

FERC

Chatterjee named chairman as quorum reached

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Neil Chatterjee, shown here during his confirmation to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission last week, has been appointed chairman of the commission. @FERC/Twitter

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has both a quorum and a new chairman.

The White House announced today that Neil Chatterjee will take over from Democrat Cheryl LaFleur as head of the agency.

Chatterjee will serve until Kevin McIntyre, a Jones Day energy lawyer, is confirmed by the Senate.

"I am honored that President Trump has designated me as chairman of the commission until Kevin McIntyre is confirmed, and I am eager to take on this responsibility," Chatterjee said. "I look forward to working with Commissioner LaFleur and Commissioner [Robert] Powelson on behalf of the American people. And I hope that we will have all five commissioners here soon with the confirmation of Kevin McIntyre and Rich Glick."

It did not take long for new commissioners Chatterjee and Powelson to join the agency after they were confirmed by the Senate a week ago. Chatterjee, a former aide to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), was sworn in Tuesday, and Powelson, a former Pennsylvania regulator, took his oath today.

Now that the regulatory body has three members, it can start tackling a backlog of hundreds of orders that has been building up since former Chairman Norman Bay resigned in February. Some of those are proposed major natural gas pipelines that have been awaiting approval.

Powelson had told a local newspaper this week that he would be sworn in next Monday, but that date was moved up. Stakeholders have been urging FERC to start making decisions as soon as possible once the two were confirmed.

Powelson and Chatterjee will now face a steep learning curve and an overwhelming first few months as they learn about the issues FERC oversees, former commissioners told E&E News ([*Energywire*](#), Aug. 10).

Two more nominees are waiting in the wings to fill out the five-member commission. McIntyre and Richard Glick, a Democratic senate aide, will face a Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee confirmation hearing Sept. 7. McIntyre had initially been tapped to lead the commission by President Trump.