



# NEWS

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 26, 2020

## **A Message to the Public from the Illinois Commerce Commission Regarding the University of Illinois Next Grid Report**

Dear Members of the Energy Industry and the Public:

We recently became aware of the release of University of Illinois' Next Grid Report ("Report"), and the dissemination of the Report by a former Commissioner of the Illinois Commerce Commission ("Commission"). Considering the potential for confusion, it is incumbent upon us to clarify the Report's implications for Illinois and the nation. Simply put, this Report is not suited for any regulatory, legislative, or policy pursuit within Illinois or any other jurisdiction.

The Commission, under the new administration, took no part in the Next Grid Report's finalization and release. The current administration neither endorses nor accepts responsibility for the contents of the Report. Rest assured, grid modernization and innovation, among others, remain of tremendous importance to the Commission. However, for the purposes of determining regulatory or legislative activities, we find it wholly improper and further disavow the Report's use for any purpose. For these reasons, this Commission did not release the Next Grid Report.

The previous administration began the Next Grid Study process over three years ago. Begun with good intentions, the Report's conclusions may lead to unintended consequences. Earlier this year, the Commission voted to approve a settlement in which the Report was required to include a disclaimer warning against its use, after allegations that the Commission, under the previous administration, violated the Open Meetings Act. We voted to approve this settlement because we believed it was necessary for Illinois to move forward.

Since the beginning of this administration, we have promoted the Commission's core values of transparency and inclusivity. From the bench, our core values are displayed through engaging in open debate during proceedings and explaining docketed matters for the public's understanding. To further that premise, the Commission developed a Citizens' Guide to help consumers, government officials, and the media better navigate the Commission. From livestreaming Commission meetings to providing an atmosphere amenable to disagreement and dialogue, the new administration has answered the call to ensure transparency and integrity at the Commission, as well as place Illinois in the leadership position it often assumes.

A recent example of these core values in action is the Commission's Order concerning customer relief during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Order approved two (2) stipulated agreements, which were the product of several months of collaborative and inclusive efforts across more than two (2) state agencies, five (5) consumer advocacy



groups, and thirteen (13) utility companies. We proudly voted to approve the stipulations because they embody the Commission's core values and provide meaningful relief to those who need it the most.

We are tremendously grateful for the opportunity to lead and serve on this Commission. As its leaders, we reiterate that this Report is neither affiliated with the current administration nor should it have bearing on Illinois policy or that of any other jurisdiction. Any suggestion that the current administration endorses or approves this Report is patently false.

Thank you and we look forward to continuing to serve the residents of our great state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carrie K. Zalewski".

Carrie K. Zalewski  
Chairman

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Bocanegra".

Maria Bocanegra  
Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael T. Carrigan".

Michael T. Carrigan  
Commissioner

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Ethan Kimbrel".

D. Ethan Kimbrel  
Commissioner

