

**OPENING STATEMENT of MARK C. CHRISTIE**  
**Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee**  
**United States Senate**  
**Washington, DC**  
**September 28, 2021**

Chairman Manchin, Ranking Member Barrasso, members of the Committee, it is an honor to be here for the first time as a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

It was just over one year ago that I appeared before you as a nominee for FERC. So first I want to thank you for the honor this committee gave me last year by reporting my nomination favorably.

During that appearance before you and in the follow-up written questions, I stated that I believed two of FERC's highest priorities should be doing our part to maintain the reliability of the power system and protecting consumers from paying any more than necessary for a reliable power supply. These priorities are especially important now as we go through a changing generation mix and efforts to reduce carbon emissions. During this transition there can be no compromise on reliability and consumers must be protected from being exploited.

Americans expect their lights to be on 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. For many, reliable power service is not just a matter of convenience, but literally a matter of life and death. It is very important that the resource mix remains capable of supplying power to meet that 24/7/365 standard and that we have a transmission grid that can deliver power to support reliability. Sufficient generation and transmission are both necessary to keep the lights on around the clock.

As I indicated to you last year, I came to FERC after 17 years as a state utility regulator and, of course, the states regulate retail rates not FERC, but what FERC does has a huge impact on retail rates, and retail rates ultimately drive the monthly power bills that consumers must pay. So we at FERC always have to be sensitive to the effect of our actions on consumer costs. Reliability is not free – transmission and generation facilities must be paid for – but we need to ensure that the costs consumers pay are no more than absolutely necessary to deliver a reliable power supply.

Thank you again for the honor of testifying today before you. I look forward to any questions you may have.