



evaluate information from local and regional power plants and grids continually, and to relay information quickly to the local control centers.

- We don't let individual airlines set standards for training and safety. Instead, that's done by the Federal Aviation Administration. The Energy Policy Act of 2005 creates an Electric Reliability Organization with the authority to set and enforce standards for reliability. But it depends on industry self-audits. This is a recipe for failure. The new organization can't be truly effective unless it can mandate standardized training and certification, specify data and controls, and conduct inspections and tests.
- We don't rely on airlines to investigate their own mistakes. The National Transportation Safety Board, an independent agency, does a stellar job of investigating crashes and "near misses" to determine steps and precautions that will prevent them from happening again. For the new Electrical Reliability Organization to be effective, it will have to be able to do the same for the transmission grid.

We don't hear about blackouts as often as we hear about airplane emergency landings or crashes, but they occur a few times each year, with costly consequences. A deregulated power industry is not in a position to bring about the continent-wide reforms, coordination and cooperation needed to make our power grid more reliable and responsive to emergency situations. Let's hope it doesn't take another system crash to bring rational administration to electricity transmission.

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