

News Release

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For more information, contact:
Steven Greenlee | sgreenlee@caiso.com

California's grid plan ready for renewable power influx

FOLSOM, Calif. – The California Independent System Operator Corporation (ISO) Board of Governors yesterday approved the 2010-2011 Transmission Plan that includes 33 grid upgrades for addressing future reliability and policy-driven needs worth \$1.2 billion. The approval provides a timely decision that will aid renewable power projects seeking financing. The ISO accelerated its planning process by six months so that American Recovery and Reinvestment Act projects could meet eligibility criteria.

The plan demonstrates that the transmission infrastructure approved to date by the ISO is adequate to carry thousands of new megawatts to meet the nation's most ambitious renewable resources goal. The transmission projects that are already approved through the ISO planning process, or identified in large generator interconnection agreements, or are progressing through the CPUC approval process accommodate a diverse range of resource portfolios for meeting a 33% RPS.

“The finding that no major new transmission projects are needing approval by the ISO at this time to support RPS reflects years of effort by the ISO, state agencies, the California Transmission Planning Group, participants in the Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative and market participants that resulted in the approval and ongoing construction of major transmission projects such as Tehachapi and the Sunrise Powerlink,” said Vice President of Market and Infrastructure Development, Keith Casey, Ph.D.

The need for access to renewable resources in Imperial County created the need for the first policy-driven transmission project—a category enabled by the ISO's new transmission planning process approved by FERC last December. The project involves re-conductoring the Devers-Mirage 230 kV double circuit line (Path 42), located in the Southern California Edison transmission service territory.

The ISO recognizes that uncertainty remains regarding how California will ultimately meet its 33% RPS goals in terms of the precise locations, resource mix and quantity of renewable energy resources. While this plan shows that the transmission approved to date can accommodate a diverse range of plausible renewable development, the ISO will continue to work with state agencies and all stakeholders to evaluate development trends and policy directives beginning with next year's planning cycle, and will reassess the transmission needs accordingly.

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Transmission Plan-2-2-2-2

This is first comprehensive ISO grid plan that considers projects that meet the California's 33% RPS as well as reliability upgrades and economic additions that benefit ratepayers. The revised transmission planning process, developed in close collaboration with stakeholders, was approved by federal regulators in December 2010 (<http://www.caiso.com/286e/286ec2a765520.pdf>).

To download the 2010/2011 plan, go to here: <http://www.caiso.com/2734/2734e3d964ec0.html>.

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California ISO Media Hotline | 888.516.6397

250 Outcropping Way | Folsom, California 95630 | www.caiso.com

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The California ISO operates the state's wholesale transmission grid, providing open and non-discriminatory access supported by a competitive energy market and comprehensive planning efforts. Partnering with more than 90 client organizations, the ISO is dedicated to the continual development and reliable operation of a modern grid that operates at the least cost to the benefit of consumers. The ISO bulk power market allocates space on transmission lines, maintains operating reserves and matches supply with demand. Recognizing the importance of global climate change, the ISO welcomes new, advanced technologies that will help meet the energy needs of 30 million Californians efficiently and cleanly. The ISO is a nonprofit public benefit corporation.