

**THE NRRI STRATEGIC PLAN
FOR THE NEW CENTURY**

RESEARCH THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Approved by

The National Regulatory Research Institute

Board of Directors

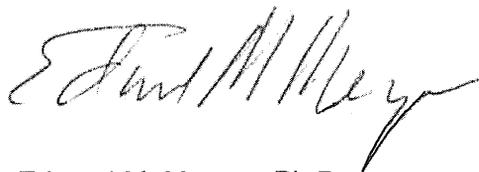
January 2000

The NRRI Board of Directors has established **an aggressive strategic plan that is responsive to the future regulatory research needs of state commissions and the research community**. It is clear that NRRI has made significant contributions and is a well-regarded regulatory resource, but a forward-looking strategic plan is essential.

This strategic plan, ***Research That Makes A Difference***, is built on what state commissions have told us they need. It positions NRRI's research and client services to be there in a timely and objective manner when regulators need them. This plan ensures that NRRI research will be invaluable in resolving the many difficult problems inherent in transitioning to competitive markets. It is built around the importance of directly helping and listening to our clients.

The NRRI Board of Directors established this strategic plan and has authorized specific implementation actions designed to help ensure that the NRRI's research resources directly assist state commissions and all members of the regulatory research community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward M. Meyers". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Edward M. Meyers, Ph.D.
Chairman, NRRI Board of Directors
Acting Chair, District of Columbia
Public Service Commission

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Introduction

Recent changes in the regulatory environment are unprecedented, and the pace of change is likely to be even faster in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Regulators, regulation, and regulatory researchers will face issues, trends, and conditions that emerge rapidly, have significant consequences, but of which little is known.

This document presents NRRI's strategic plan for the first part of the twenty-first century. It tells how the NRRI will meet the research and client service needs of regulators and the research community. How we identify and meet the research and client services needs of our clients is as important as the research itself. Our strategic plan is built around the core concept of client-centered research. Our research and client services will focus on **priority** regulatory issues, be **anticipatory**, and be **objective**.

This plan was developed using two primary sources of information. The most recent was a survey of all state regulatory commissioners and executive directors conducted by former Delaware Public Service Commissioner Nancy M. Norling. This survey produced a report that is reproduced in its entirety in Appendix A. The principal findings are

1. 95% of all respondents (commissioners and staff) agree that NRRI's primary mission should be to develop and maintain a core of knowledgeable **experts** in areas of regulation who are available upon request to NRRI clients. Almost as many respondents (93%) agree the primary mission should also be to assist clients in making policy determinations by providing **in-depth research** and analysis support.
2. **Consultation, technical assistance, education, and training**, are considered by commissioners and staff to be NRRI's most useful services. However, written reports, identified as both comprehensive research reports and as policy analysis reports, are seen as only slightly less useful.
3. "**Objectivity and lack of bias**" and "comprehensive reliable research" are considered the most important characteristics of NRRI's work.
4. Commissioners do **not have enough time to read** all of NRRI's written materials. They look for reports that are timely and relevant to the issues they are currently facing. Others get set aside and, more often than not, are never revisited.

5. Both Commissioners and staff **approve of the shift** in NRRI activities toward more responsive interaction with state commissions. They commend the NRRI staff for being visible, accessible, and responsive.
6. Survey respondents prefer to see NRRI select projects that **serve the needs of state commissions** over projects that support NARUC and NARUC Committees. However, in telephone interviews, many commissioners recognized the importance of both.
7. Commissioners and staff recognize the importance of developing and maintaining a capable staff at NRRI. Members of the NRRI staff were repeatedly complimented during the interviews for the **quality of their in-person services**.
8. Commissioners **do not use NRRI on-line**. Many of them do not see themselves as ever doing so.
9. Many commissioners would like to see NRRI **market its products aggressively**. They recognize the value of the Institute but need to be reminded of its services at the actual times when they can use them.
10. NRRI should develop and **strengthen relationships with commission staff**. The goal should be to have staff recognize the value of NRRI as a resource and to recommend NRRI products and services to commissioners.
11. NRRI should rethink its **communications with new commissioners**, to ensure that they are attention-grabbing and that they meet the needs of this group.
12. In the future, NRRI should continue to monitor, analyze, and evaluate changes in the utility industries, and should be prepared to **assist regulatory commissions in responding to changes as they develop in each state**.

The second major source of information was an external review of the NRRI commissioned by our host university, the Ohio State University. This external review produced a report that is included as Appendix B. Other sources of information and input used in this strategic plan include the extensive array of contacts NRRI staff have among the members of the regulatory community as well as staff input from a series of NRRI staff retreats.

Where Have We Been? And Where Are We Going?

The National Regulatory Research Institute (NRRI) was established by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) in 1976 as a result of a national competition to be NARUC's official research arm. Two important decisions were made at that time. The first was to locate the NRRI at a university in order to ensure objectivity. The second was to have NRRI be in a state capital. From the beginning, the NRRI Board of Directors has unequivocally stated that NRRI's research and client services must be objective and useful. NRRI research has been used in major regulatory forums since 1977 and has achieved a reputation for objective and timely research.

Looking backwards, however, is not the purpose of a strategic plan. Our clients appropriately ask "**What can you do to help me?**" Their overriding concern is to get the right mix of research and client services that will help them design solutions for the rapidly changing regulatory environment. Regulators both cause change and are impacted by changes initiated by society. This strategic plan specifies how NRRI's research will be client-centered, responsive, and anticipatory.

Our plan positions NRRI to produce **regulatory research and client services that make a difference** to regulators in the U.S. and around the world, to the regulatory research community, as well as to the providers of and consumers of regulated and unregulated network services. Nearly all of the basic underlying features of the provisioning of utility services have changed and even more significant changes are expected shortly. This is both a perfect and a difficult environment for research to make a contribution. Technological changes have made competitive provisioning possible, and regulatory changes have been directed at eliminating barriers to competition, while ensuring universal service. Client-centered regulatory research can assist in overcoming the huge information and analytical barriers facing policy makers, providers, and consumers alike.

What Have Our Clients Told Us?

Our clients have told us a number of vital things that frame our strategic planning. From these inputs we have derived the following important conclusions:

1. **The NRRI needs to deliver a diverse product line:** The vast majority of the feedback from the 1999 survey of state regulators was positive. Regulators strongly suggested that NRRI's research *and* technical assistance were

valued by clients. Useful forms of assistance cited by commissioners and staff included consultation, technical assistance, education and training, comprehensive research reports, and policy analysis reports. NRRI's written products are not always read by all stakeholders and, therefore, cannot be relied on as the only means of disseminating research results and technical assistance. NRRI clearly must deliver a comprehensive package of services to its clients. One commissioner stated,

You need to pay attention to in-depth research or you will not have the expertise to advise NARUC or the states. On the other hand, there is obviously a balance. NRRI is not set up to do only research. You need to be able to relate your findings to the needs of states. Advising the states is a very important role.

2. **NRRI's principal client is state public utility commissions.** Additional clients include NARUC Committees and Subcommittees, NARUC's regional affiliates, the NARUC Washington office, The Ohio State University, members of the regulatory research

community, international regulators, and the public. The principal client must receive the preponderance of NRRI's attention.

3. **The NRRI greatly benefits from its university home.** The objectivity of NRRI research, which is ensured by its valuable status as an interdisciplinary center in a major research university, the Ohio State University, is highly regarded. Steps must be taken to further strengthen NRRI's interactions with the Ohio State University.
4. **NRRI's principal asset is its expert staff.** Internally, the NRRI needs to create a diverse and collaborative working environment that is responsive to the needs of current and new clients and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth of its staff. This is important for staff recruitment and retention, as well as for creating an environment where innovative solutions are the norm.
5. **NRRI must market its products and services better.** Some clients reported less than full knowledge of the full range of research services that NRRI can provide. The interaction with new commissioners and staff was cited as

an area needing improvement. In addition, NRRI needs to receive better feedback on the usefulness of its products and provide commissioners with summaries of its recent, current, and future activities.

6. **The NRRI should continue to shift its activities toward more responsive interaction with state commissions.** Commissions have seen a difference in the way NRRI has provided service in recent years and commend NRRI staff for being visible, accessible, and responsive.
7. **NRRI should continue to focus its efforts on monitoring, analyzing, and evaluating changes in the utility industries and helping commissions respond to those changes.** An annual update on the status of the utility sectors was suggested as one tool to accomplish this.
8. **In the long run, the NRRI faces considerable funding challenges.** Future NRRI funding will have to reflect the realities of the significant changes occurring in the regulatory arena. Concerns include the effective ceiling on contributions from NARUC states and the need for an overall funding strategy that stabilizes, diversifies, and

grows funding in ways that directly benefit its clients.

9. **With regard to NRRI's written products, commissioners value their timeliness, relevance, comprehensiveness, and lack of bias.** The wide-spread perception of the objectivity of NRRI research continues to be our most important asset. The shift to research selection and delivery routines that produce more timely and relevant products has already begun to pay-off in terms of client satisfaction.

NRRI Mission And Vision

Based our past experience and our understanding of our client's expectations, the NRRI declares its mission to be **to provide client-driven objective research and services to inform and advance regulatory policy.** What does it mean to be client-centered? For NRRI it means research efforts are undertaken with specific clients in mind. It means that research projects are selected and co-created with our clients. NRRI's intention is to produce objective research and client services that are tied-in with the analytical needs associated with specific policy cycles. Research and client services will inform regulators and researchers in ways that advance the understanding of priority public policy issues.

NRRI has a strong Board of Directors, a majority of whose members represent NARUC, and an active Research Advisory Committee (also with a majority from state commissions) that together ensure that the highest priority research topics are addressed¹. The ability of NRRI to draw upon university faculty and other well-recognized regulatory experts in designing and carrying out its research allows it to make a significant contribution over a wide range of important issues. NRRI uses a number of client needs assessment techniques and is developing new ones that will allow even more timely responses to fast-breaking research and client service needs.

The NRRI intends to deliver products that are client-centered, anticipatory, objective, and timely. Because of the diverse needs of its clients, the NRRI will need to use multiple paths to reach them. These include published reports, presentations at NARUC and regional meetings, shorter and more focused reports, extensive use of the whole gamut of "e-technology", contract research, on-site technical assistance and quick response, state visits, cooperative ventures and partnering, and tutorials.

¹See Appendix E for a current list of members of the NRRI Board of Directors and Appendix F for a listing of the members of the NRRI Research Advisory Committee.

The NRRI vision is built around two ideas. The first is the **evolution of the utility concept from its origins as a monopoly to one that sees the future as the provisioning of services through network industries**. This profound change has widespread implications for every aspect of public utility regulation and for the transition of current utility sectors to competitive markets. Utilities were originally designed as legally-protected monopolies that provided needed public services. They were justified on the basis of the scale economies they enjoyed and as an alternative to the public provisioning of electric, gas, telephone, and water services. Recent changes in technology, market structure, regulation, and customer demand now allow us to better view utilities and new entrants as network industries, rather than as utilities. The common characteristic shared by all these entities is their use of a network -- a virtual or physical set of centrally-dispatched pathways to deliver utility services to customers. Research developed on utility networks should be applicable to other networks, such as cable television or Internet networks.

Previously, most regulatory activities were primarily focused on how to deal with an incumbent, traditional utility. In the future, regulation, however transitional or long-lasting, will deal with a much wider range and mix of services and providers. The providers of utility services may own networks, or they

may rent or lease all or parts of other networks. These networks may be regulated or unregulated, either in whole or in part. Indeed, for the foreseeable future innovative hybrids, dynamic convergences, and new customer demands will make it nearly impossible to simply use old regulatory methods. Regulatory oversight will focus instead on the elimination of barriers to competition and the promotion of universal service. The core reason for using a network is due to the economies of scale and scope they produce.

These economies require concentration and integration, some degree of common operating standards, and some degree of central control by the owners or operators of the network. Public policy in the future will focus on ensuring that achieving these natural, valuable, and needed network economies does not result in anti-competitive outcomes. Providing the objective research and client services needed in the transition to competitive network industries markets is a central component of NRRI's research and client services mission. It is where our research and client services will make a difference.

Traditional economic regulation will increasingly become an historical artifact. Regulators are likely to continue to play an important role in ensuring reliability and service quality, providing accurate information to consumers and stakeholders, educating and

serving as a liaison to other state agencies, and serving as a trusted and neutral source of objective information and analysis about network industries. Economic regulation at its core was really an attempt to have a public/private partnership through which essential utility services were affordable and delivered universally. The research and client services provided by the NRRI have already begun to support this shift in focus and will do so even more rapidly in the future.

The second idea underlying our strategic vision is founded on the **interaction between research and client service**. One of the reasons for the success of America's research universities is their understanding of the intrinsic link between research, education, and public service. While each of the major missions can stand alone, they function immeasurably better when research improves education and serves the public. Our experience and our survey of state public utility commissions clearly reveal that NRRI's most successful outcomes have occurred when **research and client service are inextricably linked**. This means that research needs to be client driven, objective, timely, and anticipatory. On a practical basis this means that research can be most successfully applied when our clients have been involved in all phases of the research process. NRRI research staff are working with the NRRI Research Advisory

Committee, the NRRI Board of Directors, NARUC standing committees, and individual state commissions to design innovative ways to participate in the development of and use of NRRI research products.

Our client service mission seeks **to maintain our direct and high-quality access with state commissioners, senior commissions staff, and leading-edge researchers**. This access allows us to better understand client research needs and design better ways of ensuring that research is useful for clients. Our goal is to produce research that is used by our clients: we see constant interaction with our clients as the best way to ensure that our research makes a difference. Our research and client services thrust is explicitly aimed at the leaders, in commissions and in the regulatory research community.

