

TESTIMONY OF JOHN R. NORRIS

**NOMINEE TO BE A MEMBER OF THE FEDERAL ENERGY
REGULATORY COMMISSION**

August 6, 2009

Chairman Bingaman, Senator Murkowski, and distinguished members of the Committee, I am honored to be here today as a nominee for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). I would like to express my appreciation to President Obama for nominating me to this position and to thank the Committee for considering my nomination.

I also want to thank Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack for his confidence in me that in large part is responsible for my being here today. While serving as then-Iowa Governor Vilsack's Chief of Staff in 1999, I was asked to take over as Chairman of Iowa's Electric Restructuring Task Force. I spent the next year and a half working with the Task Force to focus first on Iowa's energy needs for the future and then on how we could best meet those needs. The result of that process was the passage of landmark advanced ratemaking principles legislation that led to the construction of significant new electric generation capacity for Iowa, including baseload, intermediate and renewable generation. Iowa is now a national leader in wind generation as a result of the work of the Task Force and has had a reliable supply of electricity and stable electric prices for the past decade.

Beginning in March of 2005 until this past February 2009, I served as Chairman of the Iowa Utilities Board. I believe my service on a state regulatory commission is a valuable experience that I would bring with me to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. While serving on the Iowa Utilities Board I was a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and worked on that organization's Energy Resources and the Environment Committee and Electricity Committee. I also was the Co-Chair of the Department of Energy/NARUC 2009 National Electricity Delivery Forum.

From 2005 through 2009 I was also deeply involved in the issues facing Regional Transmission Organizations. During that time I served as a Board Member and was elected to Secretary and then President of the Organization of Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator (MISO) States, and was Chairman of the MISO Demand Response Working Group. I also had the privilege of serving on the FERC/NARUC Demand Response Collaborative.

I have also benefitted greatly from my years of service as a Board Member of the National Regulatory Research Institute and my participation with the Institute of Public Utilities Regulatory Research and Education at Michigan State University.

I would be honored to join in the important work the FERC is doing on improving the reliability and security of the electric grid, incorporating renewable energy into the grid for the benefit of consumers and the environment, and promoting development of smart grid policies that will

improve the efficiency of our system and provide consumers with better choices. If confirmed by the Senate, I will make these issues a personal priority and look forward to working with the members of this Committee as it prepares to move legislation addressing them.

I know you are also aware of the serious challenges created by the uncertainty facing the industries regulated by the FERC. Investments in such capital-intensive industries as electric generation and transmission, hydroelectric power, natural gas infrastructure and more are jeopardized by an uncertain future. There is a need to address such concerns as the reliability of our nation's energy supply, containment of costs to protect consumers, upgrading of our electric transmission grid and development of renewable energy and energy efficient technologies. If confirmed I look forward to working with members of this Committee and the members of Congress in general to address our nation's energy needs and resolve some of the uncertainties facing this sector of our economy.

I believe my experience as Chairman of the Iowa Utilities Board and my work as a member of NARUC and the Organization of MISO States will be assets at the FERC. I also recognize the FERC's role as an independent regulatory agency in carrying out the statutory responsibilities Congress has given to it. It is essential that the FERC continue to provide its expertise and assistance to Congress in the development of Federal energy legislation. If confirmed by the Senate, I pledge to work closely with this Committee to that end.

I have enjoyed my years of public service, and should I be confirmed it would be a privilege and an honor to continue that public service at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today and am happy to answer any questions you may have.