

Trump has nominated a guy named David LaCerte to serve on the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. (FERC) There's sparse public material available about LaCerte, a tribute to his prior accomplishments. LaCerte's record is almost devoid of relevant experience and expertise.

"FERC Commissioner" is not usually considered an entry-level job in energy law. FERC cases involve the management of the entire U.S. energy grid, except for part of Texas. Energy law and regulation are extraordinarily complex and technical, but the issues are big - management of massive U.S. electricity markets, permitting of natural gas pipelines, setting rates for electricity transmission, and ensuring grid reliability.

So far as I can tell, LaCerte has no professional background involving any of these issues. LaCerte has served in two significant positions. He was the head of the Louisiana Secretary of Veteran's Affairs. (He resigned from that in 2015 after state investigators accused his department of mispending thousands of dollars and failing to report crimes against veterans. LaCerte then sued the investigators for defamation.) He has also had two stints under Trump at the Office of Personnel Management, which is what the Feds call HR. also worked as acting managing director at the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board starting at the end of President Donald Trump's first term.

LaCerte has had one brush with energy regulation. He was a special counsel at the big oil and gas law firm, Baker Botts for two years, starting in January 2023. While there, he worked on energy litigation and environmental, safety and incident response issues. None of that has much to do with FERC.

I'm sure we'll be learning more about LaCerte. Maybe no one has mentioned a degree in energy economics, or a term on a state public utility commission. But what we do know at this point is ... unimpressive.