196 FERC ¶ 61,031
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION

Before Commissioners: Laura V. Swett, Chairman;
David Rosner, Lindsay S. See,
Judy W. Chang, and David LaCerte.

Reliability Standard(s) Pertaining to Computational Load Integration

Docket No. RD26-7-000

ORDER DIRECTING THE NORTH AMERICAN ELECTRIC RELIABILITY CORPORATION TO FILE RELIABILITY STANDARD(S) PERTAINING TO COMPUTATIONAL LOAD INTEGRATION

(Issued July 16, 2026)

1. As part of its ongoing oversight of the Bulk-Power System, and pursuant to section 215(d)(5) of the Federal Power Act (FPA),[1] the Commission directs the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the Commission-certified Electric Reliability Organization (ERO), to file by December 31, 2026, one or more new or modified Reliability Standards to address reliability risks to the Bulk-Power System associated with the integration of computational loads and any associated definitions included in the NERC Glossary of Terms Used in NERC Reliability Standards (Glossary). Likewise, pursuant to section 215(f),[2] the Commission directs NERC to develop revisions to NERC's Rules of Procedure, including registry criteria, necessary for registration of computational load entities and expects NERC to submit the proposed revisions by December 31, 2026. The Commission further directs NERC to submit, by March 1, 2027, an informational filing containing a workplan detailing the next steps in the standards development process for additional Reliability Standards pertaining to computational load integration.

[1] 16 U.S.C. § 824o(d)(5).

[2] *Id.* § 824o(f).

I. Background

A. Section 215 and the Mandatory Reliability Standards

2. Section 215 of the FPA requires the Commission to certify an ERO to develop mandatory and enforceable Reliability Standards, subject to Commission review and approval.[3] Once approved, the Reliability Standards are enforceable in the United States by the ERO, subject to Commission oversight, or by the Commission independently. Pursuant to section 215 of the FPA, the Commission established a process to select and certify an ERO,[4] and subsequently certified NERC.[5]

3. Section 215(d)(5) of the FPA authorizes the Commission, upon its own motion or upon complaint, to order the ERO to submit to the Commission "a proposed Reliability Standard or modification to a Reliability Standard that addresses a specific matter if the Commission considers such a new or modified Reliability Standard to carry out section 215 of the [FPA]."[6] Further, the Commission's rules and regulations provide that the Commission, when ordering the ERO to submit new or modified Reliability Standards, may order a deadline for such submission.[7]

[3] *Id.* § 824o.

[4] *Rules Concerning Certification of the Elec. Reliability Org.; & Procs. for the Establishment, Approval, and Enf't of Elec. Reliability Standards*, Order No. 672, 114 FERC ¶ 61,104, *order on reh'g*, Order No. 672-A, 114 FERC ¶ 61,238 (2006).

[5] *N. Am. Elec. Reliability Corp.*, 116 FERC ¶ 61,062, *order on reh'g & compliance*, 117 FERC ¶ 61,126 (2006), *aff'd sub nom. Alcoa Inc. v. FERC*, 564 F.3d 1342 (D.C. Cir. 2009).

[6] 16 U.S.C. § 824o(d)(5); 18 C.F.R. § 39.5(f) (2026).

[7] 18 C.F.R. § 39.5(g) (2026).

B. ANOPR and NERC's Comments

4. On October 23, 2025, the Secretary of Energy issued an advance notice of proposed rulemaking (ANOPR)[8] pursuant to section 403 of the Department of Energy Organization Act[9] directing the Commission to consider reforms to ensure timely and orderly interconnection of large loads to the transmission system. The Commission issued an order inviting comments on the ANOPR.[10]

5. Among others commenters, NERC filed comments supporting the need for prompt Commission action.[11] NERC states that "Reliability Standards are an important part of ensuring that the [Bulk-Power System] is prepared to meet the needs of a North American economy that is heavily reliant on the electric grid."[12] NERC explains that the 2024 Long-Term Reliability Assessment[13] identified that "demand growth is higher than at any point in the last two decades,"[14] with particular challenges arising from large loads that "are substantially larger and constructed more quickly than prior loads

[8] *Interconnection of Large Loads to the Interstate Transmission Sys.*, Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (Oct. 23, 2025) (ANOPR); *see also* Letter from Chris Wright, Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of Energy (Oct. 23, 2025) (Secretary's Letter). The full text of the ANOPR can be found at: https://www.energy.gov/sites/default/files/2025-10/403%20Large%20Loads%20Letter.pdf, and it is posted in the Commission's eLibrary in Docket No. RM26-4-000.

[9] 42 U.S.C. § 7173.

[10] *Interconnection of Large Loads to the Interstate Transmission Sys.*, Notice Inviting Comments, Docket No. RM26-4-000 (issued Oct. 27, 2025).

[11] NERC, Comments, *Interconnection of Large Loads to the Interstate Transmission Sys.*, Docket No. RM26-4-000, at 1-2, 5-6 (filed Nov. 21, 2025) (NERC ANOPR Comments).

[12] *Id