News Release

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California ISO announces plans to become Reliability Coordinator

FOLSOM, Calif. – The California Independent System Operator (ISO) today announced it will become its own Reliability Coordinator (RC) and offer these services to other balancing authorities and transmission operators in the western United States.

The ISO has given notice of its withdrawal to its current reliability coordinator, Peak Reliability, and to each of their funding members, effective September 2019.

Reliability is an essential element of operating the electric grid, and the ISO has supported a single reliability coordinator in the Western Interconnection to provide the most comprehensive and coordinated view of the system. However, with the likely departure of the Mountain West Transmission Group (MWTG) from Peak and resulting increased costs to all participants, and Peak's partnership with PJM to offer market services, the ISO believes it is now necessary to pursue its own withdrawal. Therefore, the ISO will provide these services for its own footprint as soon as possible, and to other parties across the West, at significantly reduced costs.

"The ISO reluctantly takes these steps and will collaborate with the rest of the funding parties to ensure continuity of reliability services and to avoid any party being adversely affected financially," said Steve Berberich, President and CEO of the ISO. "We will now seek to provide Reliability Coordinator services to our own system, as well as to other interested parties in the Western Interconnection."

A reliability coordinator is responsible for complying with North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC) and regional standards, including providing oversight, monitoring operational and security risks, acting or directing action to preserve system reliability, and providing leadership in system restoration following a major reliability event.

The RC services the ISO is contemplating will include outage coordination and day-ahead planning, in addition to real-time monitoring for reliability.

The ISO is extending its withdrawal period from the required 18 months to 20 months to ensure seamless coordination with Peak Reliability's members on the transition. During that time, the ISO will work through an open and transparent process with all interested stakeholders to complete necessary tariff changes, oversight functions, and certification processes from NERC and the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) in a timely manner.

The ISO plans for its new RC unit to be certified and operational by spring 2019.

The ISO will host several public meetings on the topic this month, including an informational call Thursday, Jan. 4, from 9 to 10 a.m., followed by in-person meetings at ISO's Folsom, CA, headquarters on January 17; in Phoenix, Arizona on January 18; and in Portland, Oregon on January 19. Web conferences will also be available for these meetings.

For more information on the call and in-person regional meetings, click here to view the Market Notice posted on the ISO's Key Topics webpage, along with other related documents.

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