

Preside or Lead?

The Attributes and Actions of Effective Regulators

5. Disciplined



The Regulator's Role: Thirty Years of Change, More Ahead

Up to the late 1970s, utility regulation had predictable scope: Utilities built and operated infrastructure, served customers, and requested rate increases. Commissions approved projects, sited plants, and set rates.

A regulator could describe her role in a single sentence: “We protect customers from monopoly abuse—inefficiency, unnecessary costs and excessive rates.” Consumers were passive, at-risk individuals: lacking options, needing protection.

Today, this protect-the-consumer role is but one star in an expanding universe of regulatory responsibilities.

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