

Announcement

Board Approves First Essential Action Alert, Honors Former Colleague

May 11, 2023

WASHINGTON, D.C. – An essential action alert, a data request and a moment of silence for an esteemed colleague were featured at the first hybrid meeting of the NERC Board of Trustees today. Board and Member Representatives Committee members met in person at NERC’s new office space, while observers watched remotely.

The hybrid format is one part of the Board’s efforts to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of its meetings, allowing for more direct and open conversations during in-person meetings, optimizing travel time and costs and allowing resources to be focused where most needed.

“Many of you have expressed your appreciation for our new meeting formats, including the addition of the technical sessions,” said Ken DeFontes, chair of the Board. “We are pleased to host our first hybrid meeting here in NERC’s new space that was designed expressly for collaboration.”

Opening remarks were made by Jen Easterly, director, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), Department of Homeland Secretary; and Patricia Hoffman, principal deputy assistant secretary, Office of Electricity, Department of Energy (DOE).

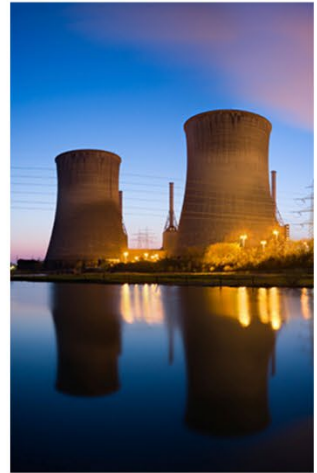
Easterly acknowledged the strong security posture of the electricity sector and thanked NERC for its partnership with CISA. She also outlined the National Cybersecurity Strategy and CISA’s Cybersecurity Performance Goals, stressing the critical need to design technology and software for security. Hoffman briefed the Board on DOE’s initiatives to facilitate development of National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors and coordinate federal agency permitting for electric transmission as well as efforts to assess long-term resilience of generation facilities.

Through a moment of silence, President and CEO Jim Robb honored the memory of Mechelle Thomas, former vice president of Compliance Assurance, who passed away May 1 after a long illness. “Mechelle led our Compliance Assurance work and was extremely successful in that role,” Robb said. “But, more importantly, she was a wonderful teammate, advisor and friend to me, to many of her NERC teammates and to many of you. To say our team is devastated is an understatement.”

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Action

The Board approved a Level 3 Essential Action alert on cold weather preparations that calls for industry to report on measures to mitigate impacts from extreme weather conditions. Given the recently expedited approval of the Cold Weather Reliability Standards by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and the continued impacts to grid reliability, it remains important to continue to engage registered entities on preparations for the upcoming winter season and beyond. Highlighting eight essential actions, this is the first instance NERC has issued a Level 3 alert, which is the highest level. The alert – Cold Weather Preparations for Extreme Weather Events – will be issued May 15 and posted publicly on NERC’s website. A May 5 [webinar and presentation](#) highlighting the alert’s essential actions is currently posted.

The Board authorized NERC to issue an internal network security monitoring data request in response to FERC’s Order 887, directing NERC to develop internal network security standards requirements and conduct a study of the risks stemming from the lack of internal network security monitoring. The order encompasses all high-impact Bulk Electric System (BES) cyber systems and medium-impact BES cyber systems with external routable connectivity. In order to address this in a timely manner, the Board authorized expedited procedures at their February meeting. The study must be filed with FERC by January 18, 2024.

In addition, the Board approved the appointment of **Soo Jin Kim** as vice president of Engineering and Standards. **Howard Gugel**, who previously served as vice president of Engineering and Standards, was named vice president of Compliance Assurance and Registration.

Updates

The Board received an update on work being done to better understand the rapid integration of inverter-based resources (IBR) on the bulk power system. IBRs are among the most significant drivers of grid transformation across North America. Several standard development projects and related efforts pertaining to generator ride-through, model validation and electromagnetic transient studies are underway with industry subcommittees. In addition, NERC filed a work plan with FERC on February 15 detailing how NERC will register IBRs that are not currently subject to existing standards and is conducting a comprehensive review of the body of standards to determine what existing requirements should apply to these newly registered IBRs.

Prior to the Board meeting, five NERC Board members met with Canadian regulators in Toronto on May 7 and noted how the engagement promoted greater understanding and recognition of regulatory structures in the Canadian provinces.

Board presentations are located on [NERC’s website](#). The next Board of Trustees meeting will be held August 17 in Ottawa.

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Electricity is a key component of the fabric of modern society and NERC, as the Electric Reliability Organization, serves to strengthen that fabric. The vision for the ERO Enterprise, which is comprised of NERC and the six Regional Entities, is a highly reliable and secure North American bulk power system. Our mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid.