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February 2009

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If You Need, Own or Depend on Electric Transmission - You Should Join Wires!

WIRES is the transmission industry's voice on key public policy issues at all levels of government. During the coming year of

WIRES News

An Update on Public Policy Developments from the Working group for Investment in Reliable and Economic electric Systems

The Big Splash

Prominent Washington policymakers gathered on Feb. 23 to announce that clean energy and electric transmission were among the highest national priorities. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar and others joined former President Bill Clinton, former Vice President Al Gore, and T. Boone Pickens of BP Capital in outlining a transformational agenda for the nation.



The President already has made clear that modernizing and expanding the electric transmission is an essential component of that transformation. [WIRES congratulates the participants for their extraordinary focus on energy policy.](#)

For more information, go to:

<http://nationalcleanenergyproject.org/wired-for-progress-building-a-national-clean-energy-grid/#more-161>

"Transmission 102" Panel Set for Capitol Hill Feb. 27

On Friday, Feb. 27, from 10:00-11:30 a.m. in Room 210 of the Cannon House Office Building on Washington's Capitol Hill, WIRES will co-host a panel of industry experts to help Members of Congress and their staffs, as well as other stakeholders, gain new perspectives on the challenges facing the America's electricity transmission system and the basic policy choices we must make to ensure the grid meets 21st century needs.



Free and open to anyone, *Transmission 102: Policy Challenges to Grid Expansion* follows up on the *Transmission 101* event that drew more than 100 stakeholders to the Hill in January. More on the event co-sponsored by **WIRES**, the **Environmental and Energy Study Institute (EESI)** and the **American Wind Energy Association (AWEA)** is available at: http://www.eesi.org/022709_transmission

Wires Praises EFC Policy Statement

Investing in new transmission is at the core of a statement recently issued by a wide-ranging coalition of environmental, industry, and public interest groups under the label of the **Energy Future Coalition**. The statement, entitled *The National Clean Energy Smart Grid: An Economic, Environmental, and National Security Imperative*, highlights [key aspects of the WIRES regulatory reform agenda](#) - better transmission planning, siting reform, and efficient and

change and challenge in Washington, your support for WIRES - and participation in its advocacy programs - are essential to building America's electrical grid to meet both current and emerging challenges.

If you're not already a member, join WIRES by contacting Jim Hoecker (202-378-2316 or 202-549-0584/jhoecker@helppllc.com).

Check the [WIRES Calendar](#) to Learn About the Latest Events And Conferences Related to Transmission Issues

equitable cost allocation.

Solar, Wind Industries Release White Paper On Green Transmission Superhighway

The American Wind Energy Association (AWEA) and the Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) on Feb. 17 released a white paper titled *Green Power Superhighways: Building a Path to America's Clean Energy Future*, detailing current inadequacies of the U.S. electric transmission infrastructure and offering policy solutions to address them.

The solar and wind communities have shown great foresight in anticipating the need for substantial transmission additions to bring clean electricity to market. The AWEA/SEIA analysis should alert policy makers that one cannot love clean energy without also understanding the need to expand the transmission network. It is a useful accompaniment to WIRES' survey of how renewable energy is being integrated into the grid.

The report is available at <http://www.awea.org/GreenPowerSuperhighways.pdf> and <http://www.seia.org/galleries/pdf/GreenPowerSuperhighways.pdf>

Federal Appeals Court Reverses FERC Interpretation Of Backstop Role in Siting

On Feb. 18, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit ruled that a decision by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to exercise federal backstop siting authority for power lines in designated corridors, even if a state has denied a project's application, misread the plain meaning of Section 216(b) of the Federal Power Act. [The ruling came in the case of Piedmont Environmental Council v. FERC, No. 07-1651, slip op. \(4th Cir. Feb. 18, 2009\).](#)

The decision reinforces state siting authority over interstate transmission by limiting the federal backstop to specific instances identified in the statute. The effect that the decision may have on current siting reforms soon to be considered by Congress is unclear. The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) recently considered a resolution that indicated some flexibility on moving the siting of EHV facilities to the federal government. No action has been taken, however.

FERC Signals New Flexibility For Merchant Transmission Projects

In its Feb. 19 approval of rates for two innovative transmission projects, FERC demonstrated notable flexibility (Chinook Power Transmission, LLC and Zephyr Power Transmission, LLC, **Docket Nos: ER09-432-000, ER09-433-000**). FERC will allow Chinook and Zephyr to support project development by contracting with an "anchor" customer -- in these cases wind generation companies -- for half of the capacity on its line instead of being required to sell capacity in an open season.

To learn more, visit: <http://www.ferc.gov/news/news->

releases/2009/2009-1/02-19-09-E-15.asp

Stimulus Package Will Help Bolster Grid

The nation's transmission grid will benefit from funding under the \$787 billion economic stimulus package signed into law by President Barack Obama on Feb. 17.

- ▶ The Bonneville Power Administration and Western Area Power Administration each will receive \$3.25 billion in additional borrowing authority for financing, building and updating their transmission systems.
- ▶ \$3.2 billion is devoted to energy efficiency and conservation block grants.
- ▶ \$4.5 billion in direct appropriations for Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability includes: \$10 million set aside to implement a "smart grid interoperability framework" per Section 1305 of the 2007 Energy Independence and Security Act, and; \$80 million to conduct a resource assessment and an analysis of future demand and transmission requirements to facilitate development of regional transmission plans
- ▶ DOE's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability will provide technical assistance to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation, the regional reliability entities, the states and other transmission owners and operators for the formation of interconnection-based transmission plans for the Eastern and Western Interconnections and ERCOT.
- ▶ \$6 billion is provided for loan guarantees for "rapid deployment" of renewable energy systems and electric power transmission lines. Projects eligible under this section must commence construction not later than Sept. 30, 2011.

Secretary of Energy Chu has committed to begin dispersing funds within 60 days. Increased workforce levels at DOE and state agencies overseeing the stimulus funding are likely. Procedures remain unclear at this time.

Study: Billions Needed to Deliver Wind Power To Eastern Interconnection

The Joint Coordinated System Plan estimates electricity sector will need \$80 billion+ in new transmission to obtain 20% of the eastern United States' electricity from wind.

Get the Complete study:

<http://www.jcspstudy.org>

Read *The Wall Street Journal's* story:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123414242155761829.html>

WIRES Members Prominent at Transmission Summit 2009

Several WIRES members will be among the speakers at the March 11-13 [Transmission Summit 2009](#) conference in Washington, DC.

FERC Hosts March 2 Tech Conference On Integrating

Renewable Resources

On March 2 in Washington, DC, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission will host a conference to assess the challenges posed by integration of large amounts of variable, renewable generation into wholesale markets and grids, as well as potentially innovative solutions to these challenges.

For more details, visit the FERC Web site:

<http://www.ferc.gov/EventCalendar/EventDetails.aspx?ID=4490&CalType=%20&CalendarID=116&Date=03/02/2009&View=Listview>

In the News

Smart Roads. Smart Bridges. Smart Grids.

The Wall Street Journal

Feb. 17, 2009

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123447510631779255.html>

Alternative Energy Still Facing Headwinds

The Washington Post

Feb. 17, 2009

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/02/16/AR2009021601199.html?hpid=moreheadlines>

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