





# SECTION IV

**Tennessee Regulatory Authority**



# Tennessee Regulatory Authority

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[www.tn.gov/tra](http://www.tn.gov/tra)

**Dr. Kenneth C. Hill, Director**

**Dr. Eddie Roberson, Director**

**Sara Kyle, Director**

**Mary W. Freeman, Director**

The mission of the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) is to promote the public interest by balancing the interests of utility consumers and providers while facilitating the transition to a more competitive environment.

The TRA was created to meet the challenge of the changing telecommunications and utility environment. The TRA is charged with the responsibility of setting the rates and establishing service standards of privately owned telephone, natural gas, electric, water, and sewer utilities. The agency also has safety jurisdiction over all natural gas utility providers.

The TRA was established on July 1, 1996, as a result of the 1995 sunset of the Tennessee Public Service Commission. The agency was originally headed by a three-member body appointed by the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House. A fourth member, appointed by joint agreement among the governor, lieutenant governor, and speaker of the House, was added by the General Assembly in 2002. In order to stagger the term end dates, in 2008, two directors were appointed to three-year terms, ending in 2011, and two were appointed to six-year terms ending in 2014. Every year, one of the directors is elected by the four-member body to serve as chairman.

The staff of the TRA draws from various professional disciplines and includes accountants, administrators, attorneys, consumer specialists, economists, engineers, information systems and computer specialists, a media specialist, policy advisors, and office support.

The TRA is comprised of six divisions: Utilities, Consumer Services, Economic Analysis and Policy, Gas Pipeline Safety, Information Technology, and Legal.

**Director Kenneth C. Hill***Tabatha Blackwell, Senior Policy Advisor**Jimmie Hughes, Executive Assistant*

Dr. Kenneth C. Hill was appointed to the Tennessee Regulatory Authority in 2009 by Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey. A Northeast Tennessee native, Dr. Hill's educational achievements include a Bachelor of Science degree in Speech (Broadcasting) and History from East Tennessee State University; a Master of Science Degree in Speech (Broadcasting) from Indiana State University; a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Biblical Studies from Baptist Christian College; a Master of Religious Education from Manahath School of Theology; and a Doctor of Religious Education from Andersonville Baptist Seminary.

**Kenneth C. Hill**

Dr. Hill has been active in communications and broadcasting all of his adult life, having been involved for more than four decades in virtually every aspect of television and radio. For the past thirty years, Dr. Hill has been affiliated with the Appalachian Educational Communication Corporation (AECC) in Bristol. Dr. Hill has also provided consulting and contract services for more than two decades in the areas of technical writing and editing, public relations, proposal writing and editing, independent research and development documentation, corporate and business communication, media acquisition, media appraisal and media utilization. Dr. Hill is active in the community, presently serving as Chairman of the Publications Board of the Evangelical Methodist Church, Member of the Board of Directors of the Tri-Cities Mass Choir, Member of the Board of the Sister Community Project (Sullivan County, Tenn., and Siguatepeque, Honduras), and Member of the Bristol Evening Lions Club. He formerly served as Secretary of the General Conference of the Evangelical Methodist Church.

Since his appointment to the TRA, Dr. Hill has been involved with the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (SEARUC). He is a member of the NARUC Committee on Water and the Committee on International Relations and has been a presenter at the NARUC Annual Meeting. Dr. Hill has also been a panelist at the National Association of Water Companies (NAWC) Conference and the Emerging Issues Policy Forum.

Dr. Hill is married and lives with his wife, Janet, in Blountville, Tenn. The couple has three children.

### Director Eddie Roberson

*Jean A. Stone, Senior Policy Advisor*

*Vicky Nelson, Executive Assistant*

Dr. Eddie Roberson was born in 1952 in Nashville. Raised in the home of a minister, his family was transferred to Chattanooga in 1960. He attended Chattanooga public schools, graduating from Chattanooga High School in 1971 where he was voted Most Athletic. He graduated from the University of Tennessee with bachelor's and master's degrees. He received a Ph.D. in Public Administration from The Institute of Government at Tennessee State University in 1998. He is also a Rule 31 Mediator. While in Chattanooga, he was elected twice to the Chattanooga School Board and served as President of the Chattanooga Sertoma Club in 1988. Dr. Roberson was hired by the Public Service Commission (PSC), predecessor to the Tennessee Regulatory



