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RTO Insider LLC

2415 Boston St.
 Baltimore, MD 21224
 (301) 658-6885

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CAISO/West News

BANC Signs Agreement to Join EDAM

Becomes 3rd Entity to Formally Commit to CAISO Market After PacifiCorp, PGE

By Ayla Burnett

The Balancing Authority of Northern California (BANC) on Nov. 25 became the third entity to formally join CAISO's Extended Day-Ahead Market (EDAM), following PacifiCorp and Portland General Electric (PGE).

"BANC is pleased to execute the EDAM implementation agreement with the ISO," BANC General Manager Jim Shetler said in a [press release](#), adding that CAISO's Western Energy Imbalance Market (WEIM) "has brought BANC and its members reliability, economic and environmental benefits."

"EDAM participation is viewed as the next logical step to expand on those benefits. We look forward to working with the ISO to achieve a spring 2027 go-live date," Shetler said.

Shetler has been a key participant on the West-Wide Governance Pathways Initiative's Launch Committee, which on Nov. 22 passed its "Step 2" proposal to establish an independent "regional organization" to assume governance of the WEIM/EDAM, a move that will require a change in California law. (See [Amid](#)

[Praise for Pathways Step 2 Milestone, Skeptics Remain Unmoved](#) and [Pathways Backers Express Confidence on Calif. Legislation](#).)

BANC is a joint powers authority consisting of six utilities: Sacramento Municipal Utility District (SMUD), Modesto Irrigation District, Roseville Electric, Redding Electric Utility, Trinity Public Utility District and the City of Shasta Lake. It has been a WEIM member since 2019.

In 2023, BANC was one of the first entities — along with its largest member, SMUD — to announce its intent to join the EDAM, after PacifiCorp. (See [BANC Moving to Join CAISO's EDAM](#).)

The formal commitment comes a month after the Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) said its Sierra Nevada (SN) region would pursue "final negotiations" to join the EDAM, clearing the way for BANC to formally join. (See [WAPA Sierra Nevada Region to Advance with EDAM](#).)

"We are excited to welcome BANC as the first public power balancing authority to formally commit to join EDAM," CAISO CEO

Why This Matters

BANC's commitment to formally join CAISO's Extended Day-Ahead Market moves the ISO closer to implementing the Pathways Initiative's 'Step 1' plan to give the Western Energy Markets Governing Body 'primary' authority over the market.

Elliot Mainzer said. "They have been a valued partner whose voice has been instrumental to the design of EDAM, and we look forward to having them join the market to deliver more benefits to their customers."

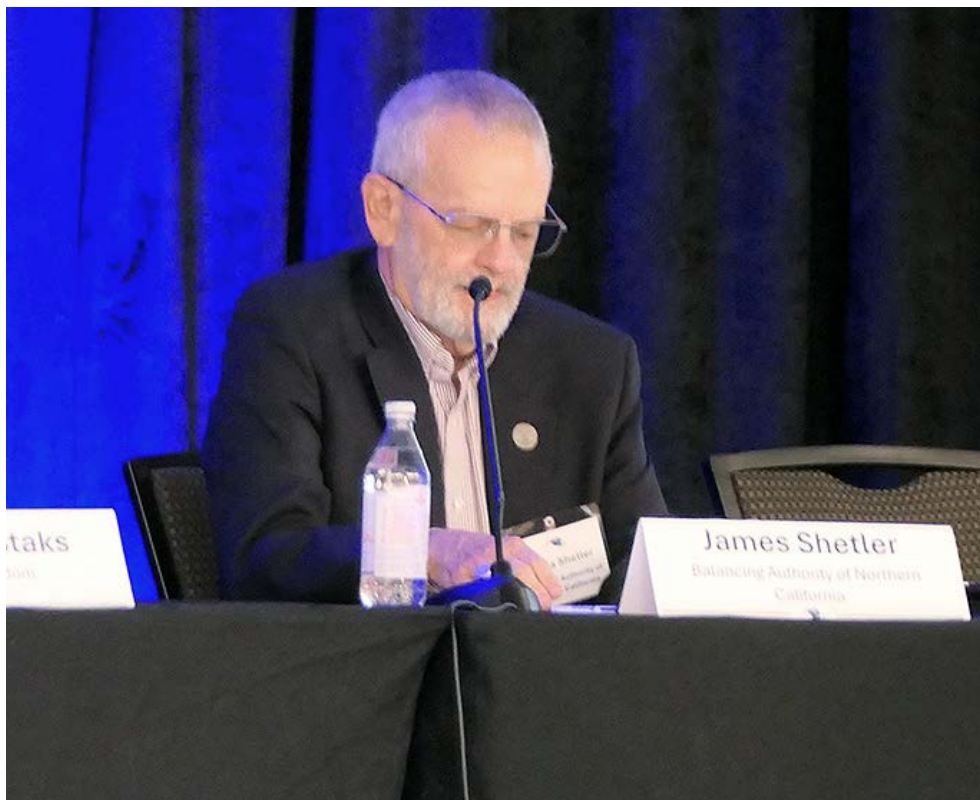
Along with formal commitments from BANC, PacifiCorp and PGE, three other entities have signaled their interest in joining EDAM: Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, BHE Montana and PNM. An additional two entities, Idaho Power and NV Energy, have indicated they favor EDAM.

Arizona G&T Cooperatives, consisting of utilities that represent 70% of WAPA Desert Southwest's load, also recently announced it will conduct a study on the benefits of joining EDAM. (See [Arizona G&T Cooperatives Announces Pursuit of EDAM Benefits Study](#).)

The Pathways Initiative's "Step 1" plan, which elevates the Western Energy Markets Governing Body to become the "primary" authority over the WEIM/EDAM compared with the "joint" authority it currently shares with the ISO's Board of Governors, will be triggered once EDAM commitments from non-ISO load reach 70% of ISO load. BANC's participation means EDAM has achieved commitment from 53% of non-ISO load compared with ISO load.

BANC's EDAM implementation agreement is slated to be filed with FERC in December.

SPP's competing Markets+ offering on Nov. 25 won its first public commitments from four Arizona utilities, although the RTO is still awaiting FERC approval for the market's tariff and no implementation agreements have been signed. (See [4 Arizona Utilities Commit to Joining Markets+](#).) ■



Jim Shetler, BANC | © RTO Insider LLC

COMPANY ANNOUNCEMENT

**RioSol Capacity Allocation**

On January 6, 2025, El Rio Sol Transmission, LLC (“RioSol”) will commence an open solicitation process to award up to 1,600 MW of bi-directional, point-to-point, firm transmission capacity. RioSol is holding this open solicitation process pursuant to its FERC authorization issued in Docket No. ER24-1726-000, dated July 5, 2024.

The RioSol Transmission Project consists of a proposed single-circuit, 500 kV alternating current electric transmission line and several substations that will transport energy from Arizona and New Mexico to customers and markets across the Desert Southwest. RioSol is seeking parties that can meet our criteria and work with us to enable the transmission project to commence construction by the end of 2026 and commence operating by the end of 2028. More information about the project can be found at www.riosol.energy.

RioSol has engaged Energy Strategies to manage the open solicitation process. Specific information about the forthcoming open solicitation process and timing can be found at www.riosol-os.com. On 12/18/2024, RioSol will host a webinar to review the project and Open Solicitation process and to answer questions from prospective customers. To sign up for the webinar, email RioSol-OS@energystrat.com.

Starting on January 6, 2025, interested entities may obtain a request for participation form and a confidentiality agreement via www.riosol-os.com and submit them to RioSol-OS@energystrat.com. Subsequently, interested entities deemed to have a legitimate interest in obtaining transmission capacity on RioSol will be provided with a confidential information memorandum and the expression of interest form. Completed expression of interest forms will be due no later than February 7, 2025.

