blackouts do not respect national boundaries. This agreement to consult on an international reliability framework is consistent with many of the recommendations of the U.S.-Canada Power System Outage Task Force report and the goals of the pending U.S. energy bill.”

“The consequences of the August 2003 power outage demonstrated the importance of cooperating with other governments and regulators in North America to ensure the reliability on our interconnected grid,” said Minister Efford. “This Bilateral Group commits to maintaining an open dialogue with our U.S. and provincial colleagues on international issues related to our electric system.”

“Maintaining high reliability standards across the international grid is critical to keeping the lights on,” said Minister Duncan. “This commitment to cooperation will benefit all of us.”

The Bilateral Group is comprised of representatives from the U.S. Department of Energy, FERC and the Federal-Provincial-Territorial Electricity Working Group of the Canadian Council of Energy Ministers, with assistance from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the U.S. Department of State.

The terms of reference, and FERC’s efforts to work with representatives from Canada can be found on our Website at [www.ferc.gov](http://www.ferc.gov).

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