One cornerstone of NRRI client service will be to continue its New Commissioners Tutorial program, where commissioners come to the NRRI for a two-day, one-on-one tutorial about all aspects of utility regulation. NRRI also will continue and improve its Executive Dialogue educational effort. The Dialogue is designed to meet the need of commissioners for an advanced one-to-one session focusing on an advanced topic, a review of current issues, or an in-depth treatment of a specific issue. As these educational efforts are

intended as complements to the Michigan State University and New Mexico State University educational programs, NRRI will continue to actively encourage participants to also enroll in both of these outstanding educational programs.

This vision signals a change in NRRI direction.

- | | |
|-------------|---|
| From | Traditional regulatory issues |
| <i>*To*</i> | <i>New issues: transition of industries and commissions</i> |
| From | Primary reliance on reports |
| <i>*To*</i> | <i>Diversified products that include timely products and in-depth analysis</i> |
| From | Regularized funding |
| <i>*To*</i> | <i>Augmentation with contracts and value-added funding</i> |
| From | Projects |
| <i>*To*</i> | <i>Programs</i> |
| From | Long-term focus (2 years) |
| <i>*To*</i> | <i>Shorter-term focus (days-to-months)</i> |
| From | Single project reports |
| <i>*To*</i> | <i>Multiple distribution of program results through reports, site visits, tutorials, and technical assistance</i> |

Based on what our clients -- NARUC member states and the University -- have told us, along with the input of NRRI staff², the NRRI Board of Directors has adopted three vision statements that focus our efforts to be a world-class provider of client-centered regulatory research services to the regulatory community.

Products and Services Vision

NRRI will deliver to current and new clients an objective, innovative, flexible, and valued mix of timely research products and services through programs that focus on public policy issues primarily in network industries.

Funding Vision

The NRRI will stabilize, diversify, and expand funding in order to ensure the NRRI's capacity to meet the needs of current and new clients.

Management Vision

The NRRI will be a diverse and collaborative organization that is indispensable and responsive to the needs of current and new clients

and provides opportunities for personal and professional growth.

2000 Goals

In pursuit of our mission and in order to address the lessons learned from this process, the NRRI has adopted eight short-term goals. Successful implementation of these short-term goals will allow NRRI to efficiently and effectively achieve our client's research and client service needs. Implementation of these goals has already begun and significant progress is expected for each goal in 2000. A project plan will be presented in 2000 to the NRRI Board of Directors for each goal that implements the action items identified below, along with budget authority, and staffing.

² See Appendices G and H for a listing of NRRI research staff and NRRI NARUC Staff Subcommittee memberships.

Goal One:
To Shift From A Project To A
Program Focus.

Traditionally, the NRRI Board of Directors and Research Advisory Committee (RAC) identified specific research projects that were then assigned to NRRI research staff. These projects typically required researchers to write a single report on the topic and to then move on to another research project. In the recent past, the NRRI has had more success with research programs--broader topic areas with an array of products that allow the researcher to follow-up on research and to tailor products to fit the needs of specific clients.

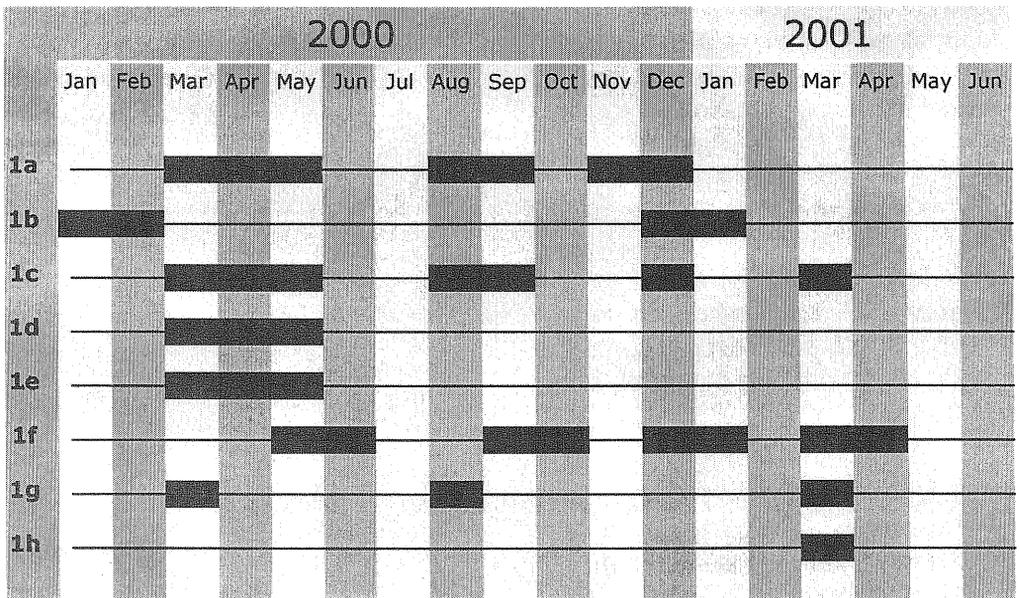
Action Items

A. In 2000, the NRRI will begin

working with the RAC to shift from a research agenda primarily consisting of stand-alone research projects to one which that uses programs. This will include co-developing generic program design characteristics that will guide the design of programs to be proposed to the Board.

B. In 2000, the NRRI will reorganize its structure in order to better encourage the development of programs: see Appendix D for the current NRRI organizational structure.

C. In 2000, the NRRI, with the advice of the RAC, will present recommendations for specific programs to the NRRI Board of Directors for approval. Following approval, specific



projects will then be implemented under each program. There will occasionally be a need for stand-alone projects, and the Board will also be asked to approve projects that are not embedded in a larger program.

- D. In 2000, the NRRI and RAC will develop ways to obtain RAC advice on projects within programs.
- E. In 2000, the NRRI and the RAC will develop criteria to judge when a program should terminate. Ideally, this should be when a specific policy cycle ends.
- F. In 2000, NRRI will develop outreach strategies that encourage client input into program and project design.
- G. In 2000, NRRI will invite leading researchers and regulatory experts to come to Columbus in order to provide input about the design and priority of existing programs and projects, as well as future ones.
- H. In 2001, the NRRI will work with the RAC to evaluate the impact of a program approach versus stand-alone research projects.

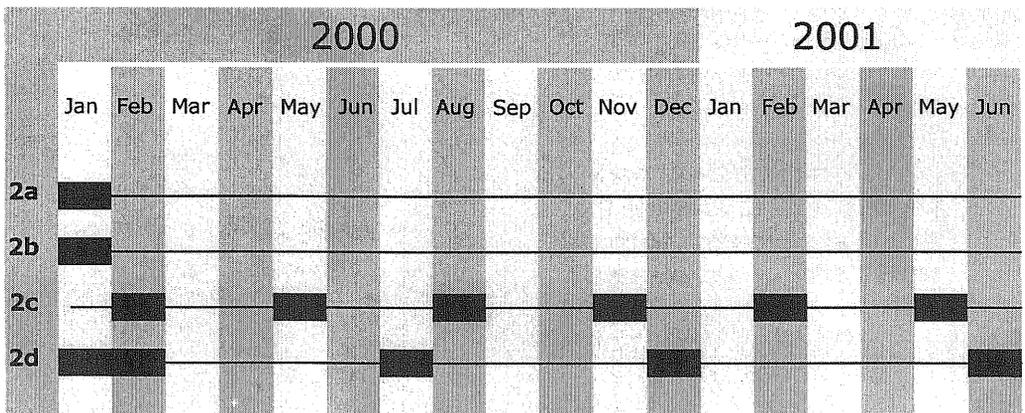
Goal Two:
Establishment Of A Staff
Performance Management
System.

The NRRI has begun to establish and will implement during this fiscal year a performance management system for staff. This system will allow managers and staff to create individualized performance plans that articulate expectations of staff and for supervisors and personal growth plans. This system will make use of the "Four Circles" diagram that is attached to this plan as Appendix C. That diagram sets out and illustrates the belief that staff performance will be optimized if client service, knowledge creation, needs assessment, and NRRI governance are blended in a complementary fashion.

- B. In 2000, NRRI will create individualized performance plans for all NRRI staff.
- C. In 2000, NRRI managers will meet at least quarterly with individual NRRI staff to assist them in achieving our common goals.
- D. In 2000, NRRI will develop and provide training resources to assist staff.

Action Items

- A. In 2000, the NRRI will establish a performance management system.



Goal Three:
Enhanced Interaction With The
Host University.

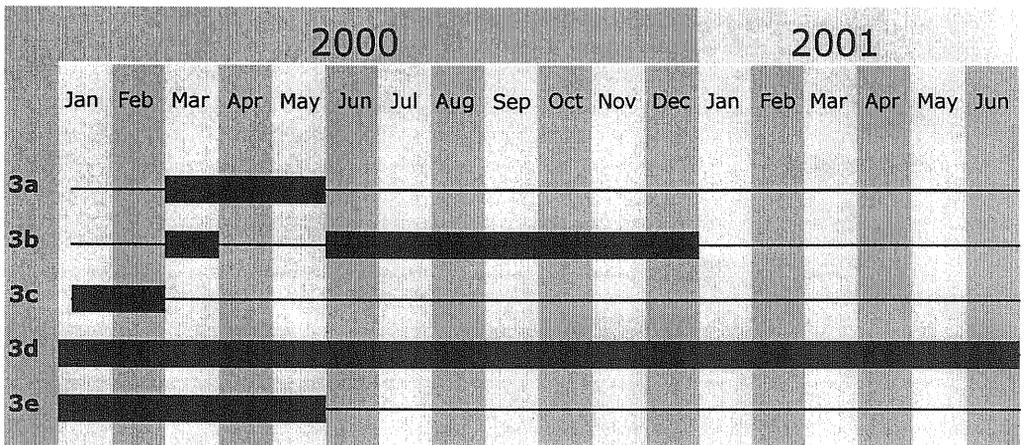
The NRRI will review and intensify its efforts to improve its linkages with the Ohio State University, its home university. Options to be explored will include the employment of more graduate and undergraduate students, greater use of University faculty, cooperative research ventures, and greater participation of NRRI staff in University activities.

Action Items

- A. In 2000, the NRRI will identify and make presentations to academic departments and research centers, with the intention of developing areas of collaborative research.
- B. In 2000, the NRRI will establish and widely publicize a series of research roundtables on electric, gas,

water, telecommunications, and regulatory transformation as one means of involving faculty and graduate students in NRRI research and for developing new linkages and research initiatives.

- C. In 2000, the NRRI will establish a four-year doctoral assistantship program announcement that academic departments can use in their recruitment of outstanding doctoral students.
- D. In 2000, the NRRI will establish a working relationship with the OSU John Glenn Institute for Policy Studies.
- E. In 2000, NRRI will develop one or more e-technology methods to share NRRI research with interested OSU faculty, doctoral students, and other researchers.



Goal Four:
Creation Of An NRRI Marketing Plan.

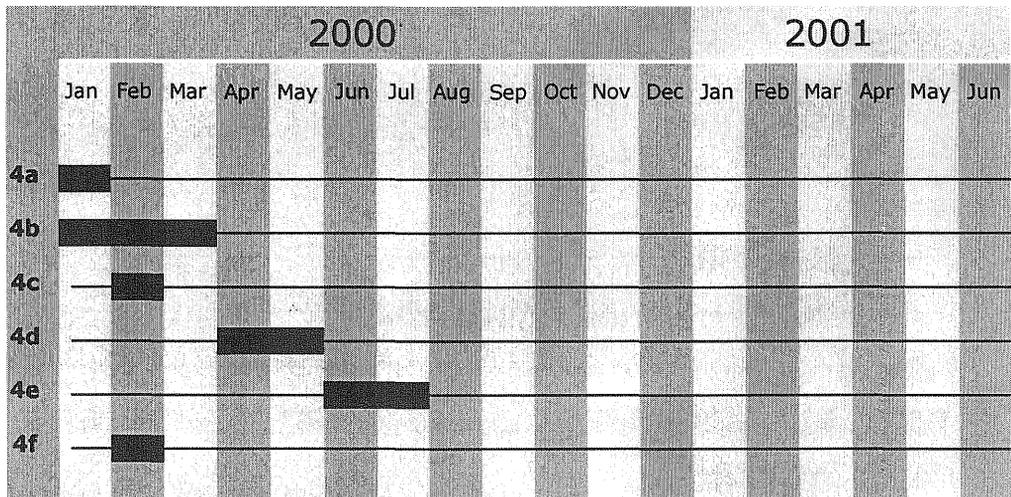
The NRRI will review its marketing methods and develop a comprehensive set of recommendations for improving its ability to make clients aware of its products and services. That plan will also examine the ability of the NRRI to better attract new commissioners to its New Commissioner Tutorials.

Action Items

- A. In 2000, the NRRI Board of Directors will establish a marketing committee.
- B. In 2000, the NRRI and the NRRI Board of Directors will develop a marketing issues framework that will serve as the basis for, if appropriate, hiring a consultant to review and improve NRRI's

marketing efforts to its current and future clients.

- C. In 2000, we will revise NRRI logos, letterheads, and other graphic modes to present a new and integrated NRRI image.
- D. In 2000, a marketing plan will be presented to NRRI Board of Directors for approval.
- E. In 2000, we will develop new processes and train NRRI staff regarding implementation of Board-approved marketing plan.
- F. In 2000, NRRI will distribute its marketing plan to all commissions.



