

**OPENING STATEMENT of MARK C. CHRISTIE**  
**Subcommittee on Energy**  
**House Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**United States House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC**  
**July 27, 2021**

Chairman Pallone, Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers, Chairman Rush, Ranking Member Upton, members of the Subcommittee, it is an honor to be here for the first time as a member of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

As this is my first appearance before you as a FERC Commissioner, let me note that two of my top priorities are reliability and protecting consumers from excessive costs. These priorities are especially important now as we go through a changing generation mix and efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

As to reliability, 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. So, reliability is Job One for FERC.

While promoting reliability, we also need to protect consumers from excessive costs. I came to FERC after 17 years as a state utility regulator. Broadly speaking, state regulators regulate retail rates for electric power while FERC regulates wholesale rates. One thing you really learn as a state regulator, however, is that while FERC does not set retail rates, what FERC does has a huge impact on retail rates, and retail rates ultimately drive the monthly power bills that consumers must pay.

So, as I said at my Senate confirmation hearing last fall and frequently since that time, one of my top priorities as a FERC commissioner is be continually sensitive to the impact of FERC's actions on the bills consumers will pay. In my view, the Federal Power Act is, first and foremost, a consumer protection statute; its historic purpose is to protect consumers from exercises of market power. That makes FERC, in essence, a consumer protection agency.

So, maintaining reliability while protecting consumers are my top two priorities.

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