ISO-NE News

Report Outlines Scope, Challenges of Clean Energy Siting in New England *Acadia Paper Points to Need to Get Community Support for Projects*

By Jon Lamson

A new white paper from the Acadia Center emphasizes the importance of community engagement to enabling the wide-scale deployment of clean energy infrastructure over the next two decades.

“For New England to build out its infrastructure at the speed and scale needed to unlock a local energy transition, it will take buy-in, acceptance and trust from the communities that will host these clean energy resources,” the climate advocacy nonprofit wrote in the *report*, published Nov. 25.

The paper includes a quantitative literature review of five recent studies on decarbonization in the region, which, on average, indicate New England’s peak load will grow to 55 GW by 2050, compared with the *2024 peak load* of 24,310 MW. This figure is in line with ISO-NE’s *projection* of a 57-GW winter evening peak in 2050.

To meet the growing demand, the review found the region will need to add “up to 5 GW of new clean energy capacity per year for the next 20 years,” assuming the region’s existing nuclear plants remain online. The studies estimated on average that 84% of generation in 2050 will come from renewables.

“The highest order recommendation is that the region must adopt a diverse, clean energy portfolio approach to achieve decarbonization goals while keeping the lights on and heat pumps running,” Acadia said, adding that this portfolio should include a mix of renewables, clean firm generation, interregional transmission, demand flexibility, energy efficiency and storage.

Why This Matters

With the vast scope of infrastructure needed for states to meet decarbonization goals, community engagement is essential for approval of individual projects and for building broad political support for the clean energy transition.

The organization emphasized how energy efficiency and demand flexibility could help significantly reduce the peak, with the studies estimating that flexibility could reduce the 2050 peak by about 7%. This peak reduction could save the region billions in transmission costs alone; ISO-NE found in its *2050 Transmission Study* that a 10% reduction in peak load could reduce the overall transmission buildout cost by about a third.

Acadia noted that energy efficiency and building retrofits were not modeled in detail in the studies and said more research is needed to quantify the full potential of both efficiency and demand flexibility.

“Increased modeling focus on the cost-effective potential of building envelope improvements to reduce overall space heating demand could reveal lower levels of generation buildout than currently found by these studies,” the group wrote.

“Energy efficiency can and should be deployed as a competitive resource, able to be procured and acquired by the MWh or MW just as states and the region currently procure generation resources,” the group added, noting that the prices of efficiency procurements would likely be cost-competitive with solicitations of large-scale renewables.

Community Buy-in Needed

Efficiency, demand flexibility, advanced transmission technologies, repowering existing renewable sites and strategies like agrivoltaics can help reduce the overall infrastructure footprint, but any decarbonization scenario will still require large amounts of new infrastructure, the report said.

To enable the construction of this infrastructure, developers must do a better job building community buy-in for their projects, incorporating feedback into project design, and providing tangible local benefits, Acadia wrote.

The report features case studies of several high-profile projects from recent years, including the canceled Aroostook Renewable Gateway and Twin States Clean Energy Link projects, along with Eversource Energy’s substation in East Boston — which is expected to come in service in 2025, 11 years after it was initially proposed.

“Levels of community support or opposition are key factors in a project’s success or failure,”



| Acadia

Acadia wrote. “High profile project failures and stories of bad actors spread between communities and stoke opposition.”

The organization added that community benefit agreements alone are not enough to prevent opposition and said “the process of negotiating and implementing community benefits programs is as important as the benefits themselves.”

“Development of a community benefit should occur through an early, inclusive, community-led process that not only informs the structure of community benefits program, but also incorporates community input into the design of the project itself,” Acadia wrote, adding that benefit plans should include accountability measures to ensure promises are met.

Community opposition can also be amplified by fossil fuel companies and incumbent power producers, Acadia said, referencing the campaign to stop the New England Clean Energy Connect Pipeline and the *challenges* to the Vineyard Wind project funded by fossil fuel groups. (See *Avangrid Sues NextEra over ‘Scorched-earth Scheme’ to Stop NECEC*.)

“Those who have benefited from the region’s widespread reliance on fossil fuel infrastructure are reluctant to accept, and often in opposition to, shifting the resource mix [toward] clean energy generation,” Acadia wrote. “Incumbent power generators have interfered in infrastructure development in numerous instances, particularly around transmission that would bring new clean energy supply into the market.” ■

MISO News

Environmental Nonprofits Argue MISO's New Capacity Accreditation Lacking Key Detail

By Amanda Durish Cook

Four environmental nonprofits insist MISO's recently approved capacity accreditation is incomplete unless the RTO details how it will conduct its loss of load modeling the new approach relies upon.

The Sierra Club, Natural Resources Defense Council, Sustainable FERC Project and Fresh Energy on Nov. 25 sought rehearing of MISO's accreditation, saying FERC seemed to miss a key piece of the puzzle when it authorized MISO's new capacity accreditation method without forcing the RTO to codify and then update its loss of load expectation modeling process in its tariff (ER24-1638).

FERC in late October approved MISO's capacity accreditation, which blends the historical performance of individual generators with a probabilistic performance during simulated loss-of-load events. (See [FERC Approves New MISO Probabilistic Capacity Accreditation](#).) MISO plans to draw on its loss of load expectation (LOLE) analysis to estimate the hours across a year that the system is likely to experience

a deficit or dwindling margins and compare those to when its resource classes are expected to be available.

The four nonprofits contend that FERC failed to appreciate how significant MISO's LOLE modeling will be to the accreditation.

"The key inputs and assumptions that MISO uses for the LOLE model have major effects on accreditation outcomes and rates. Neither the commission nor stakeholders can determine whether MISO's accreditation scheme will actually produce just and reasonable rates without reviewing those significant modeling choices," the groups argued.

They also said the consequences of not vetting LOLE modeling stand to be "severe," with FERC potentially "abdicated" its responsibility to ensure reasonable rates and MISO wielding "unchecked discretion to alter ... key components to change rate outcomes without commission scrutiny."

The groups disagreed with FERC that MISO including a description of its LOLE modeling process is merely an "implementation detail."

Why This Matters

Four nonprofits argue MISO's loss-of-load expectation modeling process is too integral to the RTO's new capacity accreditation to have been left out of the tariff filing to FERC. They seek a rehearing of FERC's approval.

They said MISO's LOLE modeling process contains "several discretionary judgments" and could alter accreditation and significantly affect rates.

For instance, MISO's LOLE modeling at present includes a cold weather outage adder, they said, which attempts to capture thermal resources' outage risks in winter and could dent those resources' accreditation values. They also said MISO is working on a new LOLE model for its storage resources, and staff so far in public stakeholder meetings have presented modeling approaches that produce wildly different outcomes.

The four further argued that the inputs and assumptions to MISO's LOLE model "are not generally understood in any contractual arrangement such that recitation would be superfluous." They pointed to MISO's existing reference to its LOLE modeling in its tariff and said that "barebones" description "implies nothing about how MISO generates probability distributions for variables such as demand, generator performance, storage availability or external import availability." They also said MISO doesn't specify how it assesses "potential load growth or expected changes in the installed resource mix prior to a given delivery year" to influence the modeling.

"As a direct result of its accreditation choices, MISO has ensured that LOLE modeling choices are specifiable practices that significantly affect rates. Yet MISO's tariff implies almost nothing about what discretionary modeling methods MISO will adopt within the very complex LOLE analytical space," the groups summed up. "To facilitate just and reasonable rates, FERC should ensure that stakeholders have full visibility into MISO's LOLE model as soon as possible so that they can work with MISO to refine the model toward optimized predictive power." ■



Solar array installation in Michigan for Wolverine Power Cooperative | J. Ranck Electric

MISO News

MISO Records Comparatively Smaller Peak in October Operations

By Amanda Durish Cook

MISO experienced an 84-GW peak load during an unseasonably warm early October; still, the peak was no match for October 2023's 99-GW peak.