**Goal Five:
Review Of NRRI Funding.**

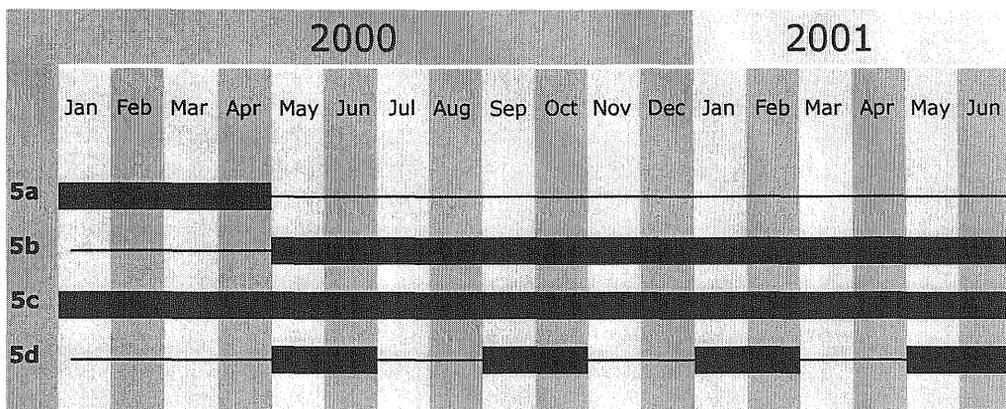
Given the funding challenges cited above, the NRRI will ask the Board, with NRRI staff support, to undertake a comprehensive review of NRRI's funding with specific attention to the strengths and weaknesses of the current formula, the possibility of diversification of funding sources, and methods to preserve the long-term financial health of the NRRI.

Action Items

- A. In 2000, the NRRI will assist the Board Funding Committee in its review of NRRI funding and recommend one or more funding plans to the NRRI Board.
- B. In 2000, the NRRI will seek out long-term contracts in NRRI program areas that are appropriate for NRRI's skill mix and which advance regulatory goals. This will

include developing pricing and marketing objectives.

- C. In 2000, the NRRI will examine and obtain international funding to allow it to provide its regulatory research and client service resources to regulatory commissions in other countries on an ongoing basis.
- D. In 2000, the NRRI will prepare budget and expenditure forecasts that ensure NRRI long-term financial health.



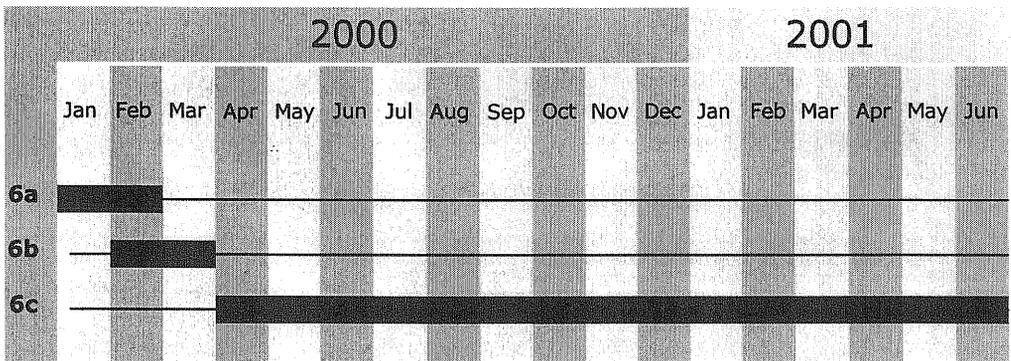
Goal Six:
Preparation Of An Annual
Regulatory Review.

The NRRI will prepare and deliver early in the Year 2000, a comprehensive review of the status of the four utility sectors and the regulatory approaches to them. If this product is deemed successful by NRRI clients, it will become an annual exercise.

opportunities to make presentations at NARUC meetings, regional meetings, and at state regulatory commissions about the trends and issues identified in the review.

Action Items

- A. In 2000, the NRRI will design and write a review of regulation covering water, telecommunications, natural gas, electric utility sectors, along with commission transformation and regulatory reform.
- B. In 2000, NRRI will distribute the annual regulatory review to all state commissions using the NRRI marketing plan, as appropriate.
- C. In 2000, NRRI will seek out



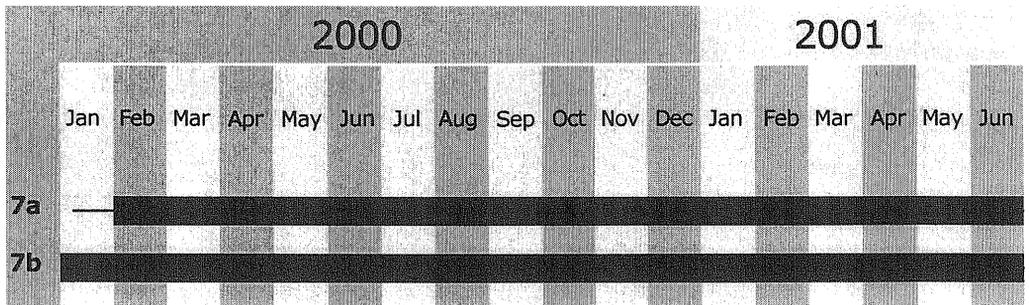
Goal Seven:
Increased Attention To The Needs
Of Large States.

Because the largest states provide the majority of the NRRI's funding, the NRRI will, in concert with the Board, undertake a specific review of the needs of large states as well as a review of the products and services currently provided to them. It will seek to do this in a way that does not diminish the quality or level of research and client services currently received by all state regulatory commissions.

Action Items

- A. In 2000, the NRRI Director and senior NRRI staff will continue to visit large states to brief them about NRRI's research and client services and to see what else the NRRI can do to meet their research needs.

- B. In 2000, the NRRI will ensure that its research projects and client service activities directly assist large states.



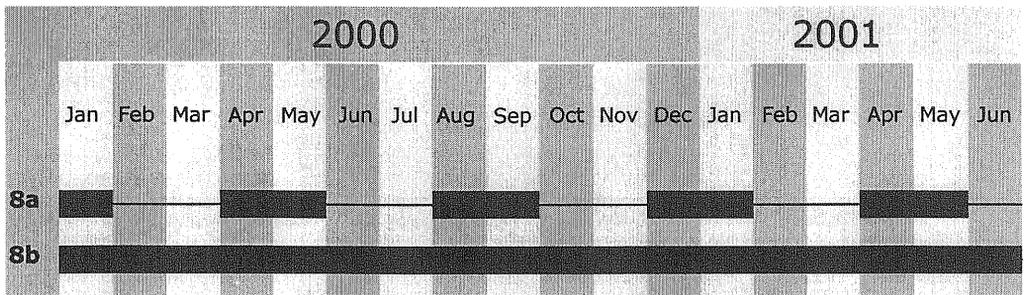
Goal Eight:
Continued Consideration Of The
Future Of The NRRI.

The current configuration of the utility industry is rapidly changing and regulatory structures are changing as well. The NRRI and its Board will continue to consider its changing role in a restructured regulatory environment. The intention is to continue to find ways to provide services to the NRRI clientele and to make a commitment to continuous improvement.

Action Items

- A. In 2000, the NRRI Board will establish a strategic planning committee to oversee the implementation of the current strategic plan.

- B. In 2000, the NRRI and the NRRI Board of Directors will consult with clients and propose new activities to advance the strategic visions contained in this plan.



What More Will We Do ?

This document is a living one that will be continually referred to, revised, and updated. Once the short-term goals listed above are accomplished, others will take their place and will be presented in the NRRI's *Annual Business Plan*. As indicated earlier, the future is likely to be highly fluid, requiring responses by the NRRI that are flexible, creative, and designed to assist our primary and other clientele. We feel confident that this plan represents a good start towards an exciting future.

How will all of this be implemented? The NRRI Board of Directors meets three times a year and a review of implementation actions will constitute a major focal point of each Board meeting. The Board has also acted to have strategic planning as one of its Committee. The intent here is to constantly scan, forecast, and evaluate. We will also continuously engage in design and re-design. Each year the NRRI prepares an *Annual Business Plan* that is approved by the Board. Each future Business Plan will contain specific activities that implement the NRRI *Strategic Plan*. The NRRI *Annual Report* is sent to all regulatory commissions and to members of the regulatory research community, and will be available on the NRRI web site www.nrri.ohio-state.edu. It will report on the implementation. Perhaps, more importantly, the

NRRI is committed to seeking client needs assessment and satisfaction information through its client service outreach activities in order to ensure that its research mission is carried out to **ensure that our research and client services make a difference.**

APPENDIX A

THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**REPORT ON NEEDS ASSESSMENT PROJECT,
SURVEY OF COMMISSIONERS**

REGULATORY PERSPECTIVES ON NRRI FUTURE: A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

August 27, 1999

Prepared by

Nancy M. Norling

Consultant

This project was undertaken in response to a request by Dr. Raymond W. Lawton, Director of the National Regulatory Research Institute, to solicit the comments and opinions of the Institute's primary clients, state regulatory commissioners and their staffs, as part of a strategic long range planning process. Nancy M. Norling, a commissioner emeritus from Delaware and a consultant in private practice, was hired to design and carry out the work.

The Survey

At the outset it appeared that the best way to get input from state regulators would be through a survey that could be designed to seek opinions about different products and services and about the work of the Institute in general. After discussions with Dr. Lawton, David Wirick, and the (then)President of NRRI's Board, Commissioner James J. Malachowski, the consultant perceived the purpose of the project to be threefold: First, to solicit regulators' opinions on the work of the Institute, as mentioned above; second, to

make survey recipients aware of the Institute's long range planning efforts and to let them know that their input and responses would be valued; and third, to lay the groundwork for regulators' acceptance of the long range plan when it was completed. The NRRI Board, of course, holds responsibility for final approval of the plan, but the broad support of regulators across the country, tacit or otherwise, was seen as very important.

Ms. Norling proposed that a short survey be sent out to all Commissioners and to senior staff, and that Commissioners be given the option of participating in a follow-up interview, by telephone or in person, to further discuss their concerns. NRRI agreed to this plan. Accordingly, a survey went out to Commissioners and commission Executive Directors in early June. By the end of July, responses had been received from 56 Commissioners and 21 staff members, most of whom were Executive Directors, although a few other interested staff members responded as well.

Ms. Norling conducted 34 follow-up interviews. Ten Commissioners who responded did not request interviews, and attempts to schedule telephone times with the others were not successful.

The survey consisted of 37 statements in 8 categories, to which recipients were asked to respond numerically according to their degree of agreement or disagreement. A "1" indicates strong agreement; a "5", strong disagreement. The statements described NRRI's products, services, or activities affirmatively. Thus, a low numbered response generally indicates a positive response to the question and a positive comment on the work of the Institute. The survey also asked for each respondent's degree of familiarity with NRRI. Sample copies of the survey, completed with summary data, are attached to this Report, along with a list of respondents. [*not included in this draft*]

Respondents

The Commissioners who responded to the survey form a self-selected group of active regulators. With one exception, all are either currently active on NARUC Committees or, if new to regulation, planning to join one as soon as they can. 48 of them, or 86%, described themselves as either very familiar or familiar with NRRI. The rest were primarily new commissioners, many of whom mentioned that they intended to take NRRI's new commissioner tutorial. Since there are many regulators who choose not to be active outside their jurisdictions, the respondent group is probably not representative of commissioners as a whole. On the other hand, there is no reason to believe that these results are biased in any significant way. There are also many other commissioners who are active in NARUC and who regularly use NRRI's services, who did not return the survey. Commissioners are very busy people, and it may be that our survey could not claim enough of their time or attention.

Staff responses were received from 21 persons representing 19 states. These were not followed up by telephone interviews. Collectively, their answers were similar to those from the commissioners, although some slight differences will be noted below.

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The survey results show that as a group, the respondents are favorably disposed toward NRRI. Nearly all of them found most written materials and most services useful ("agree" or "strongly agree"). The surveys contained very few written critical comments, and telephone interviews were full of praise for the work of the Institute. Both Board members and NRRI staff should feel very proud of the products and services that are provided to state regulators.

The principal findings and recommendations of this project are listed below:

1. 95% of all respondents (commissioners and staff) agree that NRRI's primary mission should be to develop and maintain a core of knowledgeable experts in areas of regulation who are available upon request to NRRI clients. Almost as many respondents (93%) agree the primary mission should also be to assist clients in making policy determinations by providing in-depth research and analysis support.
2. Consultation and technical assistance, and education and training, are considered by commissioners and staff to be NRRI's most useful services. However, written reports, identified as both comprehensive research reports and as policy analysis reports, are seen as only slightly less useful.
3. "Objectivity and lack of bias" and "comprehensive reliable research" are considered the most important characteristics of NRRI's work.
4. Commissioners do not have enough time to read all of NRRI's written materials. They look for reports that are timely and relevant to the issues they are currently facing. Others get set aside and, more often than not, never revisited.
5. Both Commissioners and staff approve of what they perceive as a shift in NRRI activities toward more responsive interaction with state commissions. They commend the NRRI staff for being visible, accessible, and responsive.
6. Survey respondents prefer to see NRRI select projects that serve the needs of state commissions over projects that support NARUC and NARUC Committees. However, in telephone interviews, many commissioners recognized the importance of both.

7. Commissioners and staff recognize the importance of developing and maintaining a capable staff at NRRI. Members of the NRRI staff were repeatedly complimented during the interviews for the quality of their in-person services.
8. Commissioners do not use NRRI on-line. Many of them do not see themselves as ever doing so.
9. Many commissioners would like to see NRRI market its products and services more aggressively. They recognize the value of the Institute but need to be reminded of its services at the actual times when they can use them.
10. NRRI should develop and strengthen its relationships with commission staff. The goal should be to have staff recognize the value of NRRI as a resource and to recommend NRRI products and services to commissioners.
11. NRRI should rethink its communications with new commissioners, to ensure that they are attention-grabbing and that they meet the needs of this group.
12. In the future, NRRI should continue to monitor, analyze, and evaluate changes in the utility industries, and should be prepared to assist regulatory commissions in responding to these changes as they develop in each state.

