
MGA MID-GRID & MGA-OMS Transmission Summit 2024

Speaker Biography

Grant Johnson, Prairie Island Indian Community Tribal Council

President Grant Johnson is serving his first term on Tribal Council for the Prairie Island Indian Community.

While new to Tribal Council for the 2023-2025 term, President Johnson has over 20 years of service to his Community in various positions. For the past five years, Johnson served as the Tribal Administrator managing government operations for the Tribe. In that role, he managed the Tribe's employees and operating budget, and led or assisted in various significant efforts for the Tribe, including navigating government through the COVID-19 pandemic, a major strategic planning initiative, the net zero project, and economic diversification planning. Before taking on the Tribal Administrator role, President Johnson spent nine years on the Tribe's Gaming Commission overseeing compliance and surveillance.



President Johnson believes strongly in the importance of Members being involved in their government and giving back to their community, and that's why he ran for Tribal Council.

As a Council member, President Johnson's priorities include protection of the Tribe and its members, economic development and diversification, furthering education and employment opportunities for Tribal members, and supporting the preservation and revitalization of Dakota culture and language.

President Johnson has lived most of his life on, around, or working for Tinta Wita (Prairie Island), and he graduated from Red Wing High School. He currently lives in Cottage Grove with his wife and three children. Johnson enjoys traveling, spending time with family and friends, coaching, and watching his kid's sporting events. He likes to hunt, fish, and stay active by playing hockey, and has played in All-Native softball tournaments around the country.

Ryan Young, Xcel Energy

Ryan Long is President of Xcel Energy - Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota and is responsible for the strategic planning, financial results and operational outcomes for the three states, leading teams focused on customer, community, regulatory, legislative and governmental relationships.

Ryan joined Xcel Energy in 2015 and previously served as interim General Counsel, leading the legal department and executing the company's legal strategy. Prior to that role, he served as Vice President and Deputy General Counsel where he managed the Federal and State Regulatory, Environmental and Real Estate legal teams. Ryan previously worked as a lawyer for Faegre Baker Daniels, now known as Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath in Minneapolis and Cravath, Swaine & Moore in New York City. He is a graduate of Grinnell College and Cornell Law School.



Ryan serves on the Board of Directors for Project for Pride in Living, a Minneapolis-based nonprofit organization that provides transformative affordable housing and career readiness services for individuals and families with lower incomes.

Justin Grady, Kansas Corporation Commission

Justin Grady, Deputy Director of the Utilities Division at the Kansas Corporation Commission. Justin has been employed by the KCC in the Utilities Division for 22 years. During this time, he has filed testimony in 79 Dockets before the KCC, as well as participated in several major ratemaking dockets at FERC, both electric and gas. He also regularly represents the KCC before the Kansas Legislature by providing testimony and presentations to legislative committees. Justin has a BBA in Finance and Economics from Washburn University in Topeka, KS, and an MBA in Corporate Finance from the University of Kansas.

Commissioner Marcus Hawkins, Public Service Commission of Wisconsin

Marcus Hawkins was appointed by Governor Tony Evers to serve as a Commissioner on April 8, 2024. Prior to joining the PSC, Marcus was the Executive Director of the Organization of MISO states (OMS), a regional association of state utility commissions, where he represented state interests before the regional grid operator and Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Previously, Marcus was a Senior Engineer at the PSC within the Division of Regional Energy Markets. He has additional experience working at Wisconsin Energy Conservation Corporation and PA Consulting Group.

Marcus holds a bachelor's degree in nuclear engineering and a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Wisconsin – Madison, where he also earned certificates in Technical Communication and Energy Analysis and Policy.



Commissioner John Tuma, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

John Tuma was appointed to the Public Utilities Commission by Governor Mark Dayton, effective February 2, 2015. He was reappointed by Governor Tim Walz on March 30, 2021. He also represents Minnesota as a member of the Regional State Committee of the Southwest Power Pool and is presently serving as the President of that committee. Prior to his appointment Commissioner Tuma had decades of experience working on energy and conservation policy issues for a variety of nongovernmental organizations. He most recently served as a Government Relations Associate with Conservation Minnesota. He helped lead efforts to pass key energy legislation, including Minnesota's Renewable Energy Standard – which garnered broad bipartisan support.

