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October 20, 2020

### Energy Bar Association Ignites Discussion at Virtual Fall Forum

The Energy Bar Association held a very well-attended virtual Fall Forum last week. Perkins Coie Partner Jane Rueger, who is president of the EBA this year, opened the Fall Forum with an address that built on the event theme of "Commit, Engage, Ignite." Over two packed afternoons, speakers ignited discussion of a wide array of critical issues facing the electric, natural gas, and oil industries.

Topics included recurring themes such as transmission development. Despite numerous actions by the Federal Energy Regulation Commission to reform transmission planning over the last decade, transmission investment continues to be a source of debate as the grid is built out to meet rapidly changing conditions and needs. The EBA panel addressed the biggest issues facing the transmission industry in the next five years, touching on FERC's proposed [transmission incentives rulemaking](#), FERC's recent cybersecurity incentives policy [white paper](#), as well as issues relating to the transmission system upgrades needed to access clean energy resources and support growing use of distributed resources and electric vehicles.

Other panels focused on emerging issues like the use of hydrogen and its potential role in achieving clean energy commitments, cybersecurity in the supply chain, and how FERC and appellants are addressing the major change in FERC's appeals process wrought by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia in *Allegheny Defense Project v. FERC*. The closing plenary session also offered perspectives from several prominent energy and environmental journalists on the upcoming elections and their likely impact on the energy sector.

In addition, FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee provided a keynote address in which he outlined his goals and priorities in the energy sector. He outlined his philosophy that FERC should "never be a barrier" but rather a "catalyst, an enabler of competitive and transparent markets that support needed investments." In particular, he highlighted two key reforms during his term, [Order 841](#) that aims to remove barriers to storage participation in the wholesale electric markets and [Order 2222](#) that similarly aims to remove barriers to participation by distributed energy resource aggregators. He also presaged some of the significant actions that FERC took later in the week at its open meeting, such as issuance of a proposed [policy statement](#) encouraging efforts to incorporate a state-determined carbon price in organized wholesale electricity markets.

EBA plans to make all of the recorded panel discussions available on demand, which can be accessed from the [EBA website](#).

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