

E&E Energywire

Ex-FERC, Hill official tapped as Va. regulator

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Published: Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam (D) has appointed longtime Federal Energy Regulatory Commission official and ex-congressional lawyer Jehmal Hudson to the state's top regulatory body.

Hudson is slated to replace Patricia West, whose term on the State Corporation Commission expired four months ago.



Jehmal Hudson. @jehmalhudson/Twitter

The previous director of FERC's office of government affairs, Hudson has held several top congressional legal positions, including legal clerk for former Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.). Most recently, Hudson served as vice president of government affairs for the National Hydropower Association. He will be the first black person appointed to the SCC since its establishment in 1902.

At a press conference yesterday, Northam said Hudson was "well suited" for the role. FERC Chairman Neil Chatterjee praised the appointment on Twitter, calling Hudson his former colleague and friend.

"Jehmal has been a fine public servant & strong advocate for consumers through his career. Wonderful news — see you at @NARUC, Commissioner!" Chatterjee wrote, referring to the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

The SCC, which oversees the commonwealth's utilities and insurance, securities and banking industries, has been one commissioner short since West's term expired. Democrats in Virginia's General Assembly tried to appoint Hudson during the 2020 session, but Senate Republicans used a procedural rule to block the final vote.

State law allows the governor to fill a vacant seat on the commission on an interim basis. Hudson's current appointment covers about eight months, but Democrats will have a chance to instate him for a full six-year term during the 2021 legislative session.

Harry Godfrey, the managing director of Virginia Advanced Energy Economy, applauded the appointment, saying Hudson would bring added expertise to the commission.

"Given Va. has one of the smaller utility commissions, with only three commissioners, it's terrific to have the deep knowledge, experience and perspective on energy issues and markets that Judge Hudson brings from his roles at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission and in the U.S. Congress," Godfrey said in a statement.

Hudson worked at FERC for over 10 years, holding a variety of positions from House liaison and chief legislative policy counsel to director of government affairs, according to his LinkedIn page.

Before joining FERC, Hudson served as deputy policy director for the House Democratic Caucus and chief counsel for Rep. Yvette Clarke (D-N.Y.). He earned legal degrees from both Georgetown University and Vermont Law School.