
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION



WASHINGTON, D.C. 20426

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 30, 2004

COMMISSION CONCLUDES INVESTIGATION OF 2003 NATURAL GAS PRICE INCREASES, FINDS NO EVIDENCE OF PRICE MANIPULATION

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has concluded its investigation into the run-up in natural gas prices in late 2003 and found no evidence that any organization or individual engaged in actions or transactions intended to manipulate natural gas prices during this period.

The Commission's Office of Market Oversight and Investigations (OMOI) considered fundamental factors of supply, demand, and weather forecasts for the winter heating season, analyzed data from more than 900,000 physical and financial natural gas bids, offers and trades, interviewed more than two dozen energy traders, pipelines, storage field operators and local distribution companies, reviewed trends in commodity prices generally, and examined futures trading activity in the non-commercial sector of the market.

The Commission coordinated its investigation with a parallel inquiry undertaken by the Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), which today issued a similar statement.

"This cooperation with the CFTC represents our commitment to making sure energy markets continue to work in the best interests of customers," said Commission Chairman Pat Wood, III. In addition to investigating potential market manipulation, the Commission will maintain efforts to promote greater transparency in the natural gas markets through timely access to accurate information about natural gas storage inventories, Chairman Wood said.

As part of these efforts, the Commission has scheduled a September 28, 2004, technical conference to explore the need for rules to require interstate natural gas pipeline companies and other owners and operators of natural gas storage facilities to electronically post gas storage inventory levels daily. More information on the conference is available at www.ferc.gov/eventcalendar.

