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**ICC CONTACT:** Marianne Manko

Office: (217) 782-5793

Mobile: (217) 993-1000

[mmanko@icc.illinois.gov](mailto:mmanko@icc.illinois.gov)

### **Illinois Commerce Commission Initiates *NextGrid* Utility of the Future Study**

*Collaborative to leverage state's competitive markets, smart grid-technology, and commitment to renewables*

CHICAGO – The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) today launched its consideration of the utility of the future, announcing *NextGrid* – a statewide collaborative to transform Illinois' energy landscape and economy.

Convened by the Commission and led by an outside, expert facilitator, *NextGrid* is an approximately eighteen-month consumer-focused and collaborative study. In addition to identifying and exploring future technological advancements and utility and regulatory models, the study will inform policymakers on the issues and challenges associated with a quickly evolving energy landscape and provide recommendations to the ICC and Illinois General Assembly on a range of tangible actions and policies available to best benefit customers and communities throughout Illinois.

"Illinois has a long history of progressive leadership in energy policy," said ICC Chairman Brien J. Sheahan. "Like the 1997 Electric Service Customer Choice and Rate Relief Law, the 2011 Energy Infrastructure Modernization Act, and the 2016 Future Energy Jobs Act, *NextGrid* holds the promise to further Illinois' leadership in the new energy economy. We need to support innovation by utilities that builds on our strengths, creates value for consumers, and contributes to growth and development."

The Commission study fulfills a recommendation of Governor Bruce Rauner's Transition Committee and complements the December 2016 passage of the landmark Future Energy Jobs Act, a bipartisan effort enacted by the Governor and the Illinois General Assembly which, among other things, creates policy support for zero carbon emission baseload generation and the expansion of energy efficiency programs, net metering, solar and wind energy.

Many experts believe that the electric utility industry will evolve more in the next ten years than it has in the past century with new technologies changing the way electricity is bought, sold, generated and

consumed. This transformation raises important questions about how all aspects of the system interact and what that may mean for consumers, regulators, utilities and other stakeholders.

Chairman Sheahan described *NextGrid* as an inclusive, comprehensive and collaborative process that will result in a fair assessment of policy options in light of statutory goals and the needs of Illinois consumers. “All stakeholders are invited to participate, from consumer groups to environmental advocates, utilities, academics, technology leaders, government agencies and any other interested parties,” Sheahan said.

“We are pleased to participate in this discussion to ensure any new energy proposals are affordable and focused on the consumer’s best interest,” Attorney General Lisa Madigan said. “With energy efficiency and solar options increasingly available, reduced electricity grid usage should be reflected in customers’ bills.”

“CUB looks forward to participating in *NextGrid*, and we thank the ICC for launching this effort,” said Dave Kolata, Executive Director of the Citizens Utility Board (CUB). “The energy industry is undergoing dramatic changes, and we need to make sure that consumer value is maximized. This is an excellent opportunity to help lay the regulatory groundwork for an energy future that gives consumers the tools they need to take advantage of a more reliable and affordable electricity system.”

“We commend the Commission for taking a leadership role in establishing a forum for designing the future-oriented business model and joining ComEd’s effort to maximize the smart grid and deliver new value to customers,” said Anne Pramaggiore, ComEd President and CEO. “We see *NextGrid* as an opportunity to find common ground on critical issues facing our industry and as a driver of the clean, lean, ultra-resilient energy future our customers want.”

The study will be presented to the ICC at a formal policy session early this summer. Interim and final reports are expected in early and late 2018 respectively.

To view a copy of the Commission’s Resolution announcing *NextGrid*, click [here](#). All members of the energy stakeholder community are encouraged and invited to provide input and suggestions regarding the selection of a facilitator and topics to be considered as a part of *NextGrid* by filing comments in response to the Resolution by **April 30, 2017**. Comments can be emailed to [nextgrid@icc.illinois.gov](mailto:nextgrid@icc.illinois.gov).

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#### ***About the Illinois Commerce Commission***

The Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC) is a quasi-judicial body made up of five Commissioners. Through its Public Utility Program, the Commission oversees the provision of adequate, reliable, efficient and safe utility services at the least possible cost to Illinois citizens served by electric, natural gas, telecommunications, water and sewer public utility companies. Through its Transportation Regulatory Program, the Commission oversees public safety and consumer protection programs with regard to intrastate commercial motor carriers of general freight, household goods movers, relocation towers, safety towers, personal property warehouses and

repossession agencies. The Commission's Rail Safety Program also inspects and regulates the general safety of railroad tracks, facilities and equipment in the state.

To learn more about the Commission, its offices and bureaus, click [here](#). If you are a consumer who needs help resolving a utility dispute call 800-524-0795 or file an online complaint [here](#). For a complaint related to transportation, call 217-782-6448.

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