



April 3, 2020

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**To the National Organizations Representing State and Local Government Leaders:**

On behalf of the organizations we collectively represent, we applaud you for your leadership and for your work to help your members protect their communities and constituents during the COVID-19 pandemic. We also assure you that our members—the nation’s electric and natural gas utilities, independent power producers, and nuclear generators—remain committed to keeping electricity and natural gas flowing and to helping our customers, communities, and employees stay safe and healthy.

Given the indispensable nature of the energy our members and federal electric utilities produce and deliver, it is vital that they be able to continue their work to ensure electric and natural gas service

remains safe and reliable throughout this unprecedented health emergency. To accomplish this, we are asking for your help and that of your members in recognizing that there is a limited number of highly skilled, mission-essential workers who serve on our frontlines and who need priority access to personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing.

We acknowledge and appreciate that many state, local, territorial, and tribal leaders already have adopted the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS's) guidance on Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers,<sup>1</sup> which was designed to help leaders appropriately prioritize critical infrastructure operators to ensure "continuity of functions critical to the public health and safety, as well as economic and national security." The DHS guidance was a good first step, and has allowed critical construction, maintenance, and power restoration projects to continue in many jurisdictions. We now are asking for additional assistance that is consistent with a memo that the National Governors Association sent to its members on March 25 on the challenges the energy industry is facing.<sup>2</sup>

**Specifically, we need your support in helping mission-essential employees—those who operate power generation facilities, staff the control rooms that serve as the “nerve centers” for transmission and distribution networks, and maintain the system and do emergency repairs as necessary—to be treated as a higher priority.**<sup>3</sup> This is particularly important in emergency situations when workers must enter customers' residences or businesses and as some of our members are going to the extraordinary measure of sequestering this workforce or decentralizing their operations to limit the impact a positive case would have on this category of workers.

Thank you again for the work you are doing to prioritize health and safety and for your help with this urgent request. We all have an important role to play in helping our country navigate through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and we look forward to our continued work with your organizations.

Sincerely,

Edison Electric Institute  
American Public Power Association  
Electric Power Supply Association  
National Rural Electric Cooperative Association  
Nuclear Energy Institute  
American Gas Association  
American Public Gas Association  
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers  
United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners  
Utility Workers Union of America

cc: U.S. Secretary of Energy Dan Brouillette  
Director of the Department of Homeland Security's Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency Christopher Krebs

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<sup>1</sup> See: <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>

<sup>2</sup> See: <https://www.nga.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/COVID-19-Utility-Guidance.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> See: Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council resource on testing and protecting mission-essential control center and generation facility personnel: <https://www.electricitysubsector.org>