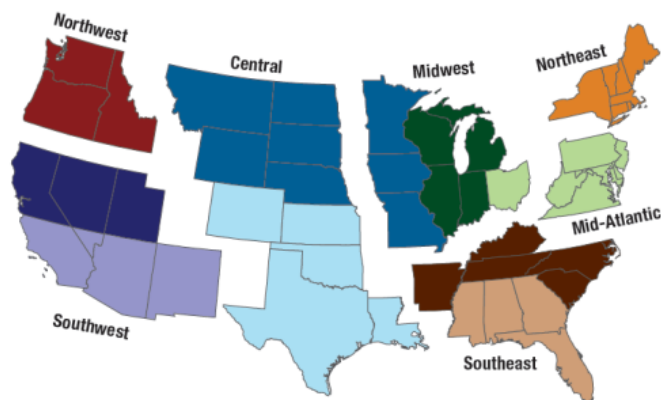


Strategies for States in Energy Assurance Planning: Regional Coordination and Communication

For more than twenty years, the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO), U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE), and National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) have worked collectively to encourage regional coordination among states in planning, communication, information sharing, and coordination of activities before, during, and after energy disruptions. In recent year the focus of this effort at DOE has been with Infrastructure Security and Energy Restoration Division (ISER) of the DOE Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability that is responsible for both energy emergency responses and recovery and for efforts in support of the protection and enhancing the resiliency of critical energy infrastructure.



This paper will provide states with strategies for working on a multi-state regional level to coordinate energy assurance planning, share information, and communicate effectively. To further assist state coordination, the completed energy assurance plans submitted to DOE are available to state energy agencies with responsibilities for energy assurance. States are encouraged to review neighboring states' plans to explore opportunities for regional coordination and identify joint actions that may be taken to mitigate the impacts of future energy disruptions.

Energy disruptions are often caused by events that affect multiple states and, as such, communications between affected states is very important in order to share information, enhance situational awareness, improve decision-making, and coordinate response actions. States should address how they will coordinate with federal and local governments, other states in their region, and the private sector. A major component of this coordination should be at the multi-state regional level as critical infrastructure that one state relies on may be physically located in another state.

According to a 2005 technical brief released by NARUC:

*"In the context of promoting homeland security and ensuring critical infrastructure protection, regional perspectives are increasingly essential; conversely, failure to develop regional strategies can undermine policies related to reliability, as well as security... Although the federal government is supportive, and local governments are clearly affected, the responsibility and capability for coordinating protection of critical...infrastructures on a regional basis falls to the states."*¹

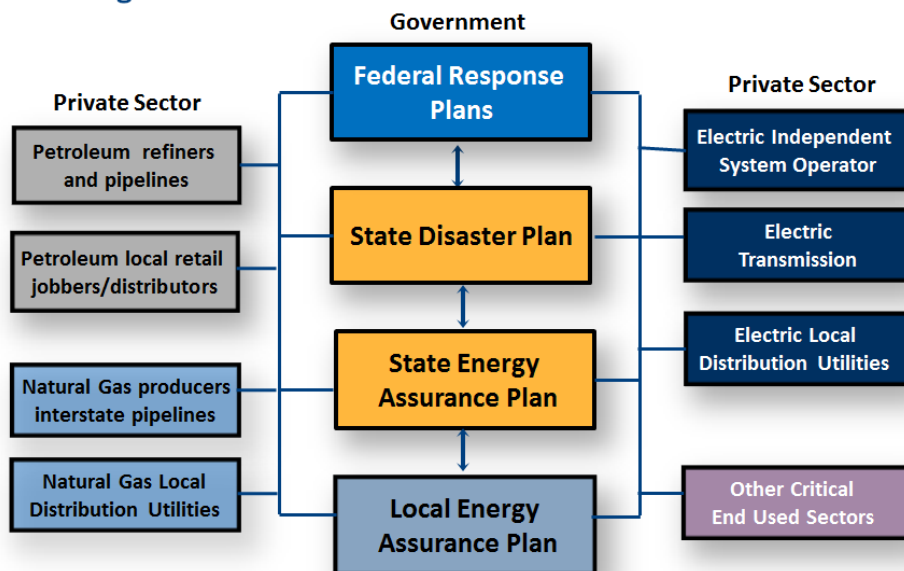
Coordinating state energy assurance plans regionally can result in a more effective and rapid response. Energy infrastructure operated by the private sector often comprises a multi-state

