

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

COVID-19 Response: Electric Power Industry Closely Coordinating With Federal Partners

WASHINGTON (March 23, 2020) – The nation’s investor-owned electric companies, public power utilities, and electric cooperatives are working together to protect the energy grid and ensure continued access to safe and reliable electricity during the COVID-19 global health crisis.

The electric power industry has been planning for years for an emergency like the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as countless other types of emergencies, and the industry is coordinating closely with government partners through the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) to ensure that organizations have the resources they need to keep the lights on.

The ESCC is holding high-level coordination calls twice a week with senior leadership from the Departments of Energy, Homeland Security, and Health and Human Services, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation. These calls help ensure that industry and government work together to resolve any challenges that arise during this health emergency.

“Electricity and the energy grid are indispensable to our society, and one of our greatest strengths as an industry is our ability to convene and adapt quickly to changing circumstances and challenging events,” said Edison Electric Institute President Tom Kuhn. “Our industry plans for all types of contingencies, and strong industry-government coordination and cross-sector collaboration are critical to our planning and response. We appreciate the ongoing leadership and support of our government partners as we all respond to COVID-19 and power through this crisis together.”

The ESCC quickly mobilized and established strategic working groups dedicated to identifying and solving for short-, medium-, and long-term issues facing the industry during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The five current areas of focus are:

1. Continuity of operations at control centers
2. Continuity of operations at generation facilities
3. Access to, and operations in, restricted or quarantined areas
4. Protocols for mutual assistance
5. Supply chain challenges

“The electric power industry has taken steps to prepare for the evolving coronavirus challenges, while maintaining our commitment to the communities we serve,” said National Rural Electric

Cooperative Association CEO Jim Matheson. “We have a strong track record of preparing for many kinds of emergencies that could impact the ability to generate and deliver electricity. While planning for this situation is unique from other business continuity planning, we are taking actions to prepare to operate with a smaller workforce, potential disruptions in the supply chain, and limited support services for an extended period of time.”

The ESCC has developed a COVID-19 Resource Guide [linked here](#) and available at electricitysubsector.org. This document was designed to support electric power industry leaders in making informed localized decisions in response to this evolving health crisis. The guide will evolve as additional recommended practices are identified and as more is learned about appropriate mitigation strategies.

“The American Public Power Association (APPA) continues to work with our community-owned public power members and our industry and government partners to gather and share up-to-date information, best practices, and guidance to support them in safely maintaining operational integrity,” said APPA CEO Joy Ditto.

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About the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council

The ESCC serves as the principal liaison between leadership in the federal government and in the electric power sector, with the mission of coordinating efforts to prepare for national-level incidents or threats to critical infrastructure. Protecting the energy grid from threats that could impact national security and public safety is a responsibility shared by both the government and the electric power sector. The ESCC facilitates and supports policy- and public affairs-related activities and initiatives designed to enhance the reliability and resilience of the energy grid. These activities include all hazards, steady-state preparation, and emergency preparedness, response, and recovery for the nation’s electricity sector.

More information is available at: <http://www.electricitysubsector.org/>

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