Commissioner Tuma served in the Minnesota House of Representatives from 1995 to 2002, representing parts of Rice, LeSueur, Scott, and Dakota counties. During his time in the House, he served as Chair of the Crime Prevention Committee.

Commissioner Tuma has practiced law in Northfield Minnesota. He earned his B.A. from Mankato State University, and his J.D. from the University of Minnesota Law School.



Claire Vigesaa, North Dakota Transmission Authority

Claire graduated from NDSU with a BS in Ag & Bio Systems Engineering in 1982. He worked in the electric cooperative network for 39.5 years, retiring in March of 2022.

His career began at Verendrye Electric Cooperative, Velva ND as an energy engineering advisor, working on a research project analyzing the effect of electric heat on substation loading. He had several career advancements, serving as Assistant General Manager at Northern Plains Electric Cooperative and Vice President of Development and Energy Services at Cass County Electric Cooperative. In these positions, he developed load management programs, served as rate and billing manager, managed public & member relations, key accounts, economic development programs, and served as chief lobbyist.



Later in his career he was tapped to help with a special task force at Tri-State G & T Association in Denver, facilitating the transfer of 100 kV plus assets (\$145 million asset transfer) from its member systems to the G & T.

Claire was named General Manager/CEO of Upper Missouri Power Cooperative in April of 2012. During that tenure, he saw the cooperative quadruple electric energy sales, the cooperative became a transmission owner in MISO and he participated in the submission of transmission assets in the Southwest Power Pool.

Throughout his career he was privileged to serve on numerous boards and committees; as President of the Carrington Economic Development Corporation, landing the Dakota Growers Pasta Company in 1992, served on ND Governor Schafer's transition team, served as an Executive Board Member and Interim CEO of the Greater Fargo-Moorhead Economic Development Corporation, served on the board of Western States Power Corporation and as a board member of the Mid-West Electric Consumers Association. He also served on National Touchstone Energy Committees for over ten years and served as a NRECA mentor for new electric cooperative CEOs.

Failing at retirement, he was approached to serve as Deputy Director of the North Dakota Transmission Authority following retirement and was appointed to serve as Executive Director of the North Dakota Transmission Authority in July of 2023. In this position, he monitors electric transmission grid activities and provides support and information to the ND Industrial Commission, ND Agencies, utilities, and developers with transmission related topics.

Claire and his wife, Jill of forty-one years built a retirement home northwest of Bismarck near the Hawktree Golf Course, have three grown children and four adorable grandchildren.

George Damian, Clean Energy Economy Minnesota

George graduated from William Mitchell College of Law (now Mitchell Hamline School of Law) with his J.D. after earning his undergraduate degree from the University of Wisconsin – Madison. After graduating, he worked on various Minnesota statewide, congressional, and local political campaigns before spending five years serving in the communications department in the Minnesota House. He has worked as the Director of Government Affairs for Clean Energy Economy MN since January 2022.

George lives in the South Metro with his wife and two daughters. When not working, from April to October you are equally likely to see him at Target Field, hacking his way around a golf course, taking his daughters to Valleyfair, or picking up sticks in his yard.



Will Harrop, Grid United

Will Harrop leads grid analytics and commercial activities at Grid United. In this role, he is responsible for quantifying and explaining the economic and grid reliability value propositions of transmission to utilities, investors, and consumers.

In previous roles, Will was responsible for the structuring of offtake contracts for wind and solar farms and leading the analytics process from resource assessment through pricing strategy. His role also encompassed new product development and nodal pricing analysis. Most recently, Will served as an originator in Swiss Re's Environmental and Commodity Markets group where he focused on products mitigating weather and commodity risks for wind and solar farms, battery energy storage facilities, and retail electric providers.

Will holds a bachelor's degree in economics from Tufts University.



Jordan Bakke, MISO

Jordan Bakke is the director of Strategic Insights & Assessments within MISO focusing on how public policy, emerging technology, and stakeholder changes impacts energy systems for the MISO footprint and developing strategies for MISO and the region to adapt to it. He received a B.S. degree in Electrical Engineering at North Dakota State University and an MBA from the University of St. Thomas. He has held many roles at MISO working in resource forecasting, resource adequacy, transmission planning, renewable integration, market & grid strategy, and corporate strategy.