NRRI's Mission

93% of the commissioners who responded agreed that NRRI's mission should include developing and maintaining a core of knowledgeable experts in different areas of regulation, who are available upon request to NARUC, to state regulatory commissions, and to other clients. 91% also agreed that the mission

should include assisting clients in making policy determinations by providing in-depth research and analysis on current regulatory issues. A slightly smaller group (77%) agreed that NRRI should also provide consulting services under contract to NARUC, to state commissions, and to others. The staff responses tracked these percentages closely. Thus, commissioners and staff seem to place a greater importance on NRRI's research and analysis and on the availability of knowledgeable staff to respond to client requests than on its contract work. This result will come as no surprise to the NRRI staff.

Demand for NRRI Products and Services

Responses to question No. 2 on the usefulness of different products and services, broadly characterized, show that commissioners value both written materials and in-person staff activities. Consultation/technical assistance and education/training were the most useful services to commissioners (85% agreement and 82% agreement respectively), while policy analysis reports at 77% and comprehensive research reports at 75% were not far behind. Projects funded by contracts were found useful by 63%, perhaps those who have directly benefited from such services.

Data from the staff responses show slightly different results. Like commissioners, staff respondents found consultation/technical assistance most useful (90% agreement), but their second preference was for comprehensive research reports (81%). This is on a par with education/training (80%), followed by policy analysis reports at 76%. Thus, it might appear that senior commission staff find comprehensive research reports somewhat more useful than do commissioners. However, because the number of completed surveys from staff is so small (N = 21), the difference of a single response can vary the percentage of

agreement by several points. To overcome this problem, the two sets of data were combined. As might be expected, the commissioner results then mask any differences from the staff, so that in-person activities (consultation/technical assistance and education/training) come out slightly ahead of the written materials (comprehensive research reports and policy analyses).

Question 3 probes further into the relative demand for NRRI's work. It breaks down technical assistance and training activities into various components and asks which of these are especially useful. "Written reports" is included as an option. The responses are similar to those in question 2. Technical assistance to state commissions is again rated most highly by commissioners, with 85% either agreeing or strongly agreeing that it is especially useful. But written reports were ranked second at 82%. 79% of commissioners found both NRRI special topic conferences and NRRI staff presentations especially useful, with telephone consultations, commissioner tutorials, and on-site training following in that order.

The staff responses track those from commissioners, except that the staff members find NRRI special topic conferences somewhat less useful, and on site training somewhat more so. Since commission staff are less likely to attend NRRI special topic conferences (especially Commissioner summits), these results are not surprising.

The relatively low rating given commissioner tutorials should not be misunderstood. Everyone who mentioned tutorials in the follow-up interviews spoke very highly of them, whether they had actually taken one or not. But the survey results include the views of many experienced commissioners, who feel, as some stated during interviews, beyond the need for the kind of training offered to new commissioners. These persons would not be likely to find commissioner tutorials especially useful.

The survey also asked respondents how they valued certain listed characteristics of NRRI written reports (question 6). The answers give some important insight into regulators' perspectives on the Institute. 95% of commissioners responding agreed that "objectivity and lack of bias" was very important, while 93% felt the same about "comprehensive and reliable research." It is clear that NRRI's clients place a strong emphasis on research quality and objectivity. This finding may not be surprising, but its importance should never be underestimated. A continued commitment to these characteristics should be fundamental to all discussions about long range strategic planning.

Other characteristics, ranked in descending order of importance, include "issue is of wide concern in the regulatory community"; "issue is of current interest personally"; "practical recommendations for policy"; "NRRI staff is available for follow-up"; "easy to understand"; and "work is not duplicated elsewhere", with which 64% of all commissioners agreed. The fact that nearly two-thirds or more of all commissioners agreed with each of the characteristics is perhaps indicative of the high value placed by these respondents on NRRI's written products.

Adding the staff response data to that of the commissioners does not change the rankings in any way. Collectively, 93% of all respondents agreed that both "objectivity and lack of bias" and "comprehensive and reliable research" were very important, and the rest of the characteristics follow in the order described above. For both sets of respondents, NRRI's ability to do comprehensive and reliable research that is objective and without bias is its most important characteristic.

Balancing Research and Technical Assistance

Because the issue of balancing technical assistance with written research reports is an important one to NRRI, the survey asked the question again in a slightly different way. Recipients were asked whether, in allocating its resources, NRRI should give priority to in-depth research reports, to responding quickly to requests for advice and technical assistance, or to education and training projects. Here, a definite preference for technical assistance emerged. 86% of commissioners and 85% of staff agreed or strongly agreed that technical assistance should receive priority; in fact, 53% of the commissioners and 50% of the staff who answered this question checked “strongly agree”. Education and training projects followed with 62% agreement (61% of staff) while in-depth research reports received 55% (50% of staff).

Some commissioners commented on this issue on their surveys. One wrote in favor of the “new trend” of responsiveness to state commissions, while adding that “quality research is still #1.” On the other hand, two respondents (one a staff member) wrote that NRRI research reports were “too academic” and “too theoretical.” There were a few comments that reports were not timely or too late. These were the only negative comments received on the surveys. More common was the comment that there was not enough time to read “voluminous” or “huge comprehensive” reports. One person called for more “technical help and solid practical policy advice”, but added, “perhaps the former [research] is needed for [the] latter, but don’t have time to read long reports.”

Several commissioners and staff respondents either commented in interviews or wrote on their surveys that the most useful NRRI reports were those that described the practices and/or rulings made by many different states on particular issues. One suggested putting up links to particular state decisions or

opinions when these reports are put on the NRRI website, so that readers can immediately locate documents of interest. Regulators and staff members both want to know what other states are doing.

During interviews, commissioners were more emphatic about the problem of long reports. Each was asked, "In thinking about NRRI's written materials, which are you likely to read?" Invariably, responses began with a comment on the large amount of material coming across the interviewee's desk, and how difficult it was to find time to read anything beyond what was required for current dockets. Commissioners are "inundated" with paper. Some wondered if NRRI could find a way to help them chart through the reading matter.

A few went on to say that they do not read NRRI's reports, although they may look at the executive summaries. But the most common answer was that they read material that is timely and relevant to their own work. The rest gets given to staff or put on the shelf to be looked at later -- but unfortunately, later never comes.

Commissioners' answers to the survey question on how they use NRRI written products support these observations. Less than half of them (45%) agreed with the answer of the ideal reader ("I read them, keep them, and refer to them often"). On the other hand, very few checked "I am too busy to look at them." The answer with the greatest amount of agreement (67%) was "I skim them and pass them on to my staff", followed by "I read those in my area of interest and discard the rest" (56%). When the interview discussions are factored in, however, these data appear overly optimistic in their representation of commissioner behavior. There is probably less reading going on than the numbers imply.

There are more ideal readers among the staff respondents (72% agreement). This supports the tentative finding, suggested above, that senior staff

members find comprehensive research reports more useful than do commissioners. 65% of the commission staff agreed that they read reports of interest and discard the rest, and 47% agreed that they skim materials and pass them on. Only 12.5% answered that they were too busy.

In thinking about these results, it is important to remember that those who were sent the survey were either commissioners or commission executive directors, all of whom have varying degrees of administrative responsibilities. Staff members who are more directly involved with the substantive issues of utility regulation would logically have more need for written reports in their areas. As one commissioner commented during an interview, one of the best audiences for NRRI's written work is the group of commission staff members who are members of NARUC Committees, where they are actively engaged in discussing current regulatory issues and in formulating policies in response.

During the interviews, commissioners were asked if members of their staffs used NRRI reports. Most replied that they did not know. However, a few reported that they recommended some reports to staff, or that staff had recommended some to them (less often). NRRI might look for ways to encourage such intra-agency dialogues.

Another way to estimate the relative importance of NRRI's written work and its technical assistance and training is to look at the examples of NRRI services cited by commissioners. All interviews began with the question, "Please think of a recent experience you have had with NRRI, either a written report that has come across your desk, or a workshop or seminar or presentation that you have attended. Describe it for me briefly and give me your reactions." The question was intended primarily to get the interviewees thinking about NRRI, but the choice of a product or service proved to be instructive. Fifteen commissioners

mentioned a written report or reports, and of these, eight mentioned a staff appearance as well -- either a technical assistance project, a presentation at one of the regional meetings, or some other in-person event. The rest mentioned only in-person events. This does not mean, of course, that they do not read reports; as indicated above, most do. But it is the in-person assistance or training given by a member or members of the NRRI staff that comes most quickly to mind.

Does this mean that NRRI's research activities should give way for increased in-person technical assistance and training? Of course not. When commissioners were asked for suggestions on how NRRI might balance research with technical assistance and training activities, they found it a difficult question to answer. Many offered no comments; one person remarked that this was the job of the Board. Those who did respond to the question clearly recognized the need for both kinds of activities. Without good research, NRRI's technical assistance and training would not be valuable. On the other hand, there is a perception that NRRI has recently increased its in-person assistance and training to commissions and that this is a good thing. As one survey respondent wrote, "The new track is the right track!" Others commented during interviews that opportunities for technical assistance and training also gave NRRI staff members valuable exposure to clients in ways that could increase financial and other support for the Institute.

The comments of one staff respondent summarize the feelings of many:

Regarding #8 a.b.c. You need to pay attention to in-depth research or you will not have the expertise to advise NARUC or the states. On the other hand, there is obviously a balance. NRRI is not set up to do only research. You need to be able to relate your findings to the needs of the states. Advising the states is a very important role.

Balancing Services to NARUC with Services to State Commissions

The survey also asked respondents about NRRI's selection of projects. Should projects be chosen to serve the needs of NARUC's action agenda and of NARUC Committees, or should projects be chosen to serve the needs of state commissions? 89% of the commissioners who answered this question agreed that NRRI's work should serve state commissions, while only 52% agreed that work should serve the interests of NARUC. Staff response percentages were almost identical. It is interesting to note that one-third of all commissioners remained neutral ("3") on the NARUC option.

During the interviews, however, it became clear that the answer was not quite so clear-cut. Commissioners were asked, "NRRI provides research support to NARUC Committees, and it also does research on issues pending before state commissions. These agendas may not always be the same. If a choice has to be made, would you place priority on NRRI's work for NARUC or on its work on pending state issues?" About one-third of the commissioners interviewed declined to choose, stating that both work efforts were important. Those who did give a priority did so reluctantly, frequently prefacing their answer with "If I had to choose. . ." or "If push comes to shove. . . ." In the end, they split very evenly on the question.

The commissioners who preferred work on state commission issues often commented that state commissions were NRRI's principal clients. A few asked rhetorically, "Who's paying?" Many indicated that their answer was based on their (perhaps selfish) personal interest.

Those who preferred work for NARUC gave some interesting reasons. A commissioner from a small state felt that participation in NARUC gave this commission a voice in national debates that it might not have had on its own.

Others recognized the active interest of members of NARUC staff subcommittees in regulatory issues, as mentioned above. These staffers would presumably be eager consumers of NRRI reports. Put another way, NRRI's work for this group would find fewer "pockets of indifference."

Still others saw NRRI's work for NARUC as a method of strengthening the collective voice of state regulators.

Two regulators suggested different paths that NRRI's work with NARUC might take. One felt NRRI should provide more solid empirical data and policy analysis to support NARUC positions before Congress and federal agencies, so that letters, testimony, and lobbying efforts could be better grounded in experience and sound reasoning. Another noted that policy recommendations were increasingly emerging from telephone conference calls among NARUC staff subcommittee members, and called for NRRI staff to play a stronger role in organizing and leading telephone discussions and shaping the resultant policy decisions.

Not everyone, however, feels that NRRI should take a lead role in policy debates at NARUC. Two commissioners cautioned that while NRRI should provide research support to committees, its staff should not take controversial positions or attempt to influence policy decisions. To do so, they argued, might compromise NRRI's well-deserved reputation for objectivity. There is obviously a balancing here; presumably experienced NRRI staff members are familiar with this issue.

It is well to consider again that the group of commissioners who responded to the survey are almost all active in NARUC and very familiar with its policy agendas. Their views on NRRI's research services for this organization reflect their own experiences. Many of them are influential commissioners whose

support for NRRI is very important to the Institute. However, they may not be wholly representative; commissioners who are not active outside of their state jurisdictions would almost certainly prefer that NRRI's activities support the work of the state commissions.

Commissioners were also asked if they belonged to a NARUC Committee and, as a follow-up, if they were aware of NRRI participation in the work of that Committee's staff subcommittee. Members of the Consumer Affairs, Electric, Gas, Telecommunications, and Water Committees all replied in the affirmative. Members of the Energy Resources and the Environment and the Finance and Technology Committees were not aware of work by NRRI.

However, only two members of the Finance and Technology Committee were interviewed, and both of them were relatively new. (One had just attended his first meeting in San Francisco in July.) They may not have had a chance to learn about the work of the various subcommittees, where NRRI staff are indeed active. On the other hand, NRRI does not participate heavily on the subcommittees of the Energy Resources Committee, as its members recognized. None of them seemed particularly concerned about this. However, a couple of members suggested that NRRI might be able to play a bigger role here than it currently does.

The Importance of Capable Staff

The question about NRRI's selection of projects included a third option with which respondents were asked to agree or disagree. It read, "The capabilities and the professional development of NRRI staff should be considered as projects are selected." 80% of commissioners and 62% of staff agreed with this statement. These results indicate an understanding, especially on the part of commissioners,

of the Institute's need to attract and maintain capable staff persons to carry out its work.

The high quality of NRRI's staff services was repeatedly commented upon in the commissioner interviews. Every commissioner who described a service involving the appearance of a staff member in any detail did so in extremely complimentary terms. "Very knowledgeable", "very helpful", "competent", "a good facilitator" -- these were terms that kept recurring. Clearly, the expertise and the capability of the NRRI staff is one of the Institute's best resources.

NRRI On-line

Commissioners were asked during the interviews whether they ever contacted NRRI on-line. The overwhelming answer was no. Many did not know that the Institute had a website, although the news did not come as much of a surprise. Nor did they know whether or not their staffs were aware of this service. A few expressed the expectation of becoming more electronically capable in the near future, and mentioned that they would then look up NRRI. One or two observed that this could be a good way to find out in a hurry what has been written on a particular issue. Overall, however, those interviewed did not indicate much of an interest in on-line services. This could be a fruitful area for NRRI outreach efforts.

