

CHAPTER 18: COORDINATING WITH REGIONAL TRANSMISSION PLANNING

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KEY FINDINGS

The Council should continue to coordinate resource data with organizations responsible for regional transmission planning. This leads to more accurate planning for both resource and transmission expansion.

REGIONAL TRANSMISSION PLANNING AND THE POWER ACT

The Power Act defines a resource as electric power or actual or planned load reduction.¹ The Act directs the Council to develop a general scheme for implementing conservation measures and developing resources with priority to be given to those resources which the Council determines to be cost-effective. The Act does not require the Council to develop a transmission plan for new resources.

The Act does, however, direct the Council to consider transmission and distribution costs to the consumer when determining whether a resource is cost-effective. Thus this plan includes estimates of costs associated with transmission and distribution for both conservation and generating resources. See chapters 12 and 13 for more information.

Convergence of Resource and Transmission Planning

Historically, regional transmission planning has occurred as a separate and distinct undertaking from resource planning. However, as the power system has become more complex with the addition of variable resources, distributed generation and demand response measures, both transmission and resource planners have come to realize that a more coordinated planning effort is needed. To that end, transmission planners have moved to adopt similar models and methods to those used by resource planners. The Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), ColumbiaGrid and the Northern Tier Transmission Group (NTTG) all currently use production cost models that are similar to models used by resource planners in the region. These production cost models use data that is consistent with data used in the AURORAxmp model and in the Regional Portfolio Model, both of which were used to develop this power plan. See chapters 8 and 15 for more information.

This convergence of modeling and planning methods has created both the need and opportunity for the Council to coordinate more closely with transmission planning organizations on data and analyses. The Council has and will continue to participate in the long-term transmission planning committees and forums whenever these opportunities arise.

¹ The Pacific Northwest Electric Power Planning and Conservation Act defines “resource” as “electric power, including the actual or planned electric power capability of generating facilities, or actual or planned load reduction resulting from direct application of a renewable energy resource by a consumer, or from a conservation measure.” (Northwest Power Act, Section 3(19)(A) and (B)).

Coordination on Planning Data

The Transmission Expansion Planning Policy Committee (TEPPC) at WECC is chartered to oversee and maintain a public database for production cost and related analysis. All three transmission planning organizations, WECC, ColumbiaGrid and NTTG, use the database produced by TEPPC in their planning activities. To ensure coordination with these regional transmission planning entities, the Council also works with TEPPC to verify that Council assumptions for generating resources are similar to those used by TEPPC².

² See Chapter 4 ANLYS-24 and ANLYS-25 for transmission action items related coordination with regional transmission planners and TEPPC, respectively.

