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OBAMA's SOTU: A TRIFECTA FOR ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION

WASHINGTON – Tuesday evening, President Obama identified as among the Administration's top priorities the strengthening of America's infrastructure, the need to move aggressively to promote clean energy resources, and making government regulations and resources more efficient and streamlined.

"In my opinion, this is precisely what we in the electric transmission sector have been talking about," said James Hoecker, Counsel to WIRES and former Chairman of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. "Expanding the transmission grid is essential to tapping America's diverse energy resources. Transmission is critical infrastructure, although – for the third year in a row – the White House has focused only on railroads, highways, and the Internet. Nothing is more critical to the economy than reliable and economic supplies of electricity."

In his address, the President issued these challenges:

- "I challenge you to join me in setting a new goal: by 2035, 80 percent of America's electricity will come from clean energy sources."
- "We can . . . become the first country to have 1 million electric vehicles on the road by 2015."
- "Our infrastructure used to be the best . . . [But] when our own engineers graded our nation's infrastructure, they gave us a 'D'."
- "We cannot win the future with a government of the past."

In response, Hoecker noted: "Clean energy – whether wind, solar power, other clean sources of generation, or even a pervasive deployment of electric vehicles –cannot happen without a stronger grid. I can only hope the Administration understands that reality."

"If the President thinks that jurisdiction over salmon is confusing, he should try planning, licensing, and constructing an upgrade to the high voltage energy delivery system," Hoecker added. "If there ever was a case for reforming the planning, siting, and cost recovery of energy infrastructure, it is for electric transmission. In this instance, private capital is available and ready to take the lead once a greater degree of regulatory certainty is provided. The President has hit the right notes. We look forward to doing our part to meet these challenges."

*WIRES (Working group for **I**nvestment in **R**eliable and **E**conomic electric **S**ystems) is a non-profit trade association of transmission providers, customers, and equipment and service companies formed to promote investment in electric transmission and progressive State and Federal policies that advance energy markets, economic efficiency, and consumer and environmental benefits through development of electric power infrastructure. For more information, visit www.wiresgroup.com or contact Jim Hoecker at 202-639-6500.*