Despite MISO registering a smaller year-over-year monthly peak, its average October 2024 load remained unchanged from last year at 69 GW, according to the RTO's monthly operations report. Ahead of the fall, MISO predicted a 95-GW peak during the month.

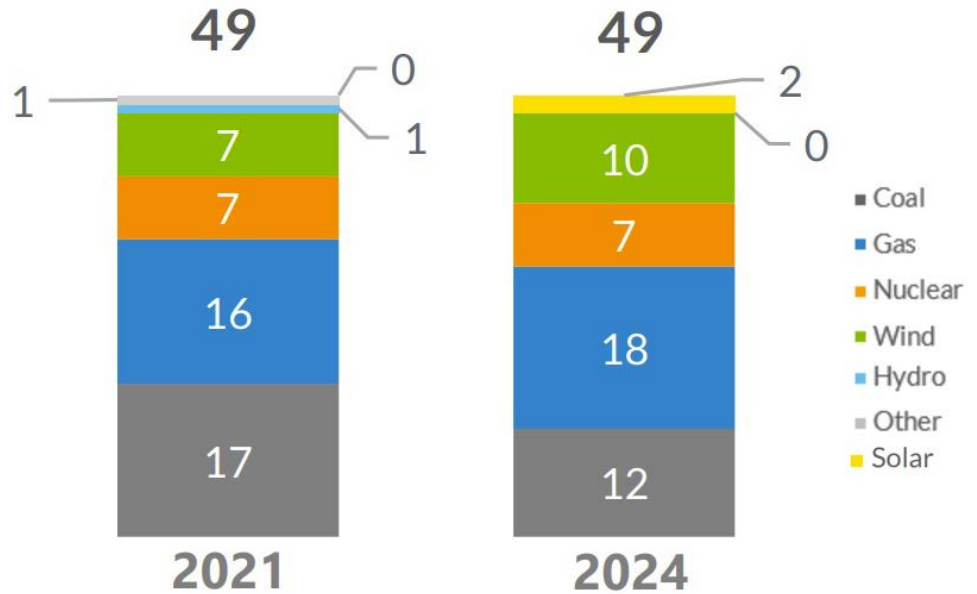
The system appeared unaffected by an 872-MW capacity deficit for the fall season in Missouri's Zone 5 due to the permanent closure of Ameren's Rush Island coal plant Oct. 15. MISO wasn't forced to issue an alert or warning throughout October. (See *MISO Predicts Painless Fall Despite Missouri Capacity Shortfall*.)

MISO averaged a \$26/MWh real-time locational marginal price during October, less than October 2023's \$31/MWh and half of October 2022's \$52/MWh average. Average coal and gas prices stayed static year-over-year, at \$2/MMBtu.

MISO said it fell short of its self-imposed standard on price divergence between its day-ahead and real-time markets over the month. System-wide, the average day-ahead price was \$26.71/MWh while the average real-time price was \$25.80/MWh.

The RTO usually tries to keep its absolute day-ahead to real-time price difference divided by a day-ahead locational marginal price at or below 22.2%. In October, MISO said the deviation reached 27%.

ENERGY FUEL MIX (TWh)



October energy fuel mix comparison from 2021 to 2024 | MISO

MISO said congestion and real-time ancillary service product scarcity worsened the divergence. It added that "ramp-up continues to be a challenge, particularly in the evening hours as generation is coming offline."

The grid operator said day-ahead to real-time price deviation this year also has been poor enough to review in January, April, May, June and July, in addition to October.

For October, real-time congestion cost the footprint about \$118 million, lower than October 2023's \$186 million.

Daily average generation outages for the typically maintenance-heavy October climbed to 61 GW this year, compared to 53 GW in October 2023.

As it's been doing on a nearly monthly basis, MISO set an all-time peak solar supply record Oct. 16, when solar briefly served a little more than 8 GW, or 16% of load at the time. Solar contributions were significant enough to register on MISO's total 49-TWh energy fuel mix for the month, where they supplied 2 TWh. ■

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NYISO News

NYISO Publishes Final RNA Showing Reliability Need for NYC Load Forecasting Task Force, Reliability Council Subcommittee Updates

By Vincent Gabrielle

NYISO announced Nov. 21 that it had published the final, approved version of the 2024 Reliability Needs Assessment, which identifies a reliability need in New York City beginning in 2033.

The declaration of a reliability need triggers a process in which NYISO solicits solutions, including transmission-based from the local transmission owners, and generation and demand response from market participants.

The NYISO Board of Directors had approved the final draft several days earlier. (See [NYISO Board Approves RNA, 2025 Budget.](#)) The RNA's assumptions changed throughout the stakeholder process. It initially identified a statewide need, but staff revised their concerns downward after they identified "flexible" loads in the cryptocurrency sector. (See [NYISO: Large Load Flexibility Eliminates 2034 Shortfall Concern.](#))

Zach Smith, senior vice president of system and resource planning, elaborated on this shift with Kevin Lanahan, vice president of external affairs and corporate communications, on the ISO's "Power Trends" podcast.

"We learned partway through this process more details, more operational characteristics of some of these facilities such that we were able to make what we believe is a reasonable

assumption that some of these facilities will reduce their demand during these peak demand periods," Smith said.

"The statewide reliability need was avoided, but it's looming, fair to say?" Lanahan prompted. "It still kind of looms in the future."

"It sure does. ... On a statewide level, we determined that we do not officially have a reliability need on a statewide basis over the next 10 years. ... That's the good news," Smith said. "However, in 2034, our calculations show that on a statewide basis ... we have a surplus of only 50 MW. That's very small on a system that's over 30,000 MW of peak demand."

With such a small surplus, any small changes in the assumptions about what generation is coming online, and the way that industries draw power, could lead to an official declaration in the short term, Smith said.

Load Forecasting Task Force Updates

The Load Forecasting Task Force presented preliminary updates to its 2024 weather-normalized peak load for the 2025 ICAP forecast at its meeting Nov. 22. These included both the preliminary weather-normalized peak loads for this year and updated growth factors for each transmission zone based on economic data from Moody's Analytics.

This year's weather-normalized peak load was 31,292.7 MW, which will be factored into next year's ICAP forecast. It occurred July 8 during the 5 to 6 p.m. hour.

Max Schuler, a demand forecasting analyst for NYISO, went over the economic indicators for the transmission zones, showing that across the board, real income, GDP, number of households and employment were trending upward, but population was trending downward in each, except in the Orange & Rockland Utilities zone.

"If households are increasing but population is going down, what does that mean?" asked Howard Fromer, director of regulatory affairs for Bayonne Energy Center.

"These are all very slight changes for household and population," Schuler said. "But it's a continuing trend of fewer people per household ... as younger people move out without their parents to start their own house."

New York State Reliability Council Installed Capacity Subcommittee

The New York State Reliability Council's Installed Capacity Subcommittee reviewed and approved updates to the [Tan45 Methodology Review Whitepaper](#) and the Installed Capacity Requirement Study technical report.