¹ NARUC Committee on Critical Infrastructure Technical Briefs. Paper 5. Regional Coordination and Intergovernmental Communication in the Energy Sector. April 2005, p. 1-2. http://www.naruc.org/Publications/CIP_CoordinationCommunication_5.pdf

distribution network. Therefore actions taken by one state in response to an energy disruption may have impacts on other states. Furthermore, the private sector can work more efficiently with states when plans and responses are more consistent and mutually reinforcing as disparate responses can increase complexity, inhibit response, and cause confusion. In addition, it is important that a state's energy assurance plan effectively interfaces with state and local disaster and emergency response plans, private sector response plans, and the plans of neighboring states.

Coordination of Plans

Planning interfaces



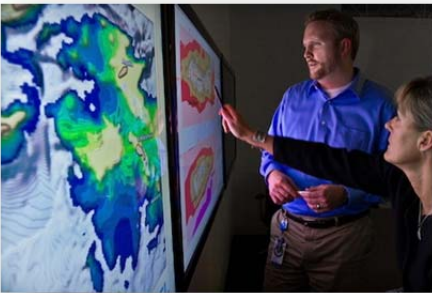
The Energy Emergency Assurance Coordinators (EEAC) Program is designed to facilitate coordination and communication. The EEAC is a cooperative effort among NASEO, NARUC, and DOE. It establishes a secure communications environment for state government personnel to access information on energy supply, demand, pricing, and infrastructure (petroleum, electricity, natural gas, and heating oil). The EEAC serves as the link between states, industry, and DOE. During a disruption the EEAC provides points of contacts to share information on energy supply, demand, pricing, and infrastructure as it relates to an energy disruption. In addition, states can also use the EEAC regional distribution list to send information to their counterparts within the region (or different regions) to exchange information, share best practices, as well as request information.

Another secure web-based portal to support regional coordination was created by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS). The Homeland Security Information Network (HSIN) provides a platform for federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, private sector, and international partners engaged in the homeland security mission to share "sensitive but unclassified" information.² HSIN is made up of working groups organized by state and federal government agencies and by mission areas (such as emergency management or critical sectors). HSIN

² U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Homeland Security Information Network. See <http://www.dhs.gov/homeland-security-information-network>

provides users with the ability to use collaboration tools, including a virtual meeting space, instant messaging, and document sharing. It includes access to tools such as DHS OneView (a geographic information system that has detailed interactive critical infrastructure maps). For more information, please contact the state homeland security agency.

The following strategies can be used to improve regional coordination among states:



- Ensure the state has at least one primary and one secondary EEAC contact.
- Maintain a list of key state and local contacts in neighboring states.
- Review energy assurance plans of states in the region and look for opportunities to coordinate response measures.
- Hold regular regional conference calls, webinars, meetings, and workshops to ensure communication, encourage information sharing, resolve conflicts, and develop joint policies and plans.
- Organize and host regional energy emergency exercises to improve coordination and provide a networking forum for federal, state, and local government personnel as well as industry representatives.
- Regularly share consequence and response information with neighboring states during an energy emergency.
- Build on existing relationships, institutions, and policies that promote multi-state regional coordination and communication (i.e. EEAC and HSN).
- Invite neighboring states to provide input into the development and updating of state energy assurance plans and provide input to other states as well.
- Sign memorandum of understanding with neighboring states to promote information sharing and coordination of energy assurance planning and response activities.
- Participate in ongoing efforts of DOE, NASEO, NARUC, NGA and other national organizations in promoting multi-state regional coordination.