



FERC Office of Public Participation: The Power of ESG in Regulated Industry

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NECPUC – May 24, 2022



Preliminary Note

Note: The views expressed herein are the author's, and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, individual Commissioners, or other Commission staff members. Nothing herein should be viewed as a prediction or prognostication of how the Commission will act on any matter, nor will this presentation address any pending matter.



OPP: A Conduit for Public Engagement at FERC

Primary Function: to coordinate and provide assistance to members of the public for participation in FERC proceedings.

Enabling Statute: Section 319 of the Federal Power Act, 16 U.S.C. Sec. 825q-1.

- Passed in 1978 but established in 2021 under the leadership of the current Congress and **FERC Chairman Richard Glick.**
- The first permanent director of OPP is **Elin Swanson Katz.**
 - Former Connecticut Consumer Counsel and former President of the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates. Elin started in November 2021.
- The Deputy Director is **Nicole Sitaraman.**
 - Formerly at Sustainable Capital Advisors, Sunrun and the DC Office of the People's Counsel. Nicole started on February 14, 2022.



Areas of Focus—Outreach, Education and Constituent Services

- Outreach is a core function of OPP. OPP is focused on consistent outreach to and encouraging representation from traditionally under-represented communities and constituencies who may not have experience with FERC and/or have limited resources for participation, including:
 - Landowners impacted by infrastructure proposals;
 - Environmental justice communities;
 - Citizens of Native American Tribes;
 - Consumer advocate, environmental, or community organizations.
- On a daily basis, OPP provides assistance to those who contact our office and proactively reaches out to our core constituencies to provide information.



OPP Activities To Date: Assistance, Connection, Dialogue

- Helping constituents understand how to intervene and comment, understand the scope of FERC jurisdiction and FERC procedural steps, learn how and where to find more information about a project or industry, and e-subscribe to FERC dockets. To date, OPP has fielded close to 300 constituent communications.
- Engaging in a “listening tour” so that we can better understand the needs of public stakeholders, rather than assume we know them, and to make sure that we are hearing the concerns and questions of communities and industry.
- Identifying FERC process improvements to enable public participation.



Ongoing Priorities

- Providing procedural information and assistance to the public
- Identifying constituent partners/suggestions for reaching key constituents through robust outreach initiative
- Building technical assistance and education program
- Developing metrics for measuring progress/success
- Expanding OPP social media profile and website
- Pushing out information on key dockets, decisions, policies through the OPP website, social media, emails, and upcoming OPP Newsletter
- Identifying models for intervenor funding
- Hiring to meet the mission



OPP is a Resource to Facilitate Participation: Empowering Communities to Speak for Themselves

- We are developing resources and educational materials to enable members of the public, including under-represented constituencies and those unfamiliar with FERC processes, to participate and bring **their voices** forward at FERC.
- OPP will not take positions on issues in proceedings at FERC on behalf of constituents. Constituents may want to opine on clean energy, pipelines and natural gas infrastructure, hydropower plants and licensing, electric transmission, electricity markets or other issues, and OPP will help people to have their voices heard, including when there may be a diversity of perspectives on a given topic.



The Questions on the Table

- What do we need to know to help members of the public?
- What are the barriers to participation at FERC?
- What resources or educational materials can we provide to the public?
- What does success look like?





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