**IRESN Focus and Mission**

***Integration, Insights, Support for Cities and Counties***

IRESN is about integration. Still a small network, IRESN needs to focus. So, our letters won’t be able to address each of the myriad and proliferating individual pieces of our energy, climate and infrastructure puzzles.

As with jigsaw puzzles, each technical issue and solution needs to fit, and each needs focused, in depth attention, or it won’t. So, we won’t speak dismissively of “stovepipes”. Markets are organized around specialized work and specific products. The vast majority of innovation and profit is derived from the focused attention they receive. Meanwhile, there is not only increasing diversity but also increasing interdependence among the improvements we attempt and the complex systems into which they must fit.

So, a modest but serious focus on integration will pay major dividends in time and money. Rational progress must make full use of existing assets while allowing new assets to be created. The efficiency of “business as usual” is an asset deserving a degree of protection. But it must not be protected to the extent that it refuses to allow better systems to be created. Especially in energy we are facing the fundamental choice between, in the box vs. out of the box if staying in the box means moving too slow.

As an example, many cities and counties have goals and needs that cannot be met if they remain on the sidelines of efforts to plan and deliver basic services (e.g. energy, water, communications, waste management). Their preparation and participation on the relevant playing fields requires attention to integration. IRESN’s mission is to provide a measure of support for their critically important and effective engagement.