

WILKINSON) BARKER) KNAUER) LLP

2138 W 32ND AVENUE
SUITE 300
DENVER, CO 80211
TEL 303.626.2350
WWW.WBK.LAW.COM
MATTHEW S. LARSON
303.626.2328
MLARSON@WBK.LAW.COM

October 31, 2023

Sarah Edmonds
President & CEO
Western Power Pool
7525 NE Ambassador Place, Suite M
Portland, Oregon, 97220
Sarah.Edmonds@westernpowerpool.org

Via Electronic Mail

Re: *Western Transmission Expansion Coalition Concept Paper for a West-Wide Transmission Plan - Comments*

Dear Ms. Edmonds:

As you may know, Wilkinson Barker Knauer LLP (WBK) is a regulatory law firm that focuses on the energy and telecommunications sectors. We have a broad practice across the western United States and beyond representing a diverse array of client interests and are active in many policy dialogues around the energy transition.

Our team at WBK has reviewed the Western Transmission Expansion Coalition Concept Paper for a West-Wide Transmission Plan (“Concept Paper”) published on October 2, 2023. The Western Transmission Expansion Coalition (WTEC) is a policy-positive step forward in our view, and we applaud this effort. We agree with the three themes set forth in the Concept Paper to guide the effort: Different; Inclusive; and Expedient.¹ Each theme is appropriately framed to deliver the most important goals within the Concept Paper: “an actionable transmission plan to address regional and interregional needs.”²

The notion of delivering an actionable transmission plan is a worthy and sound objective. The pathway to get there, through the creation of a Steering Committee, Regional Engagement Committee (REC), and Technical Task Force, is also sound. We submit, however, that for the

¹ Concept Paper, at 3.

² Concept Paper, at 2, 4.

October 31, 2023

Page 2

Concept Paper and process to lead to an actionable transmission plan that can be brought to life with steel in the ground and enhanced regional and interregional connectivity, it is essential that each of the Steering Committee, REC, and Technical Task Force have representation reflecting the energy policy and regulatory diversity of the broader region. We encourage you to keep this front-of-mind in making selections for the Steering Committee and Technical Task Force.

Respecting the REC, we believe it provides a strong vehicle to ensure West-wide perspectives are covered in the process. A West-wide perspective includes considerations of how integrated resource planning (“IRP”) works in different jurisdictions and how projects identified through the WTEC process can be considered and advanced through or consistent with these processes. Moreover, a West-wide perspective will be key to consideration of how business models and investment vehicles may interact with such projects to bring them to fruition. While the WTEC is focused primarily on project identification, we underscore that in order for those projects become “actionable,” there is a critical need to recognize the complex interplay among neighboring IRPs (and other regulatory considerations) to facilitate cross-entity collaboration. These considerations are not meant to, nor can they, distract from the core objective of the WTEC as set forth in the concept paper in terms of identifying projects that are part of a “transmission plan that provides a West-wide view by addressing both regional and inter-regional needs over a 20-year time frame,” with five-year incremental analyses inside of the longer window.³

One path to ensure the WTEC captures this perspective is to add an additional category of participants to the REC that are “West-wide Policy” representatives, and we believe a WBK participant could serve in one of these seats along with another person from an organization that participates in policy dialogues across the broader western United States. One advantage to adding this type of perspective is that would provide a unique perspective informed by a deep knowledge of IRP, project approval, and recovery processes in multiple western jurisdictions. The goal of this participation would be to enhance diversity in perspective to make sure the final plan is as actionable as possible, as opposed to representing any specific interest in the process.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments, and we wanted to reinforce our support for the overall objective articulated in the Concept Paper as the WTEC initiative moves forward.

Regards,

Matthew S. Larson

Matthew S. Larson
Partner, Wilkinson Barker Knauer LLP

³ Concept Paper at 4; *id.* at note 5.