

October 31, 2023

Sarah Edmonds
President & CEO
Western Power Pool

Dear Executive Director Edmonds,

Western Freedom is a broad coalition of large commercial and industrial customers seeking to build a more affordable, reliable and cleaner energy future through market optimization and the eventual creation of a Western regional transmission organization (RTO). We write to express our support for the Western Transmission Expansion Coalition's Concept Paper for a West-Wide Transmission Plan.

Transmission planning is critical to ensuring the western interconnection meets the challenges and opportunities of a changing generation fleet, takes advantage of the economic development potential of growing industries, and ensures customers accrue benefits from the efficient expansion of the grid. While a Western RTO would provide the most optimized transmission planning service across the footprint, Western Freedom sees the West-Wide Transmission Plan as an important effort that fills a needed gap for increased coordination in the meantime.

We are pleased to see the expressed goals for a 20 year planning horizon as well as having a transparent and replicable process. This has the potential to facilitate necessary dialogue and technical information sharing required to produce forward-looking plans that can inform sound investment decisions, support grid reliability, and increase the West's competitiveness for federal resources.

Engaged participation in the steering committee and technical task force by NorthernGrid, WestConnect and CAISO is critical to achieving the goal of regional and inter-regional planning. Furthermore, as Western Freedom seeks to elevate the voices of large commercial and industrial customers, we welcome industrial customer representation on the Regional Engagement Committee and would seek additional ongoing opportunities for meaningful engagement. Lastly, we also encourage collaboration with the Committee on Regional Electric Power Cooperation (CREPC) regarding the proposed Transmission Working Group recommendation made by the Western States Transmission Initiative (WSTI).¹ Aligning planning processes has the benefit of streamlined stakeholder engagement and improved outcomes.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and your willingness to facilitate dialogue on this proposal for improved Western transmission planning.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Staks

Kathleen Staks
Executive Director

¹ <https://www.westernenergyboard.org/wp-content/uploads/Recommendations-from-Gridworks-Western-States-Transmission-Initiative.pdf>