

## Executive Development for Utility Commissioners

# ***Leadership in Utilities Policy: Adaptive Work for New Realities***

Saturday, February 11, 2006

1:30 - 4:30 p.m.

Hyatt Regency Washington  
400 New Jersey Avenue, Washington, DC

### Agenda

#### **Introductions and Plans for the Afternoon**

#### **Case Studies in Leadership**

*Dialogue on a case study where a commissioner is faced with a regulatory challenge. Based on a real situation, the case provides hands-on practice in:*

- (1) **Differentiating between technical and adaptive challenges.** Technical challenges are problems where there is general agreement on the nature of the problem and options for solutions and their implementation are clear. Adaptive challenges are problems where people have to adapt to new situations for which traditional solutions are inadequate. With adaptive challenges, there is disagreement over whether there is a problem and, if there is one, how it should be defined; learning about new realities is required to develop solutions; and stakeholders have to do their own adaptive work.*
- (2) **Understanding when it is appropriate for a commissioner to play a leadership role and when he or she should act based on authority.** When exercising authority, the regulator is solving technical problems by directing the work of subject matter experts and making decisions that direct others to act. When practicing leadership, the regulator is focusing attention on adaptive challenges where people have to work together towards solutions that involve changing frameworks and making difficult tradeoffs.*
- (3) **Creating a holding environment for adaptive work.** Adaptive work is stressful and people resist, so there is a need to pace the work.*
- (4) **Getting on the balcony to gain perspective for orchestrating the adaptive work.** The regulator sometimes needs a balcony viewpoint to see what is going on beyond his or her normal range of vision, but all the while staying engaged in the work.*

#### **Thinking Politically**

*Exercise in analyzing the political context of an issue to identify, for example, allies and opponents.*

#### **Debriefing and Adjourn**