Better Marketing Recommended

Toward the end of each interview, commissioners were asked if there was anything that NRRI does not do that it should do. The most common response, from more than half of this group, was that NRRI needs to do a better job of

making commissioners aware of its products and services. Many used the term, “better marketing”.

It may seem to the NRRI staff that commissioners receive a substantial number of communications from the Institute. In one sense this is true, since all reports, along with *Quarterly Bulletins*, newsletters and other pieces of information, go out regularly to the mailing list. But commissioners read only what is timely and relevant to their own concerns. The rest goes to storage or to staff, and in either case, out of mind. They need and want to be reminded of what is available, even if it is already sitting on a shelf in the office.

Several commissioners mentioned things that NRRI might do. One chairman suggested that NRRI staff should sit down with each commission at least yearly to hold a general conversation: “Here’s what we have been doing; here’s what’s new; here’s what NRRI can do for your particular concerns.” Another commissioner commented on packaging: NRRI might review the design of its reports to insure that the immediate message is “Read me; I am important.” Others stressed the importance of establishing relationships with commission staff. Since these people do not always come to NARUC meetings, other ways must be found to make NRRI personnel appear visible, friendly, and accessible to them.

The question of staff relationships is an interesting one. During the interviews, it became apparent that at some commissions, staff were actively involved with NRRI and comfortable with using the Institute as a resource. Others seemed to have little awareness of what NRRI can provide. One commissioner had a telling story: His staff, a relatively small one, needed outside assistance in dealing with a technical issue involving utility accounting. He suggested including NRRI in the list of consulting firms to be sent an RFP.

Weeks later, when bid proposals came in, he realized that staff had not contacted the Institute; they simply did not have NRRI “on their radar screen” as a potential source of consulting services. Other commissioners also commented that their staffs did not seem to think of NRRI as a potential consultant.

Staff can be particularly important in acquainting new commissioners with NRRI and its services. At the very least, staff members should recommend the new commissioner tutorial to every new regulator. It appears from the interviews that this does not happen, that commissioners usually learn about the tutorial from their peers. New commissioners who do not attend NARUC meetings, or whose colleagues have not attended an NRRI tutorial, may not register its importance, notwithstanding NRRI’s mailing on the subject. (A few years ago, the previous NRRI Director, Dr. Jones, occasionally asked experienced commissioners to call new colleagues in their regions and urge them to take the tutorials. Dr. Lawton may be continuing the practice. It seems to be a good idea.) In any case, reinforcement from commission staff could increase the likelihood of attendance.

New and relatively new commissioners had some ideas on what information they might like from NRRI. All spoke of being overwhelmed for the first few weeks, and of being unable to prioritize the many issues and reading materials that claimed their attention. Some called for information on “simply how to get through the first weeks”, or “what to expect during your first week.” Others suggested information on NARUC, including the pros and cons of getting involved. More suggestions: A “primer” on administrative law, including how to conduct hearings, treat evidence, and behave appropriately on and off the bench; information on equity and conflict of interest issues; and information regarding various policy options on current issues, including the perspectives of different states with different characteristics (e.g., urban/rural; high density/low density;

geographical differences). Undoubtedly, some of this information is already being disseminated, either from NRRI or from NARUC. But the fact that commissioners are calling for it indicates that it may be getting lost in the shuffle.

Since commissioners look for timely and relevant materials, NRRI may want to consider some sort of tickler system, one that keeps track of the various dockets underway at various commissions and periodically alerts commissioners and staff to existing NRRI information on issues that are coming up. This need not include sending additional copies of reports, since they are often kept in commission libraries or offices. Again, it is a matter of bringing renewed attention to what NRRI services are available.

Where should NRRI be in 5 years?

This was the last question in the interviews. A variety of interesting answers should provide good input into NRRI's strategic planning.

The most common response was that NRRI should continue to provide assistance in areas involving industry and commission change. NRRI should evaluate industry changes, including the impact of new technology, and analyze and discuss the implications of these changes on regulatory commissions. One commissioner commented that NRRI should anticipate industry change, evaluate it, and be prepared in advance to assist commissions as they confront transition issues and situations. This might include an increased emphasis on enforcement issues, or increased interaction with legislatures and with state attorneys. Another urged NRRI to keep encouraging commissioners and staff, all of whom can become "hide-bound", to change as the regulatory environment changes.

Another common theme was the importance of increased responsiveness to the needs of state regulators. As mentioned above, commissioners like the

“new regime”; they see NRRI staff as being increasingly visible, accessible, and responsive. A few would like more timely reports; as one person commented, “I want material that is ‘just in time’ ”.

Many of those interviewed felt that NRRI should just keep on doing what it is doing, since it is doing these things well. Some see the Institute as growing even closer to state commissions, becoming (if it is not already) the “principal research arm” of the states. One person suggested, somewhat off the cuff, that NRRI consider publishing a journal on state regulatory issues.

There was also the suggestion that NRRI increase its use of electronic media. Video conferencing might make technical assistance and training opportunities available to commissioners and staff who, for one reason or another, do not attend NARUC or other meetings. This could be a means of reaching a group that does not normally interact with the Institute.

Only a few commissioners mentioned the issue of future funding of NRRI. They called for more diversified sources of financial support or for more “independent funding.” One thoughtful commissioner, from a state whose utilities are directly assessed for NRRI support, stated that in five years he would find it neither possible nor desirable to ask telephone companies to provide funds for the Institute.

Summary and Conclusion

Based on the results of the survey and of the interviews, state commissioners and senior staff are very satisfied with NRRI’s services. They find consultation/technical assistance and training more useful than the written reports, but only slightly, and they recognize the importance of research and of developing and maintaining staff expertise. They appreciate the work NRRI does for

NARUC, while considering the work done on issues directly affecting the states to be of a higher priority. Above all, they value NRRI's objectivity and its comprehensive research. For its clients, these are the hallmarks of the Institute.

The most common suggestion for improvement came in the area of marketing and outreach. NRRI must do a better job of making clients aware of its products and services. This is not so much a fault of the Institute as it is an element of the institution of state regulation: State commissioners have so much material to read and so many issues to master that time is in short supply, and it is extremely difficult to gain their attention. The number of surveys they returned, 56 out of a total universe of approximately 200, bears witness to this fact.

NRRI's efforts to be responsive to state needs, through quick response and other programs, have received favorable notice from state commissioners and staff. They currently hold the Institute in high regard. NRRI can expect its clients' support as it goes forward with the challenging but rewarding task of strategic long range planning.

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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1. NRRR's primary mission should be:

- a. To assist clients in making policy determinations by providing in-depth research and analysis on current regulatory issues.

Commissioners	39	15	4	1	0	0
% Commissioner Responses	66.1%	25.4%	6.8%	1.7%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff	14	6	1	0	0	0
% Staff Responses	66.7%	28.6%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	53	21	5	1	0	0
% Total Responses	66.3%	26.3%	6.3%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%

- b. To develop and maintain a core of knowledgeable experts in different areas of regulation who are available upon request to NARUC, to individual state regulatory commissions, and to other clients.

Commissioners	36	18	3	1	0	1
% Commissioner Responses	61.0%	30.5%	5.1%	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Staff	13	8	0	0	0	0
% Staff Responses	61.9%	38.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	49	26	3	1	0	1
% Total Responses	61.3%	32.5%	3.8%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%

- c. To provide consulting services under contract to NARUC, to individual state commissions, and to other clients.

Commissioners	18	28	10	3	0	0
% Commissioner Responses	30.5%	47.5%	16.9%	5.1%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff	6	8	6	1	0	0
% Staff Responses	28.6%	38.1%	28.6%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	24	36	16	4	0	0
% Total Responses	30.0%	45.0%	20.0%	5.0%	0.0%	0.0%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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**2. NRRI produces a variety of products.
The most useful to me are:**

- a. Comprehensive research reports on regulatory issues.

Commissioners	22	23	10	2	1	1
% Commissioner Responses	37.3%	39.0%	16.9%	3.4%	1.7%	1.7%
Staff	8	9	1	2	1	0
% Staff Responses	38.1%	42.9%	4.8%	9.5%	4.8%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	30	32	11	4	2	1
% Total Responses	37.5%	40.0%	13.8%	5.0%	2.5%	1.3%

- b. Policy analysis reports, with recommendations for action.

Commissioners	18	25	12	2	0	2
% Commissioner Responses	30.5%	42.4%	20.3%	3.4%	0.0%	3.4%
Staff	9	7	3	1	1	0
% Staff Responses	42.9%	33.3%	14.3%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	27	32	15	3	1	2
% Total Responses	33.8%	40.0%	18.8%	3.8%	1.3%	2.5%

- c. Consultation and technical assistance to NARUC and state regulatory commissions

Commissioners	25	23	7	1	0	3
% Commissioner Responses	42.4%	39.0%	11.9%	1.7%	0.0%	5.1%
Staff	8	11	1	0	1	0
% Staff Responses	38.1%	52.4%	4.8%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	33	34	8	1	1	3
% Total Responses	41.3%	42.5%	10.0%	1.3%	1.3%	3.8%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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d. Education and training in regulatory issues, through workshops, tutorials, symposia, and other media.

Commissioners	23	25	8	1	1	1
% Commissioner Responses	39.0%	42.4%	13.6%	1.7%	1.7%	1.7%
Staff	10	6	4	0	0	1
% Staff Responses	47.6%	28.6%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Commissioners & Staff	33	31	12	1	1	2
% Total Responses	41.3%	38.8%	15.0%	1.3%	1.3%	2.5%

e. Specific regulatory projects funded by contracts

Commissioners	7	23	24	2	0	3
% Commissioner Responses	11.9%	39.0%	40.7%	3.4%	0.0%	5.1%
Staff	6	5	8	1	0	1
% Staff Responses	28.6%	23.8%	38.1%	4.8%	0.0%	4.8%
Commissioners & Staff	13	28	32	3	0	4
% Total Responses	16.3%	35.0%	40.0%	3.8%	0.0%	5.0%

3. Of the many NRRI activities, these are especially useful to me:

a. Commissioner tutorials.

Commissioners	23	17	11	5	0	3
% Commissioner Responses	39.0%	28.8%	18.6%	8.5%	0.0%	5.1%
Staff	5	7	8	0	0	1
% Staff Responses	23.8%	33.3%	38.1%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Commissioners & Staff	28	24	19	5	0	4
% Total Responses	35.0%	30.0%	23.8%	6.3%	0.0%	5.0%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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b. Orientation and training workshops on site.

Commissioners	15	17	19	3	0	5
% Commissioner Responses	25.4%	28.8%	32.2%	5.1%	0.0%	8.5%
Staff	7	7	6	0	0	1
% Staff Responses	33.3%	33.3%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Commissioners & Staff	22	24	25	3	0	6
% Total Responses	27.5%	30.0%	31.3%	3.8%	0.0%	7.5%

c. NRRI special topic conferences (e.g., Commissioners Summit).

Commissioners	17	26	10	2	0	4
% Commissioner Responses	28.8%	44.1%	16.9%	3.4%	0.0%	6.8%
Staff	4	10	7	0	0	0
% Staff Responses	19.0%	47.6%	33.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	21	36	17	2	0	4
% Total Responses	26.3%	45.0%	21.3%	2.5%	0.0%	5.0%

d. Technical Assistance to state commissions (e.g., commission change, electric industry restructuring)

Commissioners	25	24	5	3	0	2
% Commissioner Responses	42.4%	40.7%	8.5%	5.1%	0.0%	3.4%
Staff	12	7	2	0	0	0
% Staff Responses	57.1%	33.3%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	37	31	7	3	0	2
% Total Responses	46.3%	38.8%	8.8%	3.8%	0.0%	2.5%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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e. Presentations by NRRI staff at NARUC and other meetings

Commissioners	16	28	8	4	0	3
% Commissioner Responses	27.1%	47.5%	13.6%	6.8%	0.0%	5.1%
Staff	9	8	4	0	0	0
% Staff Responses	42.9%	38.1%	19.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	25	36	12	4	0	3
% Total Responses	31.3%	45.0%	15.0%	5.0%	0.0%	3.8%

f. Telephone consultations and assistance from NRRI staff.

Commissioners	18	21	11	3	0	6
% Commissioner Responses	30.5%	35.6%	18.6%	5.1%	0.0%	10.2%
Staff	8	7	6	0	0	0
% Staff Responses	38.1%	33.3%	28.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	26	28	17	3	0	6
% Total Responses	32.5%	35.0%	21.3%	3.8%	0.0%	7.5%

g. Written reports.

Commissioners	14	29	8	4	0	4
% Commissioner Responses	23.7%	49.2%	13.6%	6.8%	0.0%	6.8%
Staff	7	11	1	1	1	0
% Staff Responses	33.3%	52.4%	4.8%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	21	40	9	5	1	4
% Total Responses	26.3%	50.0%	11.3%	6.3%	1.3%	5.0%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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4. I use NRRI written products in the following ways:

a. I read them keep them and refer to them often.

Commissioners	7	14	16	10	2	10
% Commissioner Responses	11.9%	23.7%	27.1%	16.9%	3.4%	16.9%
Staff	4	9	2	2	1	3
% Staff Responses	19.0%	42.9%	9.5%	9.5%	4.8%	14.3%
Commissioners & Staff	11	23	18	12	3	13
% Total Responses	13.8%	28.8%	22.5%	15.0%	3.8%	16.3%

b. I read those in my area of interest and discard the rest.

