



Customers First!

Plugging Wisconsin In

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to Preserve

Wisconsin's

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Affordable, Reliable Electricity Must Come First
U.S.-Canada Task Force Issues Final Report on August 2003 East Coast Blackout

MADISON, WI – The joint American-Canadian task force charged with investigating the causes of the August 2003 blackout that spread from Ohio to the East Coast and Canada issued its final report late yesterday. The task force offered 46 recommendations to reduce the likelihood of a similar blackout in the future. The Customers First! Coalition issued the following statement in response to the release of the report:

“Customers First! has long advocated for a sequential approach to industry restructuring. The last few years have demonstrated the fallout from the rush to deregulate – skyrocketing electricity prices in California, dubious energy trading practices and shaky reliability. This report, in its final recommendations, raises questions about the creation of commercial markets and reliability.

Customers First! echoes these questions. The Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator (MISO), which oversees the reliability of the transmission system in Wisconsin, was cited for operating violations that contributed to the August blackout. Yet, MISO is currently in the processes of designing a competitive wholesale power market for the Upper Midwest. Known as Day 2, this market is scheduled to start on December 1, 2004. Although MISO has made reliability improvements since August 2003, Customers First! continues to be concerned that MISO has strayed too far from its original purpose of reliability coordination.

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The task force's final report states that the desire to foster competition in electric markets should not erode reliability. The report also recommends a study of the effect of industry restructuring upon competition and reliability. Customers First! suggests that this study should include a careful and comprehensive analysis of the impact of MISO's proposed Energy Market Tariff on its role as Reliability Coordinator for the region. This study should take place prior to the implementation of MISO's Day 2 market. ”

The task force's final report and associated press releases can be found at <https://reports.energy.gov/>

CFC is a broad-based alliance representing Wisconsin customer, environmental, labor, business and low-income groups, the Wisconsin municipal and cooperative utilities and Madison Gas & Electric Company. Since 1996, the coalition has advocated for energy policies in Wisconsin that preserve the state's historically safe, affordable, reliable and environmentally responsible electricity. For more information, see www.customersfirst.org

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