Eddie Roberson

Authority, in 1975. He was appointed as the PSC's Chief of Consumer Services and transferred to Nashville in 1989. He also served as the agency's executive director from 1995 to 1996. He was appointed by Governor Phil Bredesen in 2006 as director to the TRA. Dr. Roberson is active in the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners where he formerly served as Chair of the Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and currently serves on the committees of Natural Gas, Consumer Affairs and Education and Research. Dr. Roberson lives in Hendersonville and is actively involved in the community and his church where he serves as an elder. He is a Member of the Hendersonville Rotary Club where he is a Paul Harris Fellow and was elected club president for 2007-2008. He is married to the former Kathy Coxey of Chattanooga, and they have two daughters, Heather and Brooke.

### Director Sara Kyle

*Shirley Frierson, Senior Policy Advisor*

*Thomas Pearson, Executive Assistant*

Sara Kyle was born in 1952 near the Tri-Cities area of Upper East Tennessee just a few days before her uncle, the late Frank G. Clement, was elected to his first of three terms as governor of Tennessee. She attended Lincoln Elementary in Kingsport, and after moving to Middle Tennessee, graduated from Dickson High School. The daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Bruce Peery, she attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville before graduating from Austin Peay State University and teaching elementary school in Clarksville. She attended graduate courses at Middle Tennessee State University while teaching. She received her law degree in 1987, the same year she married Senator Jim Kyle (D-Memphis). She practiced law in the



Sara Kyle

same firm with her husband and was an assistant public defender until she was elected to the Memphis City Court bench in 1991. A member of a family with a proud tradition of public service in elective office, she has studied the ways government relates to its citizens and worked to make that government and its agencies and courts sensitive to the needs of its citizens. Director Kyle resigned from the bench in March 1994 to become a candidate for the Public Service Commission – a race in which she stressed a strong ethics and reform program as a way to restore public confidence in the commission. She was nominated on February 29, 1996, by then House Speaker Jimmy Naifeh to become one of three members of the new Tennessee Regulatory Authority. She

was reappointed by Naifeh in 2002 and again in 2008 to serve another six-year term. The Kyles have four children and attend Second Presbyterian Church in Memphis. Long active in organizations promoting better government and public awareness, she is involved in numerous community and civic organizations. Additionally, she is a Board Member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC), serving on the Communications Committee, and is Past President of the Southeastern Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners.

### **Director Mary W. Freeman**

*Monica Smith-Ashford, Senior Policy Advisor*

*Karlisa Kuykindall, Executive Assistant*

Mary W. Freeman was jointly appointed to the Tennessee Regulatory Authority (TRA) by Governor Phil Bredesen, Lieutenant Governor Ron Ramsey and Speaker of the House Jimmy Naifeh. Director Freeman began her three-year term as director on July 1, 2008. With her appointment, Freeman became the first African-American woman to serve as director of the TRA. Director Freeman has more than fifteen years of legislative and policy experience in state government. Prior to her appointment, she served as legislative director for Governor Phil Bredesen where she assisted the Governor and the Senior Policy Advisor for Legislative Affairs in developing the administration's legislative agenda. Prior to joining the administration, she served as executive assistant to State Representative Lois DeBerry, when she was Speaker Pro Tempore of the Tennessee House of Representatives. A Memphis native, Director Freeman was born in 1966 and is the daughter of Grace Freeman and the late Wiley Freeman. She graduated from Central High School and holds a bachelor's degree in Speech Communications from Tennessee State University. Director Freeman is a Member of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and serves on the committees on Energy Resources and the Environment, Consumer Affairs, and the Utilities Marketplace Access Subcommittee. She also serves as Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Organization of PJM States, Inc., which monitors the electricity reliability and usage of the Regional Transmission Organization in Tennessee and 13 other states, and is a member of the Eastern Interconnection States' Planning Council. Director Freeman also serves as Chair of the TRA's 2-1-1 Advisory Council. Director Freeman resides in Nashville and attends St. Luke CME Church where she serves in various capacities. In 2008, the Nashville National Association for the Advancement of Colored People recognized Director Freeman as one of the Top 40 Under 45. Very active in her community, Director Freeman serves on the Executive Committee for United Ways of Tennessee, the Advisory Board of the Davidson County Community Corrections Program, the Board of Directors of the St. Luke Geriatric Center, Inc., St. Luke Housing Ministry, Creative Artists of Tennessee, and is a member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc.



Mary W. Freeman

