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## ICC Releases Electric and Natural Gas Service Safety and Reliability Notice of Inquiry Report

Chicago, IL - The Illinois Commerce Commission today announced the release of a Notice of Inquiry (NOI) Summary Report on electric and natural gas service safety and reliability. The NOI was initiated by the Commission on August 12, 2020 as a vehicle to gather information and more closely examine its rules and regulations, as well as the practices and procedures of public utilities, to ensure utility workers and the public remain safe.

“Past experience has shown us that accidents involving utility facilities and equipment can result in injury or death, and violent weather causes disruptions in service. As regulators, it’s important that we routinely examine the steps being taken by the utilities to prevent incidents and how to best respond if they do occur,” said ICC Chairman Carrie Zalewski. “The information provided in this report and proceeding will be very useful as we consider making improvements to our rules and regulations, and oversight over the public utilities.”

Through the NOI, the public utilities were asked to provide detailed answers to a number of questions related to worker and contractor safety training; the processes used to inspect utility plants, equipment and property; whether third parties are used to verify inspections; how issues identified through inspections are prioritized and addressed; and what processes are in place to permit the public to report plant or equipment deficiencies. The NOI also included questions for other interested persons regarding suggested changes to improve the Commission’s rules and regulations, and what changes the public utilities could make in their practices and procedures to better ensure electric and natural gas service is provided in a safe and reliable manner.

“We would like to thank everyone who participated in the NOI. The information gathered within the proceeding and report is intended to be used as a reference tool for the Commission and other state policy makers when considering the appropriate regulatory framework for electricity and natural gas service safety and reliability,” said Jim Zolnierek, ICC Public Utilities Bureau Chief and NOI Manager.

NOI participants include: Ameren Illinois Company (AIC), Commonwealth Edison Company (ComEd), Illinois Gas Company, Liberty Utilities Corporation (Liberty Midstates), MidAmerican Energy Company (MEC), Mt. Carmel Public Utility Company (Mt. Carmel), Northern Illinois Gas Company (NICOR), Office of Attorney General (OAG), and North Shore Gas Company and The Peoples Gas Light and Coke Company (NSG-PGL). The Chicago Area Laborers-Employers Cooperation and Education Trust (LECET) offered reply comments.

In December, the Commission announced plans to expand its electrical safety and reliability division by hiring three new electrical field inspectors and an Assistant Director of Engineering in 2021. This investment will enable the ICC to have more staff in the field inspecting utility poles, equipment and facilities and conducting investigations, complementing the work being done by the electrical engineers currently on staff and the NOI.

The full NOI report for 20-NOI-02 as well as all of the information submitted in the proceeding is available for review on the Commission website at: <https://www.icc.illinois.gov/notice-of-inquiry/20-noi-02>.

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