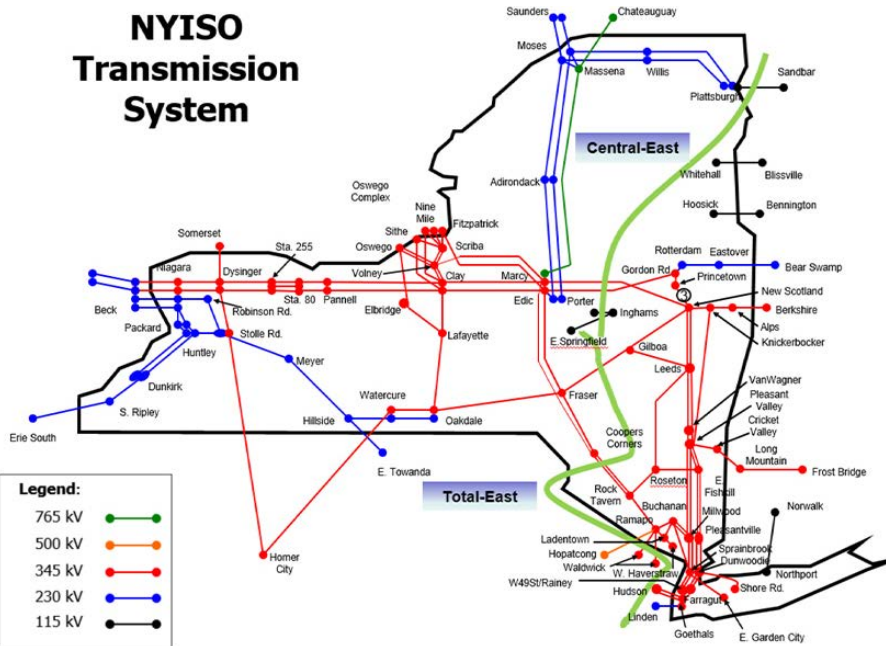
The ICAP study shows an increase in required capacity from last year, from 23.1 to 24.4%. Most of this increase was driven by the limit on Emergency Operating Procedure calls. The rest was driven by increases in renewables and Special Case Resources.

The white paper investigated how the method the NYSRC uses to help set the installed reserve margin will function as new transmission projects come online to serve offshore wind resources. (See [NYISO Studying How to Update IRM Calculation to Account for Offshore Wind.](#))

It found that under cases in which there are 9,000 MW of new offshore wind resources, the complex method for setting the IRM — known as "Tan45" — is unable to establish an IRM.

The NYSRC in 2025 will continue to investigate alternative methods, or improvements to the current method, to figure out how to calculate the IRM under evolving conditions.

Both studies will be sent to the NYSRC Executive Committee for approval in December. ■



NYISO News

Stakeholders Skeptical of NYISO Performance Penalty Proposal

By Vincent Gabrielle

NYISO stakeholders Nov. 21 expressed skepticism of an ISO proposal to levy financial penalties against underperforming generators, saying it was not developed enough to be voted upon by the end of the year.

While nonperforming generators must buy out the energy they did not provide in the real-time market based on its day-ahead operating reserves schedule, there is no penalty for nonperformance, NYISO said in presenting its proposed *Operating Reserves Performance Penalty* to the Installed Capacity Working Group meeting.

Under the proposal, NYISO would use three metrics to identify consistently underperforming providers of operating reserves:

- resource response frequency during emergency conditions and audits;
- frequency of underperformance after being scheduled in the day-ahead market to provide operating reserves; and
- the real-time energy provided compared to the real-time energy requested, covering generators that are infrequently dispatched.

“We heard feedback from a number of folks that poor performers should be removed from the market and that folks would like to see us put some additional provisions on how we will effectuate removal from the market for poor performers,” said Nathaniel Gilbraith, NYISO’s manager of energy market design. “What we wanted to do ... is lay out some illustrative metrics here today to start the discussion.”

While no one at the meeting was opposed to the idea of penalties, some said that because the thresholds for the metrics were not well defined, it was hard for them to evaluate if they were fair assessments of poor performance.

“I think you would want to provide some



PSEG's Bethlehem Energy Center, an 817-MW combined cycle plant in New York | PSEG

criteria so that people could understand at what level someone would be disqualified,” said Howard Fromer, director of regulatory affairs for Bayonne Energy Center. “I understand you have the authority today to do it, but there needs to be some distinction.”

The proposal will be discussed again Dec. 11, with a final draft for stakeholders to vote on before the end of the year, Gilbraith said.

“I’m struggling to understand why we’re moving forward with a vote on this in December when there seems to be a lot of outstanding

questions that may or may not be answered during the manual revision discussions. ... It sounds like we’re going to be working on this project next year. What’s the rush?” asked Matthew Schwall, director of regulatory affairs at AlphaGen. “As things stand, I’m inclined to vote ‘no.’”

Another stakeholder chimed in that they also thought the proposal was “under-baked” and that while they appreciated that NYISO was “under the gun” to get a vote in by the end of the year, it was hard to support a proposal that was not clearly laid out. ■

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NYISO News

\$11B Transmission + Generation Plan Canceled in NY

Clean Path New York Would Have Developed Wind and Solar, Built HVDC Line to NYC

By John Cropley

An \$11 billion package of *transmission and renewable energy investments* planned in New York has been canceled.

The Clean Path New York (CPNY) renewable energy certificate (REC) *contract with the state was terminated* Nov. 27, and one of the partners in the venture said Dec. 2 the project itself has been abandoned.

No reason was stated for the cancellation, but CPNY likely encountered the same delays and cost escalations that have bedeviled other energy projects in New York.

CPNY was envisioned as a way to break the densely populated New York City region's heavy reliance on aging fossil fuel power generation.

It was to transmit 3.8 GW of power from 23 new solar and onshore wind projects in rural upstate New York south to the New York City area via a 175-mile underground HVDC line.

Public- and private-sector officials *announced in November 2021* that CPNY and the Champlain Hudson Power Express had been chosen for *the new Tier 4 RECs* designed to help decarbonize the downstate grid.

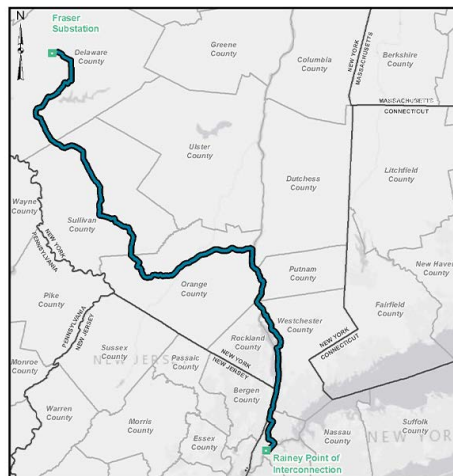
After more than a decade in development, and with a sharply higher price tag, Champlain Hudson is under construction. (See *Champlain Hudson Power Project Receives Landmark Delivery.*) CPNY, which had expected to start construction in 2024 and enter service in 2027, had not yet been approved.

CPNY was a public-private collaboration of the New York Power Authority (NYPA) and Forward Power, which is a joint venture of energyRe and Invenergy.

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) notified the Department of Public Service on Nov. 27 that it and CPNY by mutual agreement had terminated the Tier 4 REC contract (*Case 15-E-0302*).

The three-sentence notice provided no details, and neither did NYPA or Forward.

NYPA Vice President of Corporate Communications Lindsay Kryzak said Dec. 2 via email: "The Clean Path project was a public-private collaboration in response to the Tier 4 RFP by NYSERDA. We worked alongside energyRE



The proposed route of the Clean Path New York underground HVDC transmission line is shown. | *Clean Path New York*

and Invenergy to continue moving Clean Path forward in the face of changing conditions related to the economics of the project. NYPA will continue to work on modernizing the grid and addressing New York State's transmission needs to support its long-term goals."

Forward Power spokesperson Amy Varghese said via email: "energyRe and Invenergy remain committed to New York's energy transition. As we continue to advance our portfolio of renewable energy projects across the state, we will evaluate solutions for addressing the largest transmission bottlenecks facing New York's electric grid in order to deliver reliable and affordable power, good-paying jobs and clean air for the Empire State."

CPNY is the latest in a long series of casualties in New York's legally mandated effort to green its grid.