Commissioners	4	21	8	10	3	13
% Commissioner Responses	6.8%	35.6%	13.6%	16.9%	5.1%	22.0%
Staff	3	9	2	2	2	3
% Staff Responses	14.3%	42.9%	9.5%	9.5%	9.5%	14.3%
Commissioners & Staff	7	30	10	12	5	16
% Total Responses	8.8%	37.5%	12.5%	15.0%	6.3%	20.0%

c. I skim them and pass them on to my staff.

Commissioners	8	26	5	7	4	9
% Commissioner Responses	13.6%	44.1%	8.5%	11.9%	6.8%	15.3%
Staff	1	7	4	3	1	5
% Staff Responses	4.8%	33.3%	19.0%	14.3%	4.8%	23.8%
Commissioners & Staff	9	33	9	10	5	14
% Total Responses	11.3%	41.3%	11.3%	12.5%	6.3%	17.5%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3--NEUTRAL	4--DISAGREE	5--STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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d. I am too busy to look at them.

Commissioners	2	7	7	18	7	18
% Commissioner Responses	3.4%	11.9%	11.9%	30.5%	11.9%	30.5%
Staff	1	1	4	4	5	6
% Staff Responses	4.8%	4.8%	19.0%	19.0%	23.8%	28.6%
Commissioners & Staff	3	8	11	22	12	24
% Total Responses	3.8%	10.0%	13.8%	27.5%	15.0%	30.0%

5. I find these written products to be of special interest:

a. Comprehensive research reports.

Commissioners	10	29	12	6	1	1
% Commissioner Responses	16.9%	49.2%	20.3%	10.2%	1.7%	1.7%
Staff	5	13	1	2	0	0
% Staff Responses	23.8%	61.9%	4.8%	9.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	15	42	13	8	1	1
% Total Responses	18.8%	52.5%	16.3%	10.0%	1.3%	1.3%

b. Shorter policy papers.

Commissioners	26	29	1	1	0	2
% Commissioner Responses	44.1%	49.2%	1.7%	1.7%	0.0%	3.4%
Staff	9	9	2	1	0	0
% Staff Responses	42.9%	42.9%	9.5%	4.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	35	38	3	2	0	2
% Total Responses	43.8%	47.5%	3.8%	2.5%	0.0%	2.5%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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c. Products with specific recommendations for policy action.

Commissioners	14	25	14	5	0	1
% Commissioner Responses	23.7%	42.4%	23.7%	8.5%	0.0%	1.7%
Staff	8	6	4	3	0	0
% Staff Responses	38.1%	28.6%	19.0%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	22	31	18	8	0	1
% Total Responses	27.5%	38.8%	22.5%	10.0%	0.0%	1.3%

d. Reports on state regulatory activities. (e.g., Quarterly Bulletins)

Commissioners	8	27	16	7	0	1
% Commissioner Responses	13.6%	45.8%	27.1%	11.9%	0.0%	1.7%
Staff	4	7	4	3	1	2
% Staff Responses	19.0%	33.3%	19.0%	14.3%	4.8%	9.5%
Commissioners & Staff	12	34	20	10	1	3
% Total Responses	15.0%	42.5%	25.0%	12.5%	1.3%	3.8%

6. These characteristics of NRRI written products are very important to me:

a. Comprehensive and reliable research.

Commissioners	34	21	4	0	0	0
% Commissioner Responses	57.6%	35.6%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff	10	8	0	1	0	2
% Staff Responses	47.6%	38.1%	0.0%	4.8%	0.0%	9.5%
Commissioners & Staff	44	29	4	1	0	2
% Total Responses	55.0%	36.3%	5.0%	1.3%	0.0%	2.5%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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b. Lack of complexity, easy to understand.

Commissioners	27	16	12	4	0	0
% Commissioner Responses	45.8%	27.1%	20.3%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff	5	9	2	3	0	2
% Staff Responses	23.8%	42.9%	9.5%	14.3%	0.0%	9.5%
Commissioners & Staff	32	25	14	7	0	2
% Total Responses	40.0%	31.3%	17.5%	8.8%	0.0%	2.5%

c. Objectivity and lack of bias.

Commissioners	37	18	4	0	0	0
% Commissioner Responses	62.7%	30.5%	6.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff	13	5	1	1	0	1
% Staff Responses	61.9%	23.8%	4.8%	4.8%	0.0%	4.8%
Commissioners & Staff	50	23	5	1	0	1
% Total Responses	62.5%	28.8%	6.3%	1.3%	0.0%	1.3%

d. Issue is of current interest to me personally.

Commissioners	28	19	8	3	1	0
% Commissioner Responses	47.5%	32.2%	13.6%	5.1%	1.7%	0.0%
Staff	10	5	3	1	0	2
% Staff Responses	47.6%	23.8%	14.3%	4.8%	0.0%	9.5%
Commissioners & Staff	38	24	11	4	1	2
% Total Responses	47.5%	30.0%	13.8%	5.0%	1.3%	2.5%

e. Issue is of wide concern in the regulatory community.

Commissioners	21	31	5	1	0	1
% Commissioner Responses	35.6%	52.5%	8.5%	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Staff	9	6	3	1	0	2
% Staff Responses	42.9%	28.6%	14.3%	4.8%	0.0%	9.5%
Commissioners & Staff	30	37	8	2	0	3
% Total Responses	37.5%	46.3%	10.0%	2.5%	0.0%	3.8%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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f. Practical recommendations for policy determination.

Commissioners	20	25	11	2	0	1
% Commissioner Responses	33.9%	42.4%	18.6%	3.4%	0.0%	1.7%
Staff	6	10	2	3	0	0
% Staff Responses	28.6%	47.6%	9.5%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	26	35	13	5	0	1
% Total Responses	32.5%	43.8%	16.3%	6.3%	0.0%	1.3%

g. Work does not duplicate information available elsewhere.

Commissioners	16	23	15	5	0	0
% Commissioner Responses	27.1%	39.0%	25.4%	8.5%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff	3	8	5	3	0	2
% Staff Responses	14.3%	38.1%	23.8%	14.3%	0.0%	9.5%
Commissioners & Staff	19	31	20	8	0	2
% Total Responses	23.8%	38.8%	25.0%	10.0%	0.0%	2.5%

h. NRRI staff is available for follow-up.

Commissioners	24	20	13	1	0	1
% Commissioner Responses	40.7%	33.9%	22.0%	1.7%	0.0%	1.7%
Staff	8	6	4	2	0	1
% Staff Responses	38.1%	28.6%	19.0%	9.5%	0.0%	4.8%
Commissioners & Staff	32	26	17	3	0	2
% Total Responses	40.0%	32.5%	21.3%	3.8%	0.0%	2.5%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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7. NRRI's selection of projects:

- a. Projects should be selected primarily to serve the needs of NARUC's action agenda and the work of NARUC committees.

Commissioners	10	21	20	5	3	0
% Commissioner Responses	16.9%	35.6%	33.9%	8.5%	5.1%	0.0%
Staff	4	6	6	3	1	1
% Staff Responses	19.0%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%	4.8%	4.8%
Commissioners & Staff	14	27	26	8	4	1
% Total Responses	17.5%	33.8%	32.5%	10.0%	5.0%	1.3%

- b. Projects should be selected primarily to serve the needs of state commissions.

Commissioners	30	23	6	0	0	0
% Commissioner Responses	50.8%	39.0%	10.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff	13	5	3	0	0	0
% Staff Responses	61.9%	23.8%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	43	28	9	0	0	0
% Total Responses	53.8%	35.0%	11.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

- c. The capabilities and the professional development of NRRI staff should be considered as projects are selected.

Commissioners	16	26	14	0	3	0
% Commissioner Responses	27.1%	44.1%	23.7%	0.0%	5.1%	0.0%
Staff	5	8	5	2	1	0
% Staff Responses	23.8%	38.1%	23.8%	9.5%	4.8%	0.0%
Commissioners & Staff	21	34	19	2	4	0
% Total Responses	26.3%	42.5%	23.8%	2.5%	5.0%	0.0%

1--STRONGLY AGREE	2--AGREE	3 -- NEUTRAL	4 -- DISAGREE	5 -- STRONGLY DISAGREE	NO RESPONSE
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8. In allocating limited resources of staff time and finding, NRRI should:

- a. Give priority to in-depth research reports.

Commissioners	8	24	12	10	3	2
% Commissioner Responses	13.6%	40.7%	20.3%	16.9%	5.1%	3.4%
Staff	3	6	6	3	0	3
% Staff Responses	14.3%	28.6%	28.6%	14.3%	0.0%	14.3%
Commissioners & Staff	11	30	18	13	3	5
% Total Responses	13.8%	37.5%	22.5%	16.3%	3.8%	6.3%

- b. Give priority to responding quickly to requests from NARUC and state commissions for advice and technical assistance.

Commissioners	32	18	7	2	0	0
% Commissioner Responses	54.2%	30.5%	11.9%	3.4%	0.0%	0.0%
Staff	11	6	3	0	0	1
% Staff Responses	52.4%	28.6%	14.3%	0.0%	0.0%	4.8%
Commissioners & Staff	43	24	10	2	0	1
% Total Responses	53.8%	30.0%	12.5%	2.5%	0.0%	1.3%

- c. Give priority to education and training projects.

Commissioners	10	26	17	3	0	3
% Commissioner Responses	16.9%	44.1%	28.8%	5.1%	0.0%	5.1%
Staff	2	8	7	0	1	3
% Staff Responses	9.5%	38.1%	33.3%	0.0%	4.8%	14.3%
Commissioners & Staff	12	34	24	3	1	6
% Total Responses	15.0%	42.5%	30.0%	3.8%	1.3%	7.5%

APPENDIX B

THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

EXTERNAL REVIEW TEAM SITE VISIT REPORT

National Regulatory Research Institute External Review Team Site Visit Report

Review Team: Ms. Ronda Hartman Fergus, Dr. William Hogan, Mr. Marvin Lieberman, Dr. Richard P. O'Neill, Dr. William G. Shepherd

Visit of December 18-19, 1997

I. NRRI's Past Contributions and Current Situation

1. NRRI was created by NARUC to provide research and technical assistance to the member state public utility commissions of NARUC. OSU has been the host university for NRRI since its inception as the result of a competitive bidding process in which OSU participated and won. NRRI is funded almost entirely by the state public utility commissions, and it is governed by an outside board of directors composed mostly of state utility commissioners.

2. NRRI is a rich asset for the nation, the state and the university. NRRI is well regarded. Its public service mission and achievements fit well within OSU's own portfolio of values including scholarship, teaching and public contributions to Ohio and the world. The university should celebrate this record.

3. The NRRI publications and other research products have grown to be well known and highly respected. In addition to its own research contributions, NRRI provides the essential translation functions that make ideas useful. Recent forays into internet publication show great promise of continuing the interaction with the world of regulation and regulatory research. By contrast, communication within the university has been less consistent and successful. NRRI is more visible outside than inside and its accomplishments less appreciated by some within the university than by those outside.

4. Recently NRRI has been under rising pressures to provide fast-response assistance to regulators in the context of dramatic changes in regulation and markets. This puts some constraints on NRRI's ability to perform more basic research with a longer shelf life. This has sharpened a campus perception that NRRI focuses on applied work.

5. While recognizing the many strengths of NRRI, in interest of brevity this report after the external review team site visit emphasizes constructive suggestions in the main areas that captured attention.

II. *A Suggested Initiative for NRRI's Development*

The revolution underway to restructure traditional regulated industries is driving changes everywhere. With these changes comes a tremendous opportunity to set a research agenda, which could meet the needs of both NARUC and OSU. As a vehicle for linking the needs of both and providing some balance in meeting those needs, we would suggest an ongoing conference or series of research workshops to examine the issues surrounding these changes. There is common agreement that the roles and responsibilities of regulation and regulators will be different in the future. But there is little agreement on the nature of or even the best direction for the required changes. The field needs help in stepping back from the trees to reassess the forest. NRRI is in a unique position to lead this effort and define the core intellectual agenda. A two-year horizon would be appropriate for a first phase. A program of monthly seminars with invited paper(s) would draw together the OSU faculty, the NRRI research staff and invited participants from the broader research community to address the fundamental issues in crafting a new vision for the scope, content and form of public oversight of traditional regulated industries. The culmination of this phase would be in a published volume of the best papers produced and a national conference to define and energize the resulting research agenda.

III. *Specific Matters*

1. Rising calls on staff to provide practical help to regulatory sponsors.

This is a beacon of the success of NRRI. From a longer-term perspective, it is what should be expected during a period of such great turmoil in the traditional regulated industries. Inevitably, this process erodes the time for planned publishable research. Many of the researchers could be generating even more publishable scholarly research than they are able to do now. Better fees for services might lead to better balancing, but the challenge remains for management to reinforce the critical importance of a research focus. The research findings and published reports can benefit from the application work, but research and its emphasis on broad principles or lessons should be preserved as the key comparative advantage of the organization.

2. Communication with OSU faculty.

Over the years, there has been a reduced interaction with other OSU faculty. One challenge is to make NRRI more visible at OSU and more integrated with other faculty activities. For example, a small number of faculty members now review NRRI reports when requested. This could be expanded to capitalize on an already productive practice. The new initiative outlined above in Section II would be an opportunity to tap the strengths and interest of the OSU faculty to define a research agenda. This expanded

involvement could temper the tendency on campus to under-perceive NRRI's scholarly value.

3. The "two-parents" problem.

A common, but not universal, characterization of NRRI's role was to please two parents -- the university and the world of affairs. Application of this idea emphasized zero-sum tradeoffs. An alternative perspective would see the university as serving the world, with NRRI as an important part of its portfolio in pursuing that public service objective. The change in perspective would lead away from a mandate for NRRI to provide services to the university and towards a search for positive-sum activities that benefitted the world and helped both NRRI and the university in the process.

There appears to be no need for a major change the organizational structure. NRRI is well anchored in Engineering. One modest change would be to examine a wider collaborative oversight among deans and chairs of the most relevant areas as part of the university's emphasis on promoting collaborative research.

