

## Press Release

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### **High-Impact, Low-Frequency Risks Subject of Key Effort at NERC and DOE**

*Workshop Brings Industry, Government, and Risk Experts Together to Discuss Next Steps on Electromagnetic Disturbances, Cyber and Physical Security, Pandemic Disease*

PRINCETON, N.J., November 12, 2009 — In a unique two-day workshop, experts from government, academia, and the electric industry converged in Washington earlier this week to build a framework to address High-Impact, Low-Frequency (HILF) risks to the North American bulk power system.

The risks discussed at the forum are very rare, yet have the potential for wide-ranging impacts in North America. Those discussed included coordinated cyber and physical attack, electromagnetic pulse and geomagnetic storm events, and pandemic disease. The workshop featured summary presentations on each topic and facilitated working sessions designed to draw on the expertise of attendees.

Topics discussed during the working sessions included: approaches to measure and monitor HILF risks, potential mitigation steps, and formulating an effective public/private partnership to more effectively address these issues. Focus was given to determining the appropriate balance of resilience, prevention, and restoration.

“High-impact, low-frequency risks have the potential to affect all of North America’s critical infrastructures—from transportation to telecommunications to finance,” commented Michael Assante, vice president and chief security officer of NERC. “This workshop and our ongoing efforts to evaluate and address these issues are further evidence of the electric sector’s dedication to reliably serving the communities of North America.”

“These are issues of national significance and will require a national effort to solve,” commented William Bryan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Security & Energy Restoration at the U.S. Department of Energy. “Private industry, the government, and regulators (both state and federal) have much to gain through a proactive partnership that seeks to put in place the necessary means to ensure a reliable, survivable and resilient energy system. The greatest failure would be to do nothing and this workshop proved to be a solid beginning.”

The approximately 110 attendees at the closed session included representatives from the United States' Congressional Staff, Department of Defense, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Energy, Department of Health, the EMP Commission, and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Representatives from each of the North American electric industry's major sectors, including investor owned utilities, cooperatives, and municipal utilities were also in attendance.

The workshop's executive sponsors were Michael Assante, Vice President and Chief Security Officer at NERC and William Bryan, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Security & Energy Restoration at the Department of Energy. The workshop was developed by a 12-member steering committee co-chaired by Scott Moore, VP Transmission System & Region Operations for American Electric Power and Robert Stephan, Former Assistant Secretary for Infrastructure Protection in the National Protection and Programs Directorate of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

The results of the workshop will be documented in a summary report, including recommendations for future actions and a work plan to accomplish these goals. The public report will be published in the March 2010 time frame.

For more information on HILF risks, visit NERC's website at:  
<http://www.nerc.com/page.php?cid=6|69|327>.

The North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) is an international regulatory authority for the reliability of the bulk power system in North America. NERC develops and enforces reliability standards; assesses adequacy annually via a 10-year forecast and winter and summer forecasts; monitors the bulk power system; and educates, trains, and certifies industry personnel. NERC is a self-regulatory organization, subject to oversight by the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and governmental authorities in Canada. Learn more at [www.nerc.com](http://www.nerc.com).

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