

September 1, 2017

TO: NRECA Board of Directors
Distribution CEOs
Statewide Managers
G&T Managers

Texas and Louisiana Co-ops Focused on Recovery in Aftermath of Hurricane Harvey

The electric cooperative family is extremely proud of the outstanding disaster response and recovery efforts by the Texas and Louisiana co-ops and the leadership of their statewide associations during and after Hurricane Harvey. NRECA and its staff send our thoughts and prayers to co-ops members and employees facing the devastation and tragic losses caused by the punishing winds and five-days of record rainfall. [Co-op workers](#) from across the state responded in an inspiring effort to maintain safety and restore power for an estimated 60,000 co-op members. Co-ops around the state shipped poles and equipment to be ready at staging areas before the storm ended. The Texas co-ops face a very long road to full recovery, and NRECA will continue to support their efforts.

NRECA CEO Jim Matheson and other co-op leaders continue to work to ensure that electric co-ops recovering from the storm will still have a direct line to Energy Secretary Rick Perry and other agency leaders, the Electricity Information Sharing and Analysis Center, and Federal Emergency Management Agency. Those efforts include coordinating with federal officials and other power industry leaders through the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council to identify and address critical issues and maintain channels to respond quickly to calls for information.

The Administration said it is sending a request to Congress to provide relief funding for Hurricane Harvey victims. House Appropriations Committee aides said a bill for a first round of relief could go to floor votes within two weeks. Congressional leaders said the need to pass Harvey relief will affect their efforts to pass a stopgap spending bill to keep the government funded and increase government borrowing limits by the end of this month.

NRECA President Highlights How Co-ops Use Farm Bill to Boost Communities

NRECA Board President Phil Carson urged congressional leaders to ensure that electric co-ops continue to have farm bill resources to provide affordable, reliable power and support economic development efforts that contribute to the quality of life in rural communities. Speaking at a House Agriculture Committee listening session in Illinois, Carson said co-ops like Tri-County Electric Cooperative use farm bill programs to maintain the grid and invest in small and rural communities. He stressed the importance of the Rural Utilities Service loans that co-ops use to maintain and modernize the electricity grid and Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant Program funds that co-ops put back into their communities to improve essential services. Illinois statewide CEO Duane Noland moderated the session that drew comments from 65 people. Committee Chairman Mike Conaway (R-TX), Ranking Member Collin Peterson (D-MN) and Reps. Mike Bost (R-IL), Cheri Bustos (D-IL), Rodney Davis (R-IL), Darin LaHood (R-IL) and Glenn Thompson (R-PA) participated in the listening session.

2017 Regional Meetings Launch with Regions 1-4 Next Week

NRECA will kick off the [Regional Meetings](#) with [Regions 1 and 4](#) in Pittsburgh, PA, next week. Co-op representatives will consider proposed resolution on important issues like rural broadband, protecting hydropower customers and federal environmental regulations. Your work on the [proposed resolutions](#) at each Regional Meeting determines what will be considered at our Annual Meeting. The [meeting agenda](#) on business and policy issues important to co-ops includes a rural development update from USDA's new Assistant to the Secretary for Rural Development Anne Hazlett. There will be several breakout sessions on issues like broadband, next generation grid and co-op oversight. You can follow the regional action wherever you go with the 2017 Regional Meeting [iPhone](#) and [Android](#) apps.

Plant Vogtle Partners Agree to Continue Project

The Plant Vogtle nuclear project partners agreed to move ahead with the facility expansion and sent that recommendation to the Georgia Public Service Commission. Southern Co., Oglethorpe Power Corp. and others are working to complete construction of two new nuclear units at the Vogtle site. NRECA CEO Jim Matheson issued a [statement](#) supporting the decision, emphasizing that "a diverse fuel mix is vital as electric co-ops work to meet 21st century energy needs and ensure continued access to affordable, reliable power." NRECA continues to urge Congress to pass nuclear production tax credit legislation to eliminate the 2020 construction deadline for new nuclear plants to be eligible for the tax credits. The measure would also allow tax-exempt entities to transfer the tax credits to for-profit project partners. The House passed its bill and the Senate has a companion bill.

NRECA Seeks Changes to ESA Recovery Planning Guidance

NRECA sent co-op positions in [coalition comments](#) on the National Marine Fisheries Service's (NMFS) proposed revisions to Endangered Species Act (ESA) listing and recovery priority guidelines. We support NMFS's goal to recover listed species and take timely action on recovery measures that lead to species down-listing or delisting, but we're asking the agency to address co-op concerns. The agency should simplify the process for assessing the magnitude of threats to a species and give higher recovery priority to those species with economically feasible, practical, and effective conservation measures. NMFS should also work with the Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure definitions used in the final rule are consistent with ESA requirements.

EPA Seeking Stakeholder and Public Input for New WOTUS Rule

EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers will hold [stakeholder sessions](#) for recommendations on a new Waters of the U.S. (WOTUS) rule, which is likely to be proposed in 2018. The agencies will hold [teleconference sessions](#) with specific stakeholder groups in September, October and November and also hold a small entities meeting. NRECA will present comments on behalf of electric co-ops. An EPA and Corps of Engineers [proposal](#) to withdraw the 2015 WOTUS rule is open for public comment until September 27, 2017. Withdrawing the rule is the first in a two-part process to reconsider the rule that never took effect due to a nationwide court stay issued during legal challenges.