Jeff Eddy, ITC

Jeff Eddy is Director of Transmission Planning for ITC Holdings Corp., which is parent to four independent, stand-alone transmission companies that are engaged exclusively in the development, ownership, and operation of electric transmission facilities in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (MISO) and Southwest Power Pool (SPP) regional transmission organizations. Jeff's role is currently focused on regulatory policy and reliability requirements affecting transmission planning and has previously been directly responsible for the reliability and economic planning of ITC's Operating Companies.

Most of Jeff's 35-year career in the utility industry has been in Planning although he held positions in Substation Design, Communications, Operations Support and Distribution Planning. He began his career with Commonwealth Edison Company and has previously been employed by Interstate Power Company and Alliant Energy. Jeff holds a B.S. in Electrical Engineering from Iowa State University.



James Okullo, ESIG

James is ESIG's Director of System Planning and has more than a decade of experience in the power industry. Prior to joining ESIG, Okullo was Manager, Strategic Assessments at the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO). In this role, his areas of focus included forward-looking resource adequacy and accreditation of capacity resources, evaluation of system reliability attributes under an evolving resource mix, emerging generation and transmission technologies, and support of other MISO priorities, such as the Long-Range Transmission Planning.



John Wachtler, Minnesota Department of Commerce

John Wachtler works in the newly formed Office of Energy Reliability and Security at the Minnesota Department of Commerce. As part of his work, John has participated in regional planning and reliability issues at MISO for the last four years and represents the public consumer advocate sector at the MISO planning advisory committee. Prior to joining the State of Minnesota, John worked in private consulting and government, mostly on environmental review and permitting for large infrastructure projects like highways, mining projects, oil and gas pipelines, and high-voltage transmission lines.

Jørgen Festervoll, Heimdall Power

Jørgen Festervoll is an accomplished leader with over two decades of experience in energy and renewables, and a deep background in competitive markets and business strategy. As CEO, he brings discipline, focus and a strategic vision, to drive the company to innovate and excel within the Grid-Enhancing Technologies space. Before becoming CEO at Heimdall Power, Festervoll worked at the listed investment company Saga Pure, where he gained in-depth knowledge of the capital markets. Festervoll holds a M.Sc in Business Administration from NHH Norwegian School of Economics.



Temujin Roach, EDF Renewables North America

Temujin Roach is a Sr. Director Transmission Policy at EDF Renewables North America where, for going on three years, he has engaged in ISO/RTO and FERC activities – usually relating to transmission. Previously worked in energy in descending order at MISO, SPP, PUC Texas, and FERC. Began his career in energy playing with steam side of nuclear power in the US Navy on the USS Theodore Roosevelt (CVN 71), then for a short a time on Diesels for Great Lakes Fleet, on US Steel's Edwin H. Gott. He has worked on market design; initiating and upgrading organized ISO and RTO markets; generation interconnection; gas electric coordination; and transmission planning. Formally educated in Minnesota and Michigan in Economics and Political Science, he presently resides in Minnesota with his wife, three kids, two dogs, and now parents. Note his parent live with him, not the other way around...

Julia Selker, Watt Coalition

Julia Selker is the Director of Policy and Strategy and Chief Operating Officer for Grid Strategies. In this role, she facilitates new business and coordinates the Future Power Markets Forum. Julia also serves as the Executive Director of the Working for Advanced Transmission Technologies (WATT) Coalition, leading policy advocacy and education on Grid Enhancing Technologies. She previously worked in communications for the Business Council for Sustainable Energy and technology startups, interned with Congressman Peter DeFazio focused on energy and climate policy, and worked on the launch of Monterey Bay Community Power through the public relations agency Miller Maxfield, Inc. She has a bachelor's degree in physics from Reed College.



Zach Zimmerman, Grid Strategies

Zach Zimmerman is the Research and Policy Manager for Grid Strategies focused on economic and regulatory analysis related to power markets and transmission. His work includes writing reports and responding to government policy proposals for Grid Strategies clients as well as facilitating the Advancing Modern Powerlines (AMP) Coalition to support the deployment of High-Performance Conductors on the grid. He also supports the Working for Advanced Transmission Technologies (WATT) Coalition's policy and advocacy work. Zach previously worked as a Committee Legislative Assistant for the Minnesota House Energy and Climate Committee. He has a Master of Public Policy from the University of California Berkeley Goldman School, where his thesis focused on transmission planning in the Pacific Northwest. Zach graduated with a degree in Biochemistry from Goshen College.



