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Eastern Interconnection Planning Collaborative Continues Development Work, Intends to Seek Federal Funding

Development of the Eastern Interconnection Planning Collaborative moved another step closer to the goal of extending the existing regionally based transmission system planning analysis to include an interconnection-wide approach following a second meeting of Eastern Interconnection planning authorities. A decision was also reached to begin developing a proposal to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) for funding to support their work.

Meeting May 21 in Atlanta, representatives from 22 planning authorities in the Eastern Interconnection agreed to initiate the technical work to facilitate coordination of existing transmission plans, conduct reliability analyses of the combined interconnection system, and complete studies to support state, provincial, regional or federal public policy goals.

“Expanding on the existing planning expertise and protocols already employed on a regional basis in the Eastern Interconnection is the most efficient and timely means of analyzing the entire interconnection as a whole,” noted David Whiteley who facilitated the discussion.

Participants in the meeting, which follows the inaugural meeting of the group on April 8, included planners from across the U.S. and Canadian portions of the Eastern Interconnection, including the Independent System Operators and Regional Transmission Organizations, investor-owned utilities, and municipal and cooperative systems. The group continued to develop the processes and structure of the overarching Collaborative and discussed the development of a formal agreement among the participants as to how the technical study work would proceed.

“A key element of the effort is expanding upon grass roots local and regional planning approaches to further involve industry stakeholder groups, and government officials in the U.S. and Canada,” Whiteley said. “We’ve committed to work closely with state, provincial, and federal leadership, regulators and the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissions (NARUC) in crafting an effective process.”

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