

# Are Utility Workforces Prepared for New Demands?: Recommendations for State Commission Inquiries

January 1, 2010 | *Scott H. Strauss, Jeffrey A. Schwarz*

## Prepared for the National Regulatory Research Institute, Paper Concerns the “Graying” of Utility Workforces

The energy industry faces an impending workforce shortage. The shortage reflects an unprecedented number of retirements expected to occur in the next decade, coupled with increasing energy demand and changes in the skill sets needed to support shifts toward “greener” energy technologies. Both the Department of Labor and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation have expressed concerns that this so-called “graying of the workforce” and the anticipated workforce shortfall threatens the reliability, efficiency and security of utility services.

Prepared for the National Regulatory Research Institute, the paper reviews the various forms of state commission statutory authority to address workforce graying and other staffing issues, and then addresses: options for structuring an investigation; suggestions for compiling data on workforce issues, including sample data requests; examples from around the country of the types of activities that energy utilities and others are taking to address staffing concerns; and issues that commissions may confront in fashioning solutions, including concerns about impinging upon “management prerogatives.”

## Related Practices and Services

- Utility Workforce
- Electric
- Natural Gas

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