Brad Pope, Organization of MISO States (OMS)

Brad Pope joined OMS in June of 2022 following six and a half years with the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission. At the IURC, Brad served as Sr. Administrative Law Judge where he presided over electric, natural gas, and water proceedings and drafted orders for IURC approval. In an earlier role, he served as Assistant General Counsel where he focused on regional and federal energy issues in collaboration with OMS and OPSI. Brad earned a law degree from the Indiana University McKinney School of Law with a Certificate in Energy & Environmental Law and a Bachelor's degree in Philosophy from Purdue University.



Nate Burnand, Michigan Public Service Commission

Nate Burnand is an analyst in the Commission Office of the Michigan Public Service Commission where he focuses on Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) implementation. In his role at the MPSC, Nate has led on several IIJA and IRA grant applications as well as managing the MPSC's coordination with other agencies across state government. He also works with other departments in state government as well as external organizations to make sure that they are able to fully leverage the MPSC's expertise on energy and regulatory issues in their own federal funding applications. Nathan is also a two-time alumni of Michigan State University with a master's degree in public policy (MPP).

Alexandra Klass, University of Michigan Law School

Alexandra B. Klass is the James G. Degnan Professor of Law at the University of Michigan Law School. She teaches and writes primarily in the areas of energy law, environmental law, and natural resources law. In 2022 and 2023, she served in the Biden-Harris administration as Deputy General Counsel for Energy Efficiency and Clean Energy Demonstrations at the U.S. Department of Energy. Professor Klass's recent scholarly work, published in many of the nation's leading law journals, addresses regulatory and permitting challenges to integrating more renewable energy into the nation's electric transmission grid, siting and eminent domain issues surrounding interstate electric transmission lines and oil and gas pipelines, and applications of the public trust doctrine to modern environmental law challenges. She is a co-author of *Energy Law: Concepts and Insights Series* (Foundation Press, 2d ed. 2020), *Energy Law and Policy* (West Academic Publishing, 3d ed. 2022), and *Natural Resources Law: A Place-Based Book of Problems and Cases* (Wolters Kluwer, 5th ed. 2022). Before joining the Michigan Law faculty in 2022, Professor Klass was a Distinguished McKnight University Professor at the University of Minnesota Law School, where she was a member of the faculty from 2006 to 2022. She has been a visiting professor at Harvard Law School, Uppsala University (Sweden), and the University of Arizona Rogers College of Law. Prior to her academic career, Professor Klass was a partner at Dorsey & Whitney LLP in Minneapolis, where she specialized in environmental law and land use litigation.



Commissioner Joe Sullivan, Vice-Chair, Minnesota Public Utilities Commission

Joseph Sullivan was appointed to the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission by Governor Tim Walz, effective April 6, 2020, and appointed Vice Chair on May 21, 2020. Vice Chair Sullivan currently serves as Chair of the MISO Regional Expansion Criteria and Benefits Working Group (RECBWG) and is Vice President of the Board of Directors for the Organization of MISO States (OMS). He is a member of the Electric Power Research Institute Advisory Council and Executive Committee. He also serves as a member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC).



Sullivan previously served as Deputy Commissioner for the Division of Energy Resources at the Minnesota Department of Commerce. In this role, Joe led the Division and supervised the Minnesota State Energy Office and the Energy Planning and Advocacy unit.

Prior to coming to the Minnesota Department of Commerce, Joe was the Manager of Legislative and External Affairs for the Center for Energy and Environment where he worked with policy makers, regulators, utilities, energy advocates, and other key stakeholders to advance energy efficiency and clean energy policy in Minnesota.

Joe has also worked as the Regional Policy Manager for Wind on the Wires where he worked in Minnesota, Wisconsin, North Dakota, South Dakota, and Iowa to advance policies for wind power and transmission access. Joe started his career by spending six and a half years representing a municipal power agency and Greater Minnesota cities as a senior attorney at Flaherty & Hood P.A. in St. Paul, Minn. At Flaherty & Hood, Joe worked on renewable energy, transmission issues, state conservation goals, greenhouse gas reduction initiatives, net metering, nuclear waste, and utility taxation issues. Prior to joining Flaherty & Hood, Joe worked in Washington, DC at the U.S. House Committee on Science and at the Internal Revenue Service. Joe holds degrees from Marquette University and University of Wisconsin Law School.