In June 2023, the developers of most of New York's large-scale onshore and offshore renewable energy proposals sought to renegotiate their REC contracts because the cost of construction had soared after they locked in their compensation with the contracts. (See *OSW Developers Seeking More Money from New York.*)

CPNY followed up with a *petition for more money* as well, arguing that it was facing the same economic pinch: 14 of the proposals that made up the generation side of the portfolio already held Tier 1 REC contracts, and the other nine were Tier 1-eligible. (See *Clean Path NY Joins Calls for Inflation Adjustment.*)

Why This Matters

The cancellation is the latest fallout from cost escalations and the latest setback in New York's attempt to decarbonize its grid.

The Public Service Commission rejected the developers' request to renegotiate the contracts in October 2023 and CPNY subsequently *withdrew its petition*. (See *NY Rejects Inflation Adjustment for Renewable Projects.*)

Developers soon canceled the bulk of the REC contracts New York had signed. They were allowed to rebid their projects into subsequent solicitations, but the state's portfolio of contracted renewables remains stunted a year later, and state officials expect to miss the 70% renewables by 2030 mandate, perhaps by a wide margin. (See *NY Expects to Miss 2030 Renewable Energy Target.*)

Varghese did not provide a requested update on the status of the 23 generation proposals.

They were not a batch of new proposals drawn up for CPNY. Rather, they were a collection of pre-existing proposals gathered into the CPNY portfolio. And cancellation of a REC contract does not mean cancellation of the project itself, though it almost certainly pushes back the timeline.

Meanwhile, the complex Tier 4 mechanism itself is gradually taking shape. NYSERDA *submitted an implementation plan* Oct. 11, four years after Tier 4 was added to the state's Clean Energy Standard.

And a new state law gave NYPA a new role as a renewable energy developer in mid-2023, more than a year after its CPNY collaboration was chosen for a Tier 4 contract.

NYPA is finalizing a strategic plan for 3.5 GW of wind, solar and storage capacity that it would develop on its own or in collaboration with the private sector. It has said the 40 proposals in the plan likely would suffer the same attrition rate as seen in the industry — 80 to 85% for early stage proposals and 30 to 60% for more mature projects. (See *NYPA Enters Renewable Development with 3.5-GW Plan and NYPA Urged to Do More in New Renewables Role.*) ■

PJM News



Pennsylvania PUC Examines PJM's Tightening Reserve Margin

By James Downing

Pennsylvania is a net exporter of electricity, but the narrowing reserve margin in PJM led the state's Public Utility Commission to hold an all-day technical conference Nov. 25 to discuss resource adequacy.

While this past summer's capacity auction showed spiking prices amid rising demand and retiring power plants, PUC Vice Chair Kimberly Barrow said she started focusing more on resource adequacy during winter weather events like the polar vortex a decade ago and Winter Storm Elliott in December 2022. (See [PJM Capacity Prices Spike 10-fold in 2025/26 Auction.](#))

"What I'm very worried about now is those challenges occurred at a time when we were not facing the kind of load growth that we're facing right now," Barrow said. "The load growth we're facing is unprecedented, and I do not know if we are bringing resources on quick enough to face that load growth."

Pennsylvania is a restructured state, so the PUC has limited authority over power generation, but it is still responsible for ensuring reliability and affordability on the distribution system, she added.

Demand growth, driven mostly by large data centers coming online, is working alongside retiring power plants and a slow pace of adding

new supplies to cut into what for years was a healthy reserve margin, PJM Executive Vice President Stu Bresler said.

"PJM really started in an enviable position, from the standpoint of the reserves that we had available in the system than we do today, but these trends that we are seeing, obviously, are causing that to change and change significantly," Bresler said. "Overall, we believe that the structure of our wholesale electricity markets remains sound. We believe that those markets will continue to stimulate resource development and resource additions."

But there is going to be a transitional period with narrow reserve margins, as evidenced by the last capacity auction, he added. PJM's adoption of effective load-carrying capability (ELCC) to measure resources' capacity also contributed to the last auction's outcome, but Bresler said that method should encourage the kind of firmer resources the grid needs going forward.

PJM Independent Market Monitor Joe Bowring said properly designed ELCC rules would help the region maintain reliability, but it and other rules should be changed.

"I don't think the current design will get us there, but I think that we need to move forward and do a rethink of ELCC and make it more sophisticated at the point where it really

Why This Matters

Pennsylvania exports a lot of power to other states in PJM and beyond, but its membership in the RTO means even with an excess of generation, it would have to take on rolling blackouts should demand ever overwhelm supply.

will reflect supply and demand," Bowring said.

ELCC has an "excessive" focus on natural gas plants' performance during several historical hours in winters when PJM was still learning about gas notification periods, Bowring said. The rule understates the value of thermal resources, especially combined cycle natural gas plants and combustion turbines.

While Pennsylvania has restructured, that does not mean the industry relies entirely on PJM's wholesale power markets for its revenue, said Travis Kavulla, NRG Energy vice president of regulatory affairs.

NRG owns generation and a competitive retail business that serves about 10% of the demand in the Eastern restructured markets, which means it must hedge the latter with bilateral contracts with generators, he said.

"NRG, when it signs up a retail customer, engages in a policy called back-to-back hedging. On Day 1 of our service under that contract, we estimate a customer's load, make adjustments for extreme weather and then bilaterally buy energy supply that covers that estimated load on the part of the customer," Kavulla said. "These bilateral contracts are a major source of revenue to our counterparties, the power plants of PJM."

Sometimes those bilateral contracts can be more important to generators — though less visible to the public — than income from PJM's markets, he added.

"These markets were designed with the idea that the bulk of trades would be bilateral transactions and self-supply," Bresler said. "It was not intended that either suppliers would invest, or consumers would ride the spot market based on spot market prices. The fact of the matter is, though, these markets are unforgiving."



From left: Pennsylvania PUC Vice Chair Kimberly Barrow, Chair Stephen DeFrank and Commissioner Kathryn Zerfuss | Pennsylvania PUC

PJM News



PJM's goal is not for prices to be high, but to signal the market that supply is needed, which will encourage suppliers and customers to enter into new long-term contracts, he added.

Kavulla said one thing the PUC could do under its authority would be to encourage longer-term contracts in the retail market. Even residential customers can get prices locked in for five years, at lower rates than default service.

One major recent example of those bilateral deals directly leading to new supply on the grid was the contract Constellation Energy struck with Microsoft to bring Three Mile Island's recently retired reactor back to service to supply a new data center, said Adrien Ford, Constellation's director of wholesale market development.

"It's our partnership with Microsoft that's bringing the Crane Clean Energy Center back online," she said, referring to TMI's new name, "not the PJM one-year print."

Another way Constellation hedges its generation is by participating in the default service auctions that restructured states run, which secure supply for most small customers that do not shop for competitive supply, she said.

Policy Changes and the Supply Chain

With a new political party taking over the White House and EPA, some of the retirements that PJM has been forecasting could be significantly delayed, said Calpine's Joe Kerecman.

EPA's plans to regulate carbon dioxide will certainly change with the new administration, and other rules could also be tossed out, which will mean existing coal plants stay running longer.

That could help because Kerecman and other representatives of independent power producers noted that building new natural gas plants takes longer than it used to.

"I think you can get gas turbine deliveries by 2027 certainly. ... You got to write some big checks, which differentiates a company like Calpine, because we have 27,000 MW," Kerecman said. "We have well established relationships with [original equipment manufacturers] and EPC [engineering, procurement and construction] contractors as well."

The domestic industry has to compete with growing demand for power plant equipment from the Middle East, along with generally stressed supply chains, he added.

If a developer sent the first milestone payments to an OEM now, they would not get

delivery of equipment until mid- to late 2028, and then it would need to spend an additional 12 to 18 months actually building a power plant, Talen Energy Chief Development Officer Darren Olagues said.

"It's obviously a global queue, but it's one of the reasons we need to get this right now and inspire the confidence for developers to start to put down the milestone payments," Olagues said. "You're talking tens of millions of dollars per turbine."

