

News Release

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California ISO appoints Elliot Mainzer new president and CEO

Departing BPA administrator excited to advance clean energy transition

FOLSOM, Calif. – The California Independent System Operator (CAISO) announced the appointment today of Elliot Mainzer as its new president and Chief Executive Officer. He will succeed the retiring Steve Berberich on September 30, 2020.

The CAISO Board of Governors made its appointment following a highly competitive nationwide search. Berberich will remain in Folsom into October to ensure a smooth leadership transition.

Mainzer has served as administrator and CEO of the Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), based in Portland, OR for the past seven years. He was named acting administrator in July 2013 and appointed to a permanent position as administrator and CEO in January 2014. He has worked at BPA for 18 years.

“Elliot’s demonstrated success leading a large, complex power and transmission organization will serve CAISO, our customers and stakeholders well,” the CAISO Board of Governors said in a statement. “We are happy to have a leader so knowledgeable about integrating renewables and passionate about building on CAISO’s organizational strengths and momentum toward low-carbon electricity.”

In his current position, Mainzer is responsible for managing the non-profit federal agency that markets 23,000 megawatts (MW) of carbon-free power and operates much of the high-voltage power grid across the Pacific Northwest, including major interconnections with California.

“I am grateful to have the opportunity to lead the creative and innovative team at CAISO and to enable California to reliably and safely achieve its ambitious clean energy and climate goals,” said Mainzer. “I also look forward to working closely with our colleagues across the West to build on the success of the Western Energy Imbalance Market and further strengthen regional coordination and technology innovation.”

“Elliot brings exceptional leadership experience, wide-ranging contacts and inclusive strategic thinking to the CEO position,” the Western Energy Imbalance Market Governing Body said in a statement. “We look forward to working with Elliot as we continue to enhance and expand the financial, environmental and reliability benefits of the WEIM.”



Mainzer joined BPA in 2002 and has held a variety of management positions in the agency's Power, Transmission and Corporate organizations, including trading floor manager and manager of transmission policy and strategy. As executive vice president of Corporate Strategy, he led BPA's strategic planning process and provided policy leadership and cross-agency coordination on renewable resources, market design, climate change, and integrated planning.

Mainzer led BPA's ambitious grid modernization initiative, investing in business processes and operating systems essential for BPA's participation in the evolving electricity market. He transformed BPA's Transmission Services business unit through negotiation of a new open access tariff, enhanced transmission planning and establishment of performance metrics for customer responsiveness. Under Mainzer, BPA also achieved its best safety record in the agency's history.

Mainzer, a San Francisco native, earned a bachelor's degree in geography from the University of California, Berkeley, and master's degrees in business administration and environmental studies from Yale University.

Berberich served 14 years with CAISO, the last nine as CEO. He led efforts to shift California's grid to advanced clean resources, including solar, wind, storage, demand response and distributed energy programs. He was instrumental in upgrading energy management and market software, and guided the CAISO management team to create the Western Energy Imbalance Market (WEIM) which will include entities serving 82% of the load in the West, and to establish CAISO as Reliability Coordinator for most of the Western Interconnection. As president of the group of the largest transmission operators worldwide, he put CAISO at the forefront of global efforts to decarbonize electric service.

To view Elliot Mainzer's full biography, click [here](#).

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The California ISO is a nonprofit public benefit corporation dedicated, with its partners, to continuous improvement and secure operation of a reliable grid operated for the benefit of consumers. It provides comprehensive grid planning, open and non-discriminatory access to one of the largest networks of high-voltage transmission power lines in the world, and operates a \$9 billion competitive electricity market. Recognizing the importance of the global climate challenge, CAISO is at the forefront of integrating renewable power and advanced technologies that will help provide a sustainable energy future efficiently and cleanly.

The Western Energy Imbalance Market (WEIM) Governing Body is the governing authority designed by regional stakeholders with delegated authority from the CAISO Board of Governors to resolve rules specific to participation in the WEIM.