Paul Wetherbee, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL)

Paul Wetherbee recently joined the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL) as an Advisor for regional energy system planning. Prior to that, Paul worked for Puget Sound Energy where he managed energy supply operations, the merchant transmission function, and power cost regulatory processes. He also led the utility's engagement in multiple regionalization initiatives in the western interconnect, such as the Western Energy Imbalance Market.

Melissa Birchard, Grid Deployment Office, U.S. Department of Energy

Melissa Birchard is Senior Policy Advisor in the U.S. Department of Energy's Grid Deployment Office. She holds a law degree from Georgetown University, a Masters from UCLA, and a Bachelors from Bryn Mawr College. Melissa has represented clean energy companies, state and local governments, community choice agencies, public power, and non-profits on state and federal energy matters ranging from interregional transmission to behind-the-meter resources.



Robin Arnold, Western Interstate Energy Board

Robin serves as the Director of State, Federal, and International Affairs at the Western Interstate Energy Board providing support for the WIEB Board of Directors and the Committee on Regional Electric Power Cooperation (CREPC). She is also responsible for coordination with Western state partners and stakeholders, including the US Department of Energy and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. Prior to joining the team at WIEB, Robin worked as the Markets & Transmission Director at Renewable Northwest and served the State of Montana for seven years as a policy and regulatory analyst at the Public Service Commission.



Lisa Barrett, Advanced Energy United

Lisa Barrett leads Advanced Energy United's work on removing barriers and expanding opportunities for advanced energy technologies to participate in wholesale energy markets, focusing on the Midcontinent ISO and Southwest Power Pool. She has over 15 years of experience in the energy industry, including representing distributed generation projects in renewable energy certificate, forward capacity, and real-time energy markets in New England. Prior to joining Advanced Energy United, Lisa was a Program Manager for the Clean Energy Markets team at CLEAResult, where she worked with solar, combined heat & power, energy efficiency, and anaerobic digester projects.



Commissioner Philip Bartlett II, Chair, Maine Public Utilities Commission

Philip L. Bartlett II, J.D., was appointed to the Maine Public Utilities Commission in June 2019 by Governor Janet Mills. Prior to his appointment, he practiced law with Scaccia, Bartlett & Chabot. He also served in the Maine Senate from 2004 to 2012 and was elected by his peers to serve as Senate Majority Leader from 2008 to 2010. Bartlett chaired the Energy, Utilities and Technology Committee as well as the Joint Select Committee on Maine's Energy Future and he served on the Government Oversight Committee, Natural Resources Committee and Labor Committee. He taught micro and macroeconomics at the collegiate level. Chairman Bartlett holds a juris doctorate degree from Harvard Law School. He completed his undergraduate work at Tufts University, where he graduated Summa Cum Laude majoring in Economics and Political Science. His term expires in March 2025.



Stephen Bennett, PJM Interconnection

Mr. Bennett is the PJM liaison for Illinois, Ohio and Pennsylvania. In this role, he interacts with state utility commissions, executive agencies and legislators on energy policy in the areas of RTO grid reliability, transmission planning, operations and wholesale markets. Prior to joining PJM, Mr. Bennett was the Managing Director at Energy Advocacy, LLC, a boutique consultancy focused on regulatory policy in the retail and wholesale energy markets. Mr. Bennett also held management roles in government affairs for both PPL EnergyPlus and Exelon. Mr. Bennett has a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from the University of Maryland, College Park.



Matt Prorok, Great Plains Institute

Matt Prorok joined the Great Plains Institute in November 2015 and is a senior policy manager. His work focuses on the development of electric transmission infrastructure and market mechanisms to enhance the development of low-carbon energy technologies in the Midcontinent region. In addition, Matt contributes to GPI's research and analysis work and is a facilitator for the Midwestern Governors Association's Grid Security & Modernization initiative. As part of his work at GPI, he also served on the steering and policy committees of the Minnesota Energy Storage Alliance.

Matt has a background in engineering and sustainability. He obtained his BS in mechanical engineering from Penn State with a minor in earth systems and an MS in science, technology, and environmental policy from the University of Minnesota's Humphrey School of Public Affairs. His work at the University of Minnesota focused on assessment of greenhouse gas emissions attributable to electric vehicle charging in Minnesota based on policy incentives intended to direct charging to specific hours of the day.

