

ELCON *PRESS RELEASE*

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STATEMENT OF JOHN ANDERSON, PRESIDENT OF THE ELECTRICITY CONSUMERS
RESOURCE COUNCIL (ELCON), IN RESPONSE
TO THE RELEASE OF NIST'S STATEMENT ON THE SMART GRID INTEROPERABILITY
STANDARDS PROJECT, JUNE 18, 2009

I hold the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) in the highest regard for its technical knowledge and analytical abilities. They describe themselves as an “honest broker” and I don’t doubt that they have earned that title.

As NIST develops its framework for a Smart Grid, I sincerely hope that they – in their role as an “honest broker” – listen to the concerns of large and small consumers, the ones who will ultimately be paying for the very costly Smart Grid technology. In numerous forums, electricity end users of all sizes have asked what specific consumer benefits they can expect to see when a Smart Grid is fully operational. And aside from vague references to a more efficient bulk power system, there have not been many substantive examples.

I can tell NIST what consumers do not want. They do not want utilities to be able to reach inside their homes and business and restrict power flow without the consumer’s permission. They do not want new pricing mechanisms, adopted under the guise of efficiency, that raise consumers’ bills. And they do not want to pay for supposedly new technology that is then quickly superseded by newer technology, meaning that consumers pay twice – or more.

I wish NIST well. I hope that ELCON and other consumers are part of the process. Building a Smart Grid may be a noble and worthwhile objective. But one objective of building a Smart Grid must be to provide consumers with clearly measured and verified new benefits.

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ELCON, established in 1976, is the national association of large industrial users of electricity from virtually every manufacturing sector. ELCON members seek a reliable supply of electricity at competitive prices and have long supported federal and state efforts to achieve that objective. More information about ELCON is available at ELCON’s website, www.elcon.org.