



FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

January 13, 2021

Robert R. Redfield, M.D.
Director
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

José R. Romero, M.D., FAAP
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30329

Dear Director Redfield and Chairman Romero,

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is the agency charged with overseeing the reliability of the nation's bulk power system. Over the course of the last year, workers at electric utilities across the country have engaged in heroic efforts to keep the lights on in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Their work ensures the functioning of our nation's critical infrastructure—everything from our telecommunications systems to the hospitals that care for our most vulnerable.

It has come to our attention that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has updated its vaccine allocation guidance to place the energy workforce in Phase 1c. We recognize that developing vaccine guidance is a complex, iterative task that requires the balancing of numerous equities. We write with a narrow request: as the Advisory Committee continues to review and update its recommendations, we urge you to consider that a subset of the energy workforce be included in Phase 1b—specifically, highly trained electrical field workers, power plant operators, transmission and distribution grid operators, and personnel who procure the energy needed to balance the grid on a moment-to-moment basis. Those workers' duties can only be performed on-site, usually in close quarters, where full adherence to social distancing guidelines is impossible. And while these utility employees can be counted as among the most critical among the American workforce, they represent a relatively small population. We understand that the number is likely to be on the order of thousands of workers in each state. As such, we urge you to consider prioritizing these workers as the CDC continues revising its vaccine guidance.

We would welcome the opportunity to engage in further discussion regarding the urgency of protecting this subset of essential energy workers and the importance of their work when it comes to safeguarding America's electric system.



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Respectfully,

James P. Danly
Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Neil Chatterjee
Commissioner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Richard Glick
Commissioner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Allison Clements
Commissioner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

Mark C. Christie
Commissioner
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission

cc: Mark W. Menezes, Deputy Secretary of Energy
Brandon Wales, Acting Director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency