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Chairman Murkowski Welcomes FERC’s Engagement with EPA on Reliability

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, today welcomed a recommendation from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission that the Environmental Protection Agency include a safety valve in its Clean Power Plan to protect the reliability of the nation’s power system.

“It is a good first step that FERC is formally engaged on this issue,” said Murkowski, chairman of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. “I am glad that FERC is responding to the concerns it heard during the recent round of technical conferences, which I, along with my colleagues in the House, called for in November. I fully expect the EPA to engage seriously with FERC, which, through its oversight of the Electric Reliability Organization – NERC – is the federal agency accountable for the reliability of the grid.”

Murkowski, along with House Energy and Commerce Committee Chairman Fred Upton, R-MI, and Energy and Power Subcommittee Chairman Ed Whitfield, R-KY, in November [wrote](#) to FERC requesting the commission convene a technical conference with federal agencies and stakeholders to discuss the reliability challenges posed by the raft of new environmental regulations – known collectively as the Clean Power Plan – being proposed by the EPA.

That letter followed the release of a [report](#) from the North American Electric Reliability Corp. (NERC) that questioned EPA’s analysis on the potential impact of the Clean Power Plan.

“Ensuring the reliability of the electric grid must be job one,” Murkowski said. “I take EPA at its word that it does not intend its rules to put reliability at risk. However, FERC is the expert federal agency when it comes to reliability. And the Federal Power Act, in turn, requires FERC to rely on the ERO. We must do more to ensure that the nation’s power supply and delivery will not be degraded by the cumulative effect of environmental regulations that are becoming increasingly restrictive. Moreover, the utilities we task with keeping the lights on need a clear signal that if there’s ever a conflict between compliance with environmental and reliability requirements – reliability wins out.”

Chairman Murkowski has introduced legislation ([S. 1221](#)) to address reliability concerns with major proposed rules on a prospective basis. That bill will be part of the legislative hearing the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee plans to hold in early June on Title IV of the broad energy bill.

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