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FERC Transmission Planning Meetings to Focus on Interregional Challenges

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) will convene regional conferences later this year to determine whether transmission providers' planning efforts can meet the challenges posed by wider integration of regional energy resources into the nation's power grid for the benefit of consumers.

The conferences will examine whether existing transmission planning processes adequately consider needs and solutions on a regional or interconnection-wide basis to ensure adequate and reliable supplies of electricity at just and reasonable rates. FERC also will explore whether the existing transmission planning processes sufficiently meet such emerging transmission challenges as the development of interregional transmission facilities, the integration of large amounts of location-constrained generation and the interconnection of distributed energy resources. The conferences will determine the progress and benefits of each transmission provider's planning process, gather customer and other stakeholder input and discuss any areas that may need improvement.

"Planning is one of the three legs on the transmission policy stool – the others are siting and cost allocation – and all are crucial to meeting the goals of assimilating demand resources, renewable energy and distributed generation into the grid for the benefit of consumers," FERC Chairman Jon Wellinghoff said. "These regional conferences will help provide the Commission with the information necessary to understand each region of the country and how it relates to broader, interregional transmission planning needs."

FERC announced the conferences today in the context of approving, with certain conditions, transmission plans submitted by Maine Public Service Company; PJM Interconnection, L.L.C.; Xcel Energy Services, Inc. and Southwestern Public Service Company; MidAmerican Energy Company; Midwest Independent Transmission System Operator, Inc. and American Transmission Company, LLC; ISO New England; Southwest Power Pool; California Independent System Operator Corporation; and Southwestern Power Administration.

The Commission will announce the specific dates, times and agendas of the technical conferences at a later time.

Order No. 890, issued in February 2007, reformed FERC's *pro forma* open access transmission tariff to ensure that transmission service is provided on a non-discriminatory basis by developing an open, coordinated and transparent transmission planning process.

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