4. Regularizing the internal processes of responsibility and evaluation.

The high quality of the staff and the maturity of the organization would justify a more regularized process for developing the research agenda and evaluating performance. The researchers are neither a staff merely to be assigned tasks nor a tenured faculty with individual autonomy. The asset of emphasizing good collegial values should be balanced with a more consistent process for providing feedback, goal setting and evaluation.

5. NRRI's physical location off-campus.

The off-the-main-campus location has many advantages of space, style, cohesion, facilities, access and parking. But it may accentuate the separateness, even isolation, from the campus and faculty. Being physically peripheral may suggest that NRRI's content and contributions are peripheral to OSU. This distance adds to the need to work for more integration and mingling of activities.

6. Teaching and training.

A small but significant number of doctoral students are actively involved in NRRI. This is going well, especially from the perspective of the students. However, it also presents an opportunity for expanded awareness through a closer and more frequent involvement of faculty in guiding and promoting the process.

7. Funding presents needs for new approaches, as is true of every such unit.

Funding is always a concern. NRRI has an excellent record and there is good reason to believe that it can continue indefinitely. However, the gradual erosion of

research dollars, coupled with expanded demands on everyone, creates a funding problem that is not a crisis but which deserves early attention.

First, NRRI could revise its funding basis from the regulators and the states in several ways: adjusting the interstate basis for getting yearly funds, requiring minimum contributions from every state, and fitting specific fees more closely to the extra demands for outside help by the NRRI staff researchers.

Second, NRRI should consider extending its sources of funding to other areas and groups. We recognize that NRRI's goal is to provide an independent resource for state public utility commissions. In this period of change, however, it may be appropriate for NRRI and NARUC to reconsider the potential for funding from the industry and/or to consider more creative alternative funding sources. However, if the funding is expanded, NRRI must remain sensitive to the source of the funding so as not to erode its credibility.

8. Finding the new director.

The transition to a new director to follow in the footsteps of the highly successful founder presents an immediate challenge. However, NRRI's future is bright. It is an excellent institution that could be the launching pad for even greater contributions in the future. The task is to find the right leadership emphasis. Balance is the key. NRRI's new leader needs to understand the role of the institute to its major clients (regulators), while also understanding the fit of NRRI within the university. It is also critical that the new leader understand the necessary balance between applied and basic research. Look for a vigorous promoter of both research and public involvement: a pure researcher would face the demise of the organization in the fast changing world; a pure activist would allow gradual decay of intellectual capital and compromise the fundamental reason for supporting NRRI.

NRRI's research encompasses issues involving some of the country's basic infrastructure industries such as the telecommunications, natural gas and electric services industries which are undergoing profound changes. To be able to influence the policy debate on the critical restructuring issues represents new challenges and exciting opportunities for the university, NRRI and its new director.

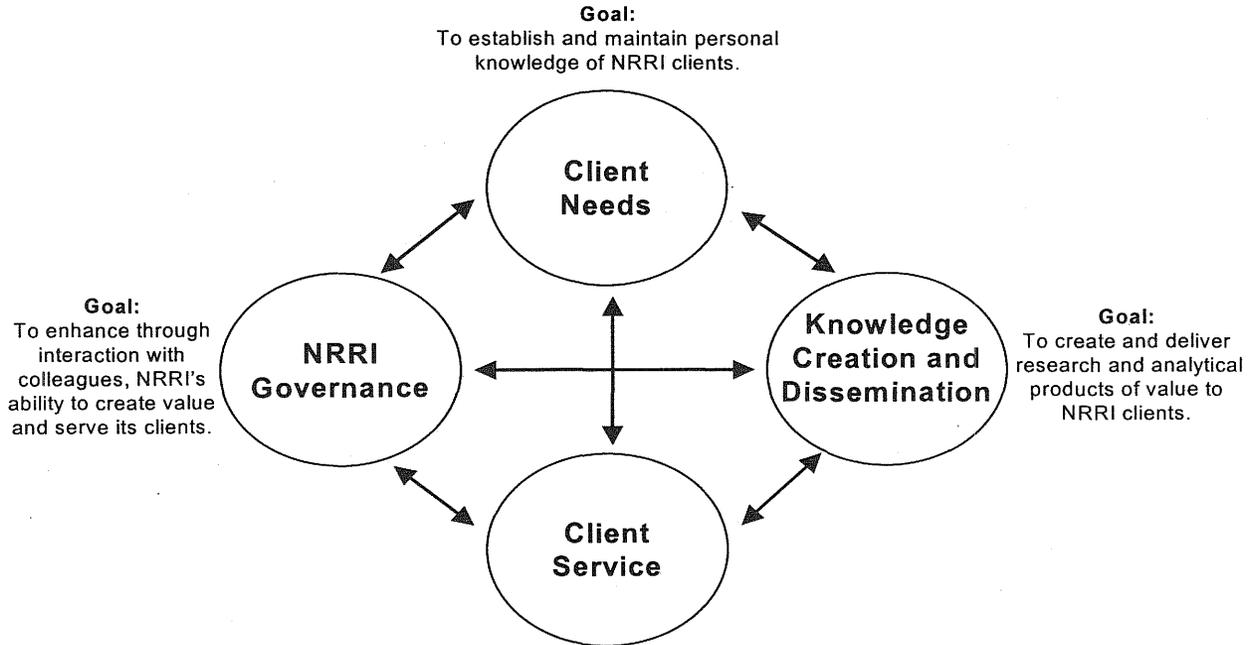
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APPENDIX C

THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**AN INTEGRATED CLIENT-CENTERED MODEL FOR
NRRI STAFF PERFORMANCE AND EVALUATION**

An Integrated Client-Centered Model for NRRI Staff Performance and Evaluation



Client Hierarchy

NARUC (states, commissioners and staff)

OSU (Faculty and Students)

Public

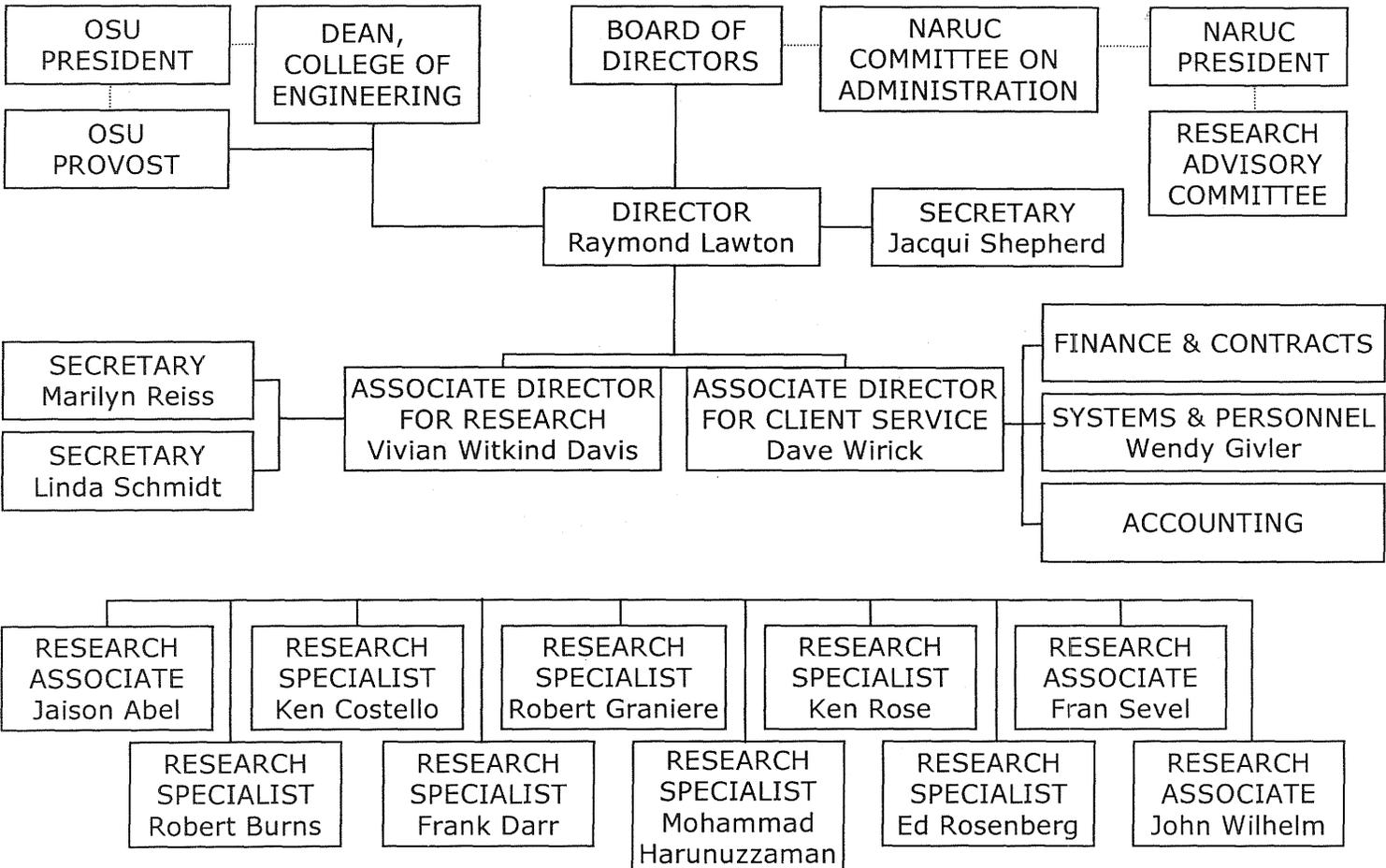
Regulatory Professionals

APPENDIX D

THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

NRRI TABLE OF ORGANIZATION

NRRI ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



APPENDIX E

THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

MEMBERS OF THE NRRI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

January 2000

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Interim VP for Research
The Ohio State University

Dr. David B. Ashley, Dean
College of Engineering
The Ohio State University

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President
California Public Utilities Commission

Honorable Nora Mead Brownell
Commissioner
Pennsylvania Public Utility
Commission

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NRRI Director

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Utah State University

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Ms. Pamela L. Prairie, Director
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Michigan State University

Honorable Jo Anne Sanford
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North Carolina Utilities Commission

Professor David B. Smith, Director
Center for Public Utilities
New Mexico State University

Honorable Herbert H. Tate
President
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

1 vacancy

APPENDIX F

THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

**MEMBERS OF THE NRRI RESEARCH
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
RESEARCH ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

January 2000

Ms. Cathleen Carpino
Hearing Officer
Massachusetts Department of
Telecommunications and Energy

Dr. Michael S. Proctor, Manager
Economic Analysis
Policy and Planning Division
Missouri Public Service Commission

Dr. John Cita, Chief
Economic Policy and Planning
Kansas State Corporation
Commission

Ms. Beth W. Salak
Assistant Director
Florida Public Service Commission

Ms. Deborah K. Flannagan
Executive Director
Georgia Public Service Commission

Ms. Lisa C. Stump
Manager, Policy Development
Iowa Utilities Board

Dr. Fred S. Grygiel
Chief Economist
New Jersey Board of Public Utilities

Dr. Tim Sullivan
Advisor, Executive Division
California Public Utilities
Commission

Dr. Grace Hu
Chief Economist
D.C. Public Service Commission

Dr. John T. Tschirhart
Department of Economics
University of Wyoming

1 vacancy

Mr. Ernest G. Johnson, Director
Public Utility Division
Oklahoma Corporation Commission

Dr. Karen Palmer
Resources for the Future

APPENDIX G

THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

NRRI STAFF

Raymond W. Lawton
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Ray Lawton is the Director of the National Regulatory Research Institute, the official research arm of state regulatory commissions. The NRRI was jointly established at the Ohio State University (OSU) by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and OSU. The NRRI is located in the OSU College of Engineering and conducts interdisciplinary research. The NRRI has a staff of 26 and an annual budget of 2.75 million dollars.

Previously, Dr. Lawton served as Associate Director for the Telecommunications and Water Division at the NRRI from 1985 until 1998. Earlier he served as NRRI Associate Director for Administration and Special Projects. Prior to that time he conducted energy research for the NRRI, primarily in electric pricing and conservation. He was project manager for two, one-million dollar grants from the U.S. Department of Energy and conducted a national needs assessment of the electric and natural gas regulatory research needs of state public utility commissions. He has also held senior positions at the Ohio Office of Budget and Management, the Ohio Department of Economic and Community Development, and the Academy for Contemporary Problems. At the Department of Development he managed the National Science Foundation-funded Ohio Cities Innovation Consortium. Dr. Lawton has an appointment as an Adjunct Associate Professor in the School of Public Policy and Management at the Ohio State University.

Dr. Lawton has served on the water, communications, management analysis, and education staff subcommittees of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC). He has frequently made presentations at NARUC national and regional meetings, at state commissions, and other regional and national meetings. His research reports include topics such as regulatory reform, competition, electric utility reliability, local calling areas, service quality, small water companies, commission transformation, and consumer education. He also has published research on international relations and educational evaluation.

Currently Dr. Lawton is principal investigator for a research project funded by the Missouri Public Service Commission to study natural gas service quality for residential consumers in Missouri. The survey appears to be the first of its kind. Recently he assisted the NARUC Gas Committee in developing study topics. He is currently working on determining what characteristics a successor regulatory regime might have and on the use of survey research to get reliable information directly from consumers.

Dr. Lawton is a member of the New Mexico State University Advisory Committee, Center for Regulatory Studies; the Advisory Committee for the Institute of Public Utilities, Eli Broad College of Business, Michigan State University, and the Advisory Committee for the Urban Water Research Center, School of Social Ecology, University of California, Irvine. He is a member of the NRRI Board of Directors. He served as a reviewer for the NSF Intergovernmental Science and Public Technology Division.

