



FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Office of the Chairman

January 29, 2024

The Honorable Martin Heinrich
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heinrich,

Thank you for your January 16, 2024, letter discussing the critical role that electric transmission can play in ensuring reliability during the clean energy transition now underway in our country. Simply put, I could not more strongly agree. Developing much-needed electric transmission is, first and foremost, a *reliability imperative*. It is what will enable us to meet the reliability challenges facing our electric grid, including, as you note, the growing threat of extreme weather. Nothing we do at this Commission is more important than that.

I also agree that our proceeding on transmission planning and cost allocation, *Building for the Future Through Electric Regional Transmission Planning and Cost Allocation and Generator Interconnection*, Docket No. RM21-17-000, is foundational to ensuring that our country develops the electric transmission we need at a price that we can afford. Indeed, I do not believe there is any single action that the Commission can take that will contribute more to enhancing the reliability and resilience of our electric grid than a final rule that facilitates the development of needed electric transmission. To realize that potential, however, we must ensure that transmission planners are identifying the transmission facilities that will most improve reliability and benefit customers – including through a robust consideration of those facilities’ benefits to the grid – and then allocating the cost of those facilities fairly, consistent with the cost causation principle. I am confident that any final rule we issue will achieve both critical priorities.

Thank you again for your letter and your attention to these important issues. As I have maintained from the day I joined this Commission, ensuring reliability is – and always must be – job number one. We have, before us, the opportunity to take another historic step toward meeting that all-important responsibility, and you have my commitment that I will do everything I can as Chairman to make the most of that opportunity.



Your letter and this reply will be placed in the public file in Docket No. RM21-17-000. If I can be of further assistance in this or any other Commission matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Willie Phillips", is positioned above the printed name and title.

Willie Phillips
Chairman

CC: The Honorable Edward J. Markey
The Honorable Peter Welch
The Honorable John Hickenlooper
The Honorable Angus S. King, Jr.
The Honorable Ron Wyden
The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.
The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
The Honorable Tina Smith
The Honorable Ben Ray Lujan
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
The Honorable Mazie Hirono
The Honorable Jeffrey A. Merkley
The Honorable Brian Schatz
The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
The Honorable Bernard Sanders
The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable John Fetterman
The Honorable Michael F. Bennet
The Honorable Elizabeth Warren
The Honorable Alex Padilla