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Committee:
Ways and Means

House of Representatives
State of South Carolina

March 9, 2021

The Honorable Richard Glick, Chairman
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
888 First Street, NE
Washington, DC 20426

RE: Docket # ER21-1111; Invitation for Fed/State Technical Conference

Dear Chairman Glick:

I am writing to request that the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (the "Commission") convene a technical conference to investigate wholesale market reform in the Southeast United States, in light of the broad interest across the region in improving affordability and system reliability, and in order to create more competition with clean energy technologies.

South Carolina is still recovering from the shock of the V.C. Summer nuclear plant shutdown in late 2017. Many state ratepayers are left paying off around \$9 billion in debt. This fact, coupled with the lack of competition and choice, has forced our state to focus on energy market reforms.

In 2020, the South Carolina General Assembly passed legislation to study potential market-based reforms (SC Act 187 of 2020). It has also enacted state level reforms aimed at fairness for independent power producers, improved utility planning, and preservation of a vibrant distributed energy market.

It has come to my attention that the Commission has been open to the promotion of open markets for generation, storage and demand management. After conferring with my colleagues in the SC General Assembly, I believe there is an opportunity here for federal-state cooperation that could ultimately lead to more competition and choice for our ratepayers and help to create a cleaner energy market here.

It is also my understanding that some South Carolina electric utilities have joined with other Southeastern utilities in filing a proposal at the Commission for a transmission pooling arrangement called the Southeastern Energy Exchange Market (or SEEM). Like many of my state colleagues, I am concerned about SEEM because it limits the competition that sparks lower pricing and cleaner energy options.

March 9, 2021

Page 2

Having said that, I am writing this letter to formally request the Commission's participation in a joint federal-state technical conference to go beyond its limited scope and consider the potential benefits for the Southeast of having an independently operated regional transmission organization (RTO) or energy imbalance market; the consideration of wholesale market redesign; and other ways that state jurisdiction might be improved within a new state/federal partnership.

Again, I believe a technical conference considering these issues will help South Carolina lawmakers and other stakeholders better understand the energy marketplace here in the Southeast.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nathan Ballentine". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Nathan" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Ballentine".

Representative Nathan Ballentine

NB/dkh/2021march9-2,3

cc: Commissioner Neil Chatterjee, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426
Commissioner James Danly, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426
Commissioner Allison Clements, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426
Commissioner Mark C. Christie, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 888 First Street, NE, Washington, DC 20426