He has twice received an OSU College of Engineering award for outstanding service, been appointed an Ameritech Faculty Fellow by the OSU Graduate School, and was awarded an OSU Graduate School Ameritech Prize for telecommunications research.

Dr. Lawton has traveled extensively and has provided technical assistance to Uzbekistan, Germany, Bolivia, India, Costa Rica, Moldova, Union of South Africa, the International Telecommunications Union, and the Confederation of Independent States. He has visited most state commissions.

Dr. Lawton received his Ph.D. from the Ohio State University in 1972. He was appointed a National Science Foundation Trainee, by the OSU Graduate School. He completed his undergraduate work at the State University of New York College at Oswego.

David W. Wirick
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David Wirick is Associate Director for Client Services at the National Regulatory Research Institute (NRRI), which is located at the Ohio State University. He created and leads the NRRI's program to provide assistance to state public utility commissions engaged in transformation in response to changing utility and regulatory environments and the NRRI's Y2K program. He has worked directly with many states and regulators, making presentations on change, facilitating workgroups, assessing organizational readiness for change, and developing Y2K strategies. He has also authored reports and articles on a wide variety of topics including accounting for regulated utilities, the use of geographic information systems, the evaluation of water utility financial capacity, public utility commission strategy, the health effects of electromagnetic fields, the natural gas futures market, the gain-on-sale of utility assets, the mediation of interconnection disputes, alternative dispute resolution, staffing the commission consumer education function, the Year 2000 problem, and several reports on commission change. He is a mediator and mediation trainer and a Certified Management

Accountant. He holds an M.A. from Ohio State in Public Policy and a B.A. (summa cum laude) from Kent State University.

Vivian Witkind Davis

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Dr. Vivian Witkind Davis is the Associate Director for Research at the NRRI. She is currently working on NARUC-sponsored research on successor regulatory regimes in telecommunications. Her most recent report is on a "bill for rights" for telecommunications consumers. Dr. Witkind Davis has authored or co-authored numerous reports on telecommunications and water regulation.

Telecommunications reports address price caps regulation, service quality, and wireless competition. Water reports address regulatory problems of small waterutilities. She is a member of the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Telecommunications and the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Water. She has provided technical assistance and training to many state commissions and the governments of Egypt and Bolivia. Dr. Witkind Davis received her Ph.D. from the Ohio State University School of Public Policy and Management in 1982. She holds a B.A. from Wellesley College and an M.A. from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University.

Jaison R. Abel

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Dr. Jaison R. Abel joined the National Regulatory Research Institute as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate after receiving his Ph.D. in economics from The Ohio State University in 1999. His recently completed dissertation provides a theoretical and empirical analysis of dominant firm pricing and the development of fringe competition in local telephone markets under price-cap regulation. Dr. Abel continues to conduct research analyzing the transition of traditionally regulated industries as various forms of incentive regulation are adopted and competition emerges in markets that were once shielded from entry. Prior to obtaining his Ph.D., he was a Graduate Research Associate in the Electric and Gas Division at the National Regulatory Research Institute and taught economics at both Ohio Wesleyan University and The Ohio State University. Dr. Abel also holds an M.A. in economics from The Ohio State University (1995) and a B.A. in economics from the State University of New York at Geneseo (1994).

John Borrows
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Mr. Borrows is a Senior Research Specialist at the NRRI. Currently he is working primarily on a project to determine information infrastructure needs for state commissions. Previous work at the NRRI by Mr. Borrows includes reports on aspects of the water industry, telecommunications research reports and participation in assistance programs for specific states and foreign countries. Mr. Borrows was the Director of Utilities for the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio for over twenty years. He graduated from the Ohio State University with a Bachelor of Electrical Engineering degree.

Robert E. Burns
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Mr. Burns is editor of the NRRI Quarterly Bulletin and is a Senior Research Specialist and attorney at the Institute. He is the most senior researcher and policy analyst at the Institute with over twenty years of public utility and natural resource experience at The Ohio State University. Bob has been with the NRRI's Electric and Gas Research Division since 1980. At the NRRI, Bob has written forty-five major reports and eighty articles or papers and has made over one hundred and thirty presentations on diverse regulatory topics, mostly concerning electric and gas public utility policy. Bob is currently working on electric utility restructuring issues, including gas utility mergers and acquisitions, and reliability and quality of power service. Bob represents the NRRI on the NARUC Staff Subcommittees of Law and Administrative Law Judges. He is also involved in the NARUC CEE/NIS Regulatory Exchange Program involving regulators from Eastern Europe. Bob is a Phi Beta Kappa, who received his J.D. from The Ohio State University College of Law in 1978 and is listed in Marquis Who's Who in American Law.

Kenneth W. Costello
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Ken Costello is a Senior Institute Economist at the National Regulatory Research Institute. He received B.S. and M.A. degrees from Marquette University and has completed some doctoral work in economics at the University of Chicago. Mr. Costello previously worked for the Illinois Commerce Commission, the Argonne

National Laboratory, Commonwealth Edison Company, and as an independent consultant.

Mr. Costello has conducted extensive research and written widely on topics related to energy industries and public utility regulation. These topics include natural gas customer choice programs, unbundling of retail gas services, regulatory practices and innovative generation technologies, alternative ratemaking methods for local gas distribution companies, price-cap regulation for energy utilities, utility energy-efficiency programs, competitive pricing of utility services, electricity transmission access, electing state public utility commissioners, energy assistance programs, market power, the pricing of affiliate transactions involving a regulated utility, codes of conduct, regulatory oversight of gas procurement by local gas distributors, lessons learned in regulation, a regulatory agency's perspective of incentive ratemaking for pipelines and local gas distributors, independent power production, regional energy modeling, and the price and availability of western coal in the Midwestern electric utility market.

Mr. Costello's research has appeared in books, technical reports of the National Regulatory Research Institute, the Illinois Commerce Commission and the Argonne National Laboratory, and in scholarly and trade publications. These publications include the Cato Journal, Electricity Journal, Energy Journal, Energy Law Journal, Public Utilities Fortnightly, Regulation, Resources and Energy, and Yale Journal on Regulation.

Mr. Costello has also provided training and consulting services to the governments of Argentina, Bolivia, China, Costa Rica, Egypt, Russia, Alberta, Canada, the Central and Eastern European countries, and the Newly Independent States.

Mr. Costello is a member of the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Economics and Finance, and Gas. He has written book reviews for the Energy Journal and has been a referee for the Energy Journal, Resources and Energy, the Review of Industrial Organization, and the Journal of Law and Economics.

Frank Darr
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Frank P. Darr joined the National Regulatory Research Institute in May 1999. He is working on projects involving market power, telecommunications convergence and OSS testing and published and spoken on each of these areas. He received

his undergraduate degree summa cum laude from the University of Akron in 1979 and his law degree with honors from the Ohio State University in 1982. After three years with a private law firm, he served as an assistant attorney general assigned to the Public Utilities Commission of Ohio. He then joined the faculty at the Fisher College of Business at the Ohio State University from 1987 to 1995 where he received tenure as an associate professor. He left academia for three and a half years to serve as the legal director of the Ohio Consumers' Counsel. He has published many articles on utility law in leading law reviews and was a two-time Ameritech research fellow while at Ohio State. He is also a coauthor of a NRRRI publication concerning regional regulation.

Wendy Givler
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Ms. Givler has been with the Institute since 1985. She is currently the Systems and Personnel Manager. She is responsible for maintaining the Institute's computer systems and website, developing electronic tools that enhance the NRRRI's ability to communicate with its clients, and assisting the NRRRI staff identify and develop mechanisms to provide electronic services to its state-commission clientele. She represents the Institute on the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Computers.

Robert J. Granieri
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Dr. Granieri joined the Institute as a Senior Institute Economist in November of 1988. Before joining the Institute, he worked at a large state regulatory commission, a major electric utility, and a major telecommunications firm.

His work in the electric and telecommunications sectors has been concentrated in the areas of interconnection, transmission and access pricing, stranded costs, market power, social-program maintenance, and industry restructuring. Dr. Granieri's work in the electricity and telecommunications industries included both management and analyst positions. His analytical experience has been accumulated as a strategic planner, financial analyst, economic analyst, and cost analyst. His management experience is accrued in the areas of economic analysis, regulatory support, and strategic marketing.

International experience includes direct participation in the restructuring of the Canadian and Japanese electricity industries. In addition, Dr. Graniere has provided advice on the restructuring of the Indian and Brazilian electricity industries.

His national experience includes the design of conservation programs funded by utilities, the implementation of open network architecture, the design of alternative regulatory formats, and the introduction of new technologies into regulated markets.

Lastly, Dr. Graniere's work at the state regulatory commission was analytical and advisory. In his capacity as Executive Assistant to a Florida Public Service Commissioner, he participated directly in the regulation and analysis of the electricity, telecommunications, natural gas and water industries. His work at this time included the determination of acquisition adjustments for water utilities, the merger analysis for water utilities, the regulatory and economic analysis of the restructuring of the telecommunications industry, the design of access charges for long-distance carriers, the analysis of the cost of AT&T's divestiture of its local operating companies, and the analysis of over fifty rate cases in the electricity, telecommunications, natural gas, and water industries.

Dr. Graniere received his B.A. in economics from Upsala College, his M.A. in economics from Northwestern University, and his Ph.D. in economics from Florida State University, Institute For Social Research.

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Dr. Harunuzzaman is a Senior Research Specialist at the NRRI. He has been working in the regulatory field for twenty years. The areas in which he has contributed include utility resource planning, pricing and rate design of utility services, unbundling of gas services, and environmental issues. He developed several computer models for regulatory analysis. He is the author or coauthor of more than thirty NRRI publications. Dr. Harunuzzaman received an M.Sc. in Physics from The University of Dhaka, Dhaka, Bangladesh; an M.S. in Nuclear Engineering from The University of Oklahoma, Norman; and a Ph.D. in Nuclear Engineering from The Ohio State University. He is a member of the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Energy Resources and the Environment and the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Gas.

Kenneth Rose
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Kenneth Rose is a Senior Institute Economist in The National Regulatory Research Institute at The Ohio State University. Dr. Rose has been working on energy and regulatory issues for more than fifteen years. Dr. Rose has testified or presented at many state legislative and public utility commission hearings, proceedings, conferences, and workshops on electric industry restructuring (including Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Mississippi, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia). Dr. Rose has testified before several committees of the U.S. House of Representatives on regulatory matters. Since joining the Institute in 1989, he has worked primarily on studies concerning the electric industry and has directed or contributed to many reports, papers, articles, and books. Topics include Clean Air Act implementation, environmental externalities of electricity production, competitive bidding for power supply, regulatory treatment of uneconomic costs, market power, and industry restructuring impacts on residential customers. Dr. Rose is a frequent presenter at conferences, workshops, and other instructional venues. Prior to coming to the NRRI, Dr. Rose worked on many energy related issues at Argonne National Laboratory. Dr. Rose received his B.S., M.A., and Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Edwin A. Rosenberg
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Dr. Rosenberg is a Senior Research Specialist at NRRI where he conducts economic policy research on telecommunications topics. Before joining the NRRI in 1991, Ed received a Ph.D. in economics from North Carolina State University, taught economics and statistics at North Carolina State University and the University of North Carolina at Asheville, and spent eight years as an economist on the staff of the North Carolina Utilities Commission where he prepared expert testimonies and reports on subjects including the utility cost of capital and fair rates of return, electricity demand forecasting, and conservation planning. Ed's research topics at the NRRI have included contract pricing of electric and telephone Service, regulation of regional telecommunications holding companies, universal service policies, merger and acquisition analysis, incremental cost-based pricing, alternative regulation, rights-of-way policies, and analysis of market power issues. Ed is an active member of NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Telecommunications and is currently working on several

projects including analysis of market power and asymmetric regulation in emerging competitive markets.

Francine Sevel
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Dr. Francine Sevel is the former editor of the NRRI Quarterly Bulletin and conducts research on consumer education, consumer affairs, and public information issues facing state public utility commissions. Dr. Sevel also provides onsite assistance to state public utility commissions on these topics and represents the NRRI on the NARUC Ad Hoc Committee on Consumer Affairs and the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs. Dr. Sevel has a Ph.D. in education and an M.A. in journalism from The Ohio State University (OSU); previously she was an Assistant Professor at OSU.

John Wilhelm
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John D. Wilhelm joined the NRRI in August 1999 as a Senior Research Associate. He is currently in charge of the Institute's water research program. He has recently completed a report on capacity planning and development for drinking water systems. John is currently investigating state-level water resources planning, conducting research into performance benchmarking and best practices for water utilities, and customizing a decision support methodology for state utility commissions. John received his undergraduate degree from the United States Military Academy in Nuclear Engineering and his Masters degree in Industrial Engineering from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. He is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Public Policy and Management at The Ohio State University. He is a member of the NARUC Staff Subcommittee on Water.

APPENDIX H

**THE NATIONAL REGULATORY RESEARCH INSTITUTE
NRRI STAFF NARUC STAFF SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS**

NRRI STAFF NARUC STAFF SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERSHIPS

NARUC STAFF SUBCOMMITTEE	NRRI STAFF MEMBER
Administrative Law Judges	Robert Burns
Telecommunications	Raymond Lawton
Telecommunications	Vivian Witkind Davis
Telecommunications	Edwin Rosenberg
Computers	Wendy Givler
Consumer Affairs	Francine Sevel
Economics and Finance	Kenneth Costello
Energy Resources and Environment	Mohammad Harunuzzaman
Environment-Efficiency	Kenneth Rose
Executive Directors	David Wirick
Gas	Kenneth Costello
Gas	Mohammad Harunuzzaman
Law	Robert Burns
Management Analysis	Raymond Lawton
Strategic Issues	Robert Graniere
Water	John Borrows
Water	Raymond Lawton
Water	John Wilhelm
Water	Vivian Witkind Davis
International Relations	Raymond Lawton