It's also hard to plan for a power plant with continuous discussions about changing PJM's capacity market, he added.

The industry's bankers would "love a steadier signal," LS Power Senior Vice President Marjorie Philips said.

"But I think there's a couple of things to think about," Philips said. "One is, the data centers are ignoring the capacity markets. They are paying astronomically more. There's a reason why we are all looking to supply them. They value the electricity a lot more than we're valuing it in the capacity market."

The other factor is that constant regulatory interventions in the market do not help build investor confidence, she added.

"The commodity fluctuations are less troubling than the regulatory interventions," Philips said. "But I think long term, if we let the market work and understanding that it's very unpalatable that we're going to have to deal with high prices, and that, candidly, falls on your shoulders, how to manage the retail rates, and we are not unsympathetic to it, but that is the political reality."

It takes "two or three" price signals for developers to invest in new supply as they have in the past, she added.

Potential State Responses

While Pennsylvania is a restructured state, Consumer Advocate Patrick Cicero said it was still the PUC's responsibility to ensure resource adequacy.

"I would just submit that I think that no one should question that is the job of the Public Utility Commission," Cicero said.

State law requires the PUC to ensure reliable, affordable electricity, and part of that includes the generation issue facing the PJM region, he added.

"The fact that we're a restructured state means that generation is no longer rate

regulated, but it does not mean that the Public Utility Commission does not have the authority and tools necessary to ensure continued reliability," Cicero said. "I assure you that if something happens, you will be blamed, and so consequently, if you will be blamed, then you should have the tools necessary to fix this problem."

PJM's market is not a failure, but it is leading to resource adequacy problems for Pennsylvania right now, PPL Electric Utilities President Christine Martin said.

"I really do think that we need to keep an open mind [and] not let the past dictate the future; not let a law passed almost 30 years ago define our future," Martin said.

PPL supports changing the law to allow utilities to invest in generation, but Martin said that would not have to completely upturn Pennsylvania's history with the markets. It is mainly focused on getting new resources online in the commonwealth.

"We are not insulated from Maryland or New Jersey or Delaware or D.C.," Martin said. "We don't have that luxury. So, when we think about resource adequacy and economic development and keeping the lights on, the type of generation [and] the location of generation does matter."

GT Power Group President Glen Thomas, a former Pennsylvania PUC chair, cautioned commissioners from turning away from the markets too quickly. Given that generation investments are lumpy, PJM has faced these kinds of debates in the past — including 15 years ago when Maryland and New Jersey tried to get new natural gas built with state-backed contracts, which were ultimately found unconstitutional by the U.S. Supreme Court.

One of the contracts that New Jersey signed would have paid a plant \$286 to \$432/MW-day, well above the \$270/MW-day the last auction capacity auction cleared at, Thomas said. It would have added over \$1 billion over the term of the contract, which proved unneeded as the three plants New Jersey tried to support are all still operating today without any subsidies.

"They made a very critical mistake that would have cost their consumers a lot of money, but for the fact it was litigated and determined to be unconstitutional," Thomas said. "So, it's great to think about these plans. It's great to think about the future, but it's very hard to predict the future with these markets. These markets are cyclical." ■

PJM News



Developers Seek Deadline Extension in NJ Storage Plan

Questions Arise over Demand for Storage Project Completion in 18 Months

By Hugh R. Morley

Solar developers are urging the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities to extend the completion timelines in the agency's proposed storage development plan, saying 550 days to complete a project and secure connection through PJM is too short.

The board's *draft proposal* requires grid supply or distributed projects approved under the program to be commercially operating within 550 days of getting the agency award. If they are not, "the capacity they reserved would be returned to the market" and be available for other projects, the proposal says.

The timeline was the most salient concern at a Nov. 20 hearing, in which other speakers — while generally supporting the proposal — called for the BPU to address a range of issues, among them accelerating the start of the program segment focused on distributed storage and strengthening it to make it more attractive to developers.

The proposal, the New Jersey Storage Incentive Program (NJ SIP), sets out the guidelines for two sectors: a program for behind-the-meter, distributed projects that is expected to launch in 2026 and one for in-front-of-the-meter projects, including grid supply projects,

that will begin in early 2025.

At least six of the more than two dozen speakers said they believe the project completion deadline — known as a maturity requirement — is too restrictive.

Dan Watson, director of development at Jupiter Power, a large-scale energy storage developer, said construction alone can take three years on a large project.

"It can be a long time with the PJM related upgrades as well," he said. "So, the 550-day timeline is in obvious need of correction and consideration for larger projects."

Fred DeSanti, executive director of the New Jersey Solar Energy Coalition, said a grid supply project in front of the meter would "be applying as a wholesale generator in order to do a front-of-the-meter project," and the current proposed timeline would be tough to meet.

"That's a process that could take as long as two years or more," he said. "I know you want to get started on that program in 2025. But it's unlikely that we can even get approvals until 2027."

PJM is working through a major backlog of resources and is not accepting any new project requests until 2026.

The proposal says the intent of the requirements "is to eliminate projects that cannot be expected to reach commercial operation within a reasonable time frame." The proposal explains that a project is considered to have reached commercial operation if "it is fully constructed and has completed the full interconnection process, either at PJM or with a New Jersey jurisdictional [electric delivery company], including construction of any required interconnection upgrades."

A BPU representative at the meeting said the BPU's consultant on the project suggested the 550-day timeline. He added that several speakers expressing concern about the requirements "gets our attention," and the BPU staff would consider the issue.

Launch Date Controversy

The NJ SIP proposal is a revised version of a *draft proposal* first released in September 2022, with changes made in response to stakeholder input. The state aims to install 2,000 MW of total capacity by 2030, but progress has been slow. A BPU spokesperson said the state currently has 560 MW of installed storage, but that capacity will not be counted toward the 2,000-MW goal.

Several speakers said there is significant interest in developing storage in the state. Diane Cherry, deputy director of the Mid-Atlantic Renewable Energy Coalition, said there are 3,700 MW of storage projects in the PJM queue. Noting the state's 2,000-MW goal, she urged the BPU to focus on grid-supply project incentives and said, "We can easily meet and exceed this goal with the appropriate regulatory direction."

Joshua Lewin, president of Helios Solar Energy of Somerville, N.J., encouraged the board to consider launching both the distributed and grid supply segments in 2025, rather than delay the distributed project launch by a year — an opinion also voiced by other speakers.

"This continued delay in the program rollout is unhelpful in gaining customer willingness to enter a new and unfamiliar market," he said.

The revised NJ SIP includes a competitive solicitation to determine the incentive level for grid supply projects, which was not in the original plan. Also new is an option under which the BPU will accept applications from solar-plus-storage projects, rather than standalone storage projects. That will allow the



| Greenbacker Renewable Energy Company LLC

PJM News



program to accept projects that are not eligible to receive storage incentives from the Competitive Solar Incentive part of the Successor Solar Incentive program, which encompasses solar-plus-storage projects. (See [NJ BPU Updates Proposal for Storage Incentives.](#))

The revised proposal also makes the bid-participation fee of \$1,000/MW refundable to unsuccessful bidders, instead of nonrefundable. BPU said the shift stems from the addition to the plan of a “pre-development security” of up to \$100,000/MW, to be paid upon application approval.

The security is designed to ensure the project is carried out as planned, allowing the BPU to impose penalties that will be deducted from the security if the project misses the Planned Commercial Operation Date or the Guaranteed Commercial Operation Date.

The storage proposal also has deferred implementation of a distributed pay-for-performance incentive on projects to give utilities time to develop the mechanism to calculate it.

