

August 27, 2019

FERC Commissioner to Receive Top Prize in Energy Policy

Philadelphia, PA—Today the Kleinman Center for Energy Policy at the University of Pennsylvania announced that it will award this year's [Carnot Prize](#) to Cheryl LaFleur, commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). She will be awarded the prize at Penn in late October, two months after her departure from the agency.

The Carnot Prize recognizes LaFleur's distinguished contributions to energy policy. During her FERC tenure, LaFleur successfully navigated nearly a decade of change in the nation's energy industry, power supply, and political leadership. She helped oversee wholesale energy markets, electric transmission, and natural gas infrastructure.

She has been at the forefront of great transitions in energy. These include the growth of domestic natural gas and the subsequent U.S. shift away from coal; the world's growing emphasis on climate change and the development of innovative clean energy technologies.

She is the only person to lead FERC twice under two different administrations, in periods of considerable turmoil. Under the Trump administration, she has spoken out in defense of independent and fact-based decision-making, maintaining market independence and building consensus. She voted against the Department of Energy's proposal to subsidize coal and nuclear, and has supported market reforms for renewable energy storage and demand-side energy programs. She has actively worked to negotiate bipartisan compromises on contentious issues at the intersection of energy and the environment.

"We are pleased to give one of the world's most visible and esteemed awards in energy policy to Commissioner LaFleur, who thoughtfully balances the demands of economic growth and environmental protection," said Fritz Steiner, dean and Paley Professor at the Weitzman School of Design, home of the Kleinman Center.

LaFleur exemplifies "the grit that defines this prize," said Kleinman Center Faculty Director Mark Alan Hughes. Hughes noted that in 2018 LaFleur insisted on reviewing decades-old pipeline application policies and announced that "climate impact" would now be factored into FERC's decision process.

LaFleur is the fifth recipient of the Carnot Prize, and joins a distinguished list of past prize winners, including: Piyush Goyal, India’s minister of railways and coal; Gina McCarthy, former administrator of the EPA; Fatih Birol, executive director of the International Energy Agency; and Daniel Yergin, author and energy expert.

About LaFleur. Cheryl LaFleur was first nominated by President Barack Obama to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in 2010 and was confirmed for a second term by the Senate in 2014. She has served as both chairman and acting chairman of the commission. Before joining the commission, LaFleur had more than 20 years of experience as a leader in the electric and natural gas industry, including her work as executive vice president and acting CEO of National Grid USA. Earlier in her career, she directed conservation and demand response programs. LaFleur holds a J.D. from Harvard Law and a bachelor’s from Princeton.

About FERC. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission is an independent agency that regulates the interstate sale and transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. It oversees the nation’s wholesale energy markets and the reliability and security of the bulk electric system. It also reviews proposals to build liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals and interstate natural gas pipelines as well as licensing hydropower projects.

About the Prize. The Carnot Prize is named in memory of French scientist Sadi Carnot, the father of thermodynamics. Carnot recognized that the power of the steam engine would “produce a great revolution” in human development. The Carnot Prize honors those leading similar energy policy revolutions that bring progress and prosperity.

About the Kleinman Center. The [Kleinman Center for Energy Policy](#) at the University of Pennsylvania Stuart Weitzman School of Design creates the conditions for policy innovation that support a just and efficient transition to sustainable energy.

About the Weitzman School. The mission of the University of Pennsylvania [Stuart Weitzman School of Design](#) is to prepare students to address complex sociocultural and environmental issues through thoughtful inquiry, creative expression, and innovation. As a diverse community of scholars and practitioners, we are committed to advancing the public good—locally, nationally, and globally—through art, design, planning, and preservation.

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