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Electric Power Industry Applauds Trump Administration for Its Continued Commitment of Resources to Help Puerto Rico

WASHINGTON, D.C. (February 23, 2018) – Since Hurricane Maria made landfall in Puerto Rico in September, the CEO-led Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) has been working across the electric power sector and with federal government partners to assess damages to the energy grid and to support and accelerate power restoration efforts on the island.

“Responding to major events like Hurricane Maria requires strong industry-government coordination,” said ESCC Co-chair Tom Fanning, chairman, president, and CEO of Atlanta-based Southern Company. “We applaud the action taken today by President Trump and his administration to extend the 100-percent cost sharing by the federal government. This action is an unprecedented show of support by this administration and recognizes that, while significant progress has been made to restore power, more work remains.”

Hurricane Maria caused catastrophic damage and created unprecedented logistical challenges. Through the ESCC, the entire electric power industry has worked closely with our government partners to marshal the necessary resources and expertise to aid our fellow American citizens in Puerto Rico. As of today, power has been restored to more than 86 percent of customers across the island.

“We thank President Trump and his administration for the continued support,” said Kevin Wailes, ESCC co-chair and CEO of LES, the customer-owned utility based in Lincoln, Neb. “The unprecedented extension of 100-percent federal cost sharing is appropriate given the extraordinary situation and the complexities of restoration that remain.”

“The industry’s mutual assistance program is an essential element of restoring electric service to homes and businesses after major events,” said Duane Highley, president and CEO of the Arkansas Electric Cooperative Corp. and ESCC co-chair. “Crews from the mainland have made significant progress in recent months, yet more work remains to bring electricity to all residents of the island.”

“Our industry’s focus remains squarely on those customers who are still without power,” added Fanning. “While crews continue to face some of the most challenging work of any restoration effort in our nation’s history, particularly in the most remote and hardest-hit areas, they remain steadfast in their commitment to working safely and as quickly as possible to restore power.”

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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/>
