

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
FOR INFORMATION, CONTACT:
BRIAN REIL, (202) 508-5514

Hurricane Michael: Power Restored to 95 Percent of Customers As Industry Works to Rebuild the Most Severely Damaged Infrastructure

WASHINGTON (October 16, 2018) – Less than a week after Hurricane Michael devastated the Southeast, electricity has been restored to more than 2.6 million—or approximately 95 percent of—customers impacted by the fast-moving and devastating storm. In just days, investor-owned electric companies, public power utilities, and electric cooperatives mobilized an army of more than 35,000 workers from 27 states and Canada to restore power safely and as quickly as possible. This workforce includes company personnel, contractors, and mutual assistance workers.

Approximately 131,000 electricity customers remain without power as of 6:00 p.m. EDT, with the majority of outages isolated in the Florida Panhandle communities that took a direct hit from the hurricane. Entire sections of the energy grid need to be rebuilt in some of these communities, and many of the customers still without power may not be able to be reconnected due to the severe damage to their homes and businesses.

“This was a historic storm, and we continue to see a historic response from the crews who are working around-the-clock to restore power,” said ESCC Co-chair, Duane Highley, president and CEO of Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corporation. “Never before have so many workers been mobilized so quickly from across our industry, and workers continue to be redeployed to the hardest hit areas where, in many cases, the energy grid is being completely rebuilt.”

Last night, the CEO-led Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) convened a call to discuss the restoration efforts with Deputy Secretary of Energy (DOE) Dan Brouillette, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Under Secretary for National Protection and Programs Directorate Chris Krebs, and other senior Administration officials and executives from all segments of the electric power industry.

The industry is also coordinating closely with its manufacturing partners and supplier networks to ensure that all material needs are being met.

“Power restoration is a team effort, and strong industry-government coordination and cross-sector collaboration are essential,” said ESCC Co-chair Kevin Wailes, CEO of Lincoln, Nebraska-based Lincoln Electric System. “We will continue to coordinate closely to ensure the full capabilities of the industry and government are being utilized to rebuild the most severely damaged infrastructure.”

“We appreciate the ongoing leadership from DOE, DHS, and FEMA in helping to coordinate the industry’s response with federal, state, and local officials,” said ESCC Co-chair Tom Fanning, chairman, president, and CEO of Atlanta-based Southern Company. “There is heartbreaking, utter devastation in the coastal communities. Our crews will continue to work around-the-clock to rebuild the energy grid and to restore power and hope to the customers and communities we are so privileged to serve.”

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/>