Prioritizing Segments

Lyle Rawlings, president of the Mid-Atlantic Solar & Storage Industries Association, urged the BPU to focus the program resources on distributed storage rather than grid-scale

Why This Matters

The current proposed timeline for energy storage projects could be tough to meet because PJM is working through a major backlog of resources and not accepting any new project requests until 2026.

storage projects. He said the association’s recent member survey showed many already are engaged in the sector.

“There’s a lot of development going on anywhere from less than 10 kWh to tens of megawatt-hours in the behind-the-meter storage field,” he said. One reason, he said, is that “behind-the-meter revenue is substantially more than the grid supply revenue.”

“Behind-the-meter storage is going to be for the foreseeable future more economic, and that means long term a better ability to reduce the incentives from the program and save ratepayers money,” he said. Other speakers said distributed projects, because they are smaller, may get up and running and contribute to the state’s need for storage more quickly.

Addressing the ratepayer impact, Megan Lupo, assistant deputy ratepayer advocate for the New Jersey Division of Rate Counsel, took issue with a new element in the proposal that directs the BPU to pay developers or owners the full project incentive upfront, rather than over 10 to 15 years.

She said the board staff concluded the new system would reduce the level of risk and so bolster program incentives.

“However, it is not clear that any additional incentives are needed for New Jersey to achieve its statewide goals,” she said. “An increase in incentives should be supported by evidence that proves the current incentives are insufficient to meet statewide targets. If not, New Jersey risks over-incentivizing energy storage.”

Lupo also expressed concern about making the fees refundable.

“This change would risk making the bidding process less meaningful and may cause an increase in the number of bids that are speculative in nature,” she said, adding that \$1,000/MWh is low compared to other states.

“There is no reason to believe these current nonrefundable fees are overly burdensome to bidders,” she said. ■

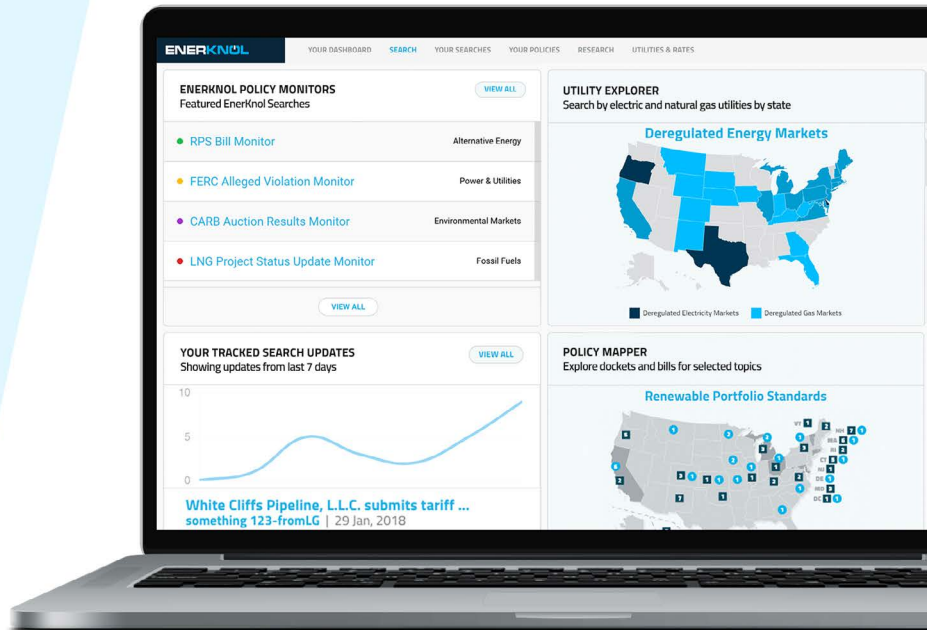


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Company News

LPO Announces \$4.9B Conditional Loan for Grain Belt Express

Rivian Could Receive \$6.57B to Restart Work on Georgia Factory

By K Kaufmann

With less than two months until President-elect Donald Trump takes office, the Department of Energy's Loan Programs Office on Nov. 25 announced three conditional loans totaling more than \$11 billion, to be used to build interregional transmission, an electric vehicle factory and virtual power plants.

Invenergy's Grain Belt Express, an interregional high-voltage direct current line, has received a conditional loan of \$4.9 billion to help finance Phase 1 of the project, a 578-mile, 2,500-MW line running from Ford County, Kansas, to Callaway County, Missouri, according to the [LPO announcement](#).

The second phase of the project, from Missouri to Illinois, eventually will take the HVDC line to 800 miles and connect SPP, Associated Electric Cooperative, MISO and PJM. The LPO announcement notes that DOE's [National Transmission Needs Study](#) has estimated that interregional transfer capabilities between SPP and MISO might need to increase tenfold by 2035 to meet growing power demand.

EV maker Rivian is slated for up to \$6.57 billion for the development and construction of a new plant east of Atlanta. The company plans to build out the facility in two phases, with production of its R2 and R3 SUVs beginning in 2028 and eventually ramping up to 400,000 vehicles per year, according to a Nov. 25 [press release](#).

If finalized, the Rivian loan would be the first made under LPO's Advanced Technology Vehicles Manufacturing (ATVM) Loan Program to manufacture EVs in the U.S., as opposed to EV components, LPO said.

A third conditional loan, for \$289.7 million, will go to Sunwealth, a commercial solar developer, which will use the money to install up to 1,000 solar and storage systems across as many as 27 states. The projects will include installations on commercial and multifamily buildings, as well as community solar facilities.

Partnering with SYSO, a developer of distributed energy resources management systems, Sunwealth intends to aggregate the systems as a virtual power plant. Estimated capacity of the systems could total up to 168 MW of solar and

Why This Matters

LPO's multibillion-dollar conditional loans for interregional transmission and electric vehicle manufacturing almost certainly will draw close scrutiny from the incoming Trump administration. Will jobs and investments in Southern and Midwestern states provide the support needed to close these deals?

16.8 MW and 33.6 MWh of battery energy storage, according to LPO.

The announcements of the conditional loans signal the start of contract negotiations between LPO and the potential recipients to finalize the awards. Companies must "satisfy certain technical, legal, environmental and financial conditions before [LPO] enters into definitive financing documents and funds the loan," the announcements all say.

These negotiations often take months, which could mean uncertainty for the awardees. Prior to his election, Trump pledged to claw back any unspent dollars from the Inflation Reduction Act, which added *billions* to the funds available to LPO. Some analysts have predicted a Day 1 executive order halting any further distribution of IRA funds.

In response to questions from *RTO Insider*, an LPO spokesperson did not comment on whether the office would be able to finalize the contracts for these three conditional loans before Trump takes office, focusing instead on the office's role as a "bridge to bankability" for a broad range of greenhouse gas-reducing technologies.

Since President Joe Biden took office in 2021, LPO has announced 31 deals totaling approximately \$47.72 billion in project investment, including 13 projects with finalized contracts for \$13.18 billion in federal support. Contracts for 18 projects totaling \$34.54 billion are pending, according to the spokesperson.

"Utilizing funding provided by Congress, LPO has accomplished tremendous progress in a



Routes as proposed: — Phase 1 — Phase 2

LPO's conditional loan of \$4.9 billion will be used to help finance Phase 1 (in yellow) of the Grain Belt Express, a 2,500-MW interregional transmission line running approximately 578 miles from Ford County, Kansas, to Callaway County, Missouri. | [Invenergy](#)

Company News

short amount of time on bipartisan priorities including advanced nuclear, geothermal, advanced fossil energy and critical minerals,” the spokesperson wrote in an email. “As a result, there is steel in the ground and job openings at new or expanded facilities around the country.

“It would be irresponsible for any government to turn its back on private-sector partners, states and communities that are benefiting from lower energy costs and new economic opportunities spurred by LPO’s investments.”

Navigating Uncertainty

Both Invenergy and Rivian welcomed the LPO announcements, while still navigating ongoing uncertainties about their respective projects.

In an emailed statement, Shashank Sane, executive vice president and head of transmission at Invenergy, said, “We are pleased to see LPO’s evaluation validate the findings of the Kansas and Missouri public utility commissions, both of which have long affirmed our project is key to improving grid affordability

and reliability across the Heartland.”

The first phase of the project has earned successive approvals from the Kansas Corporation Commission, originally in 2019 and again in 2023 to increase capacity for power delivery on the line, according to the [project website](#). The Missouri Public Service Commission issued similar approvals in 2019 and 2022.

However, Invenergy has run up against interconnection delays in MISO, which has given the project a 2030 interconnection date, versus the project’s original target of a 2027 in-service date. In February 2024, FERC approved an interconnection agreement with the 2030 date.

Invenergy had asked MISO for a limited operation provision in the agreement to allow the Grain Belt Express to begin partial operations in 2027. (See [FERC OKs Grain Belt Express Connection Agreement with MISO; Invenergy Displeased with 2030 Target.](#))

FERC also gave Invenergy only partial approv-

al to charge negotiated rates on the line once in operation. (See [Grain Belt Express Gets Partial Approval for Negotiated Rate Authority from FERC.](#))

Rivian founder and CEO RJ Scaringe said the LPO’s loan, if finalized, “would enable Rivian to more aggressively scale our U.S. manufacturing footprint. ... A robust ecosystem of U.S. companies developing and manufacturing EVs is critical for the U.S. to maintain its long-term leadership in transportation.”

Rivian suspended work on the new plant in Georgia in March, shifting production of its R2 SUV to its plant in Illinois, a decision saving the company \$2.25 billion, according to a [press release](#).

The company has not specified when it will resume work on the plant, but according to a spokesperson, “Georgia will provide the volume of production essential for us to enter new markets, including international ones. We expect to start construction to meet our stated goal of start of production in 2028.” ■



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Company Briefs

TotalEnergies SE to Halt OSW Farm in Mid-Atlantic

TotalEnergies SE, a Paris-based oil and gas conglomerate, last week said it is halting its plan to build an offshore wind farm near the New York-New Jersey coastline following President-elect Donald Trump's victory.

TotalEnergies CEO Patrick Pouyanne said the company plans to revisit the project in four years when political winds in the U.S. could shift once again.

Total's subsidiary, Attentive Energy, was one of six companies that committed a total of \$4.37 billion in 2022 to build offshore wind farms in New York Bight. The project is still in the early stages, as the companies recently obtained leasing rights from the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management.

More: [New York Post](#)

Blackstone Buys EQT Pipeline Stakes for \$3.5B

Natural gas producer EQT said alterna-



tive asset manager Blackstone would buy minority stakes in some of its pipelines for \$3.5 billion.

The sale will help EQT reduce the debt it accumulated after its \$14 billion purchase of pipeline operator Equitrans Midstream in July.

The transaction is expected to close this quarter.

More: [Reuters](#)

Federal Briefs

Commerce Department Announces New Solar Tariffs on Southeast Asia

The Commerce Department last week announced a new round of solar tariffs on Southeast Asian producers.

The new duties extend the United States' anti-dumping regime in Southeast Asia to solar cells, from just finished modules previously. The determination is the second in a trade case brought by a group of companies, including South Korea's Hanwha Qcells and First Solar, accusing Chinese companies of unfairly selling below-cost solar components into the U.S.

The department's final order will be released April 18.

More: [Reuters](#)

DOE to Deploy AI on Grid Backlog

The Department of Energy's Grid Deployment Office has opened an initial funding opportunity for up to \$30 million to accelerate the interconnection process for new

energy generation through the introduction of artificial intelligence techniques.

Projects will apply AI algorithms to parse interconnection applications, more quickly identify deficient applications and rapidly notify project developers, the DOE said. AI software trained on a library of accurate documentation and application materials can review interconnection applications for the required documentation and flag any errors. An estimated 90% of interconnection applications are deficient, and the work required to correct those errors causes major delays.

Nearly 2,600 GW of active projects were in U.S. grid interconnection queues at the end of 2023, up 27% from the end of 2022, according to a Lawrence Berkeley National Lab report.

More: [Axios](#)

US Utility-scale Solar to Add Record 32 GW in 2024

The U.S. is expected to install over 32 GW of

utility-scale solar in 2024, marking another record year after 2023, according to the American Clean Power Association's inaugural Solar Market Monitor report.

The report projects a dip in 2025, with a 16% drop in installations compared to 2024.

More: [Renewables Now](#)

BLM Reserves Public Land for Utah Solar Project



The Department of Interior last week announced the Bureau of Land Management has temporarily reserved 5,159 acres of public land

for the 600-MW Star Range solar project in Utah's Beaver County.

The land will be withdrawn from the public land laws for two years, including location under the Mining Law. During this period, BLM said it will review potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

More: [Renewables Now](#)

State Briefs

CALIFORNIA

PG&E Says it May Have Started Sites Fire

PG&E told the Public Utilities Commission that its equipment may have ignited the Sites Fire in Colusa County that burned more than 19,000 acres in June.



In a filing, PG&E said its system experienced an outage around 1:26 p.m. June 17 near where the fire started. Cal Fire said the

blaze began around 19 minutes later. A worker sent to the scene found part of a tree had fallen on what was then a de-energized power line.

The fire burned for more than a week and was the state's ninth-largest wildfire this year.

More: [KQED](#)

MAINE

AG Sues Oil Giants over Climate Change

Attorney General Aaron Frey last week announced a lawsuit against major oil companies Exxon, Shell, Chevron, BP and Sunoco, and lobbying group American Petroleum Institute, alleging they knowingly concealed the role of fossil fuels in climate change for decades.

The state said it is seeking a jury trial and damages compensating the state for both future mitigation efforts and the costs of earlier impacts.

Maine is the ninth state to sue to hold oil companies responsible for the effects of climate change, none of which have gone to trial.

More: *The Hill, The New York Times*

SOUTH DAKOTA

Pennington County Enacts 1-year Moratorium on Solar, Wind

The Pennington County Commission voted 4-0 to place a one-year moratorium on all conditional use permits for "utility-scale

alternative energy."

More than 450 citizens petitioned for the moratorium after the county's planning commission issued conditional use permits on Oct. 28 for the Cheyenne River Ranch Wind and Solar Farm.

The moratorium will go into effect Dec. 12 and will expire Dec. 12, 2025, unless it is extended.

More: *Rapid City Journal*

TENNESSEE

Chattanooga's EPB to Buy 33 MW of Solar Power



Chattanooga's electric utility, EPB, will purchase up to 33 MW of solar power from a Nashville-based supplier starting in 2028.

EPB CEO David Wade said the utility reached a 30-year agreement with Silicon Ranch to buy power at a price lower than the Tennessee Valley Authority's average wholesale rate, resulting in yearly savings of \$1.6 million once the solar installation is complete.

Silicon Ranch plans to begin construction

in 2027 and have the facility operational by the middle of 2028.

More: *Chattanooga Times Free Press*

VIRGINIA

Assembly Proposes Board to Advise Localities on Large Solar Projects

The General Assembly's Commission on Electric Utility Regulation recently proposed the creation of a new state-level board to advise local governments on large solar projects.

Under the draft plan, the Solar Energy and Energy Storage Siting Advisory Board would offer its opinion to any local government evaluating a solar project that is more than 20 MW and considered of statewide significance. If a local government rejects a proposal, the developer could appeal to the State Corporation Commission or perhaps a circuit court. And if the state falls behind on meeting its goals for adding new renewable energy, the state could eventually turn the board's opinions into binding approvals.

The Legislature will continue to discuss the proposal.

More: *Cardinal News, Richmond Times-Dispatch*

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