



The Secretary of Energy

Washington, DC 20585

January 15, 2021

The Honorable Phil Scott
Governor of Vermont
109 State Street, Pavillion
Montpelier, Vermont 05609

Dear Governor Scott:

As you might recall, I sent you two letters regarding the importance of essential critical infrastructure workers within the energy sector and nuclear matters in March and May 2020 regarding the COVID-19 pandemic. While initial concerns were surrounding the prioritization of personal protective equipment, recent efforts have focused on vaccine prioritization for our critical infrastructure workforce. This issue is vital to maintaining the safe and efficient energy services that have continued to sustain our Nation's economy during this challenging time, as well as ensuring essential energy services to meet national security commitments to the Federal Government and U.S. Military. I am now asking that the critical infrastructure workforce in both the public and private sector, including those at the Department of Energy's (DOE) Power Marketing Administrations (PMAs) and National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) sites, is prioritized for receipt of the COVID-19 vaccine.

The energy sector, including the Nation's investor owned utilities, municipal-owned utilities, cooperatives, and the Department's PMAs, as well as members of the oil and natural gas subsector, provide 24-7/365 electricity and ensure the free flow of energy products, necessary for the health and safety of all Americans. These critical energy workers support and preserve the infrastructure and operations centers critical to maintaining the backbone of the energy system. By prioritizing their health and safety for vaccine distribution alongside other frontline workers, we ensure continuous distribution of energy to the Nation's rural and urban communities.

Essential critical infrastructure workers, as designated in the Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) *Memorandum On Identification Of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response*,¹ at the PMAs and NNSA sites, as well as within private industry, conduct highly specialized tasks and cannot work from home or in isolation from others on the job site. The PMAs operate electric systems and sell the electrical output of Federally-owned and -operated hydroelectric dams in 34 States; their employees operate facilities that are needed to maintain the reliability and security of the Nation's energy grid. Similarly, NNSA's essential workers handle a range of issues including nuclear

¹ DHS CISA Memorandum On Identification Of Essential Critical Infrastructure Workers During COVID-19 Response: <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>

weapon systems, global and potential domestic nuclear security threats, the management and disposal of hazardous nuclear materials, and the safe and secure transport of nuclear materials. These individuals continue to work every day, putting both themselves and their families' safety at risk in service of our Nation.

Prioritizing vaccination access for mission-essential workers is consistent with guidance contained in the October 2, 2020, *Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine*, by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine², and the October 29, 2020, *COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Operational Guidance for Jurisdictions Playbook*, by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.³ These reports recommend critical infrastructure workers be considered for prioritization based upon job function and exposure to risk.

The PMAs' and NNSA's mission-essential workers must receive the vaccine through the States and territories, and therefore I respectfully ask that States and territories also include Federal energy workers along with private energy sector workers as a high priority for voluntary access to initial inoculation. Such work is critical to public health and safety, as well as our economic and national security.

President Trump's highest priority has always been to preserve the health, safety, and wellbeing of the American people. DOE remains dedicated to working closely with governors, mayors, county officials, and tribal leaders to ensure the safety of the workforce and the continued operation and security of the energy sector in support of our Nation's economy and the safety of our citizens.

Sincerely,



Dan Brouillette

² Framework for Equitable Allocation of COVID-19 Vaccine: <https://www.nationalacademies.org/our-work/a-framework-for-equitable-allocation-of-vaccine-for-the-novel-coronavirus>

³ COVID-19 Vaccination Program Operational Guidance The COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Operational Guidance for Jurisdictions Playbook <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/covid-19/covid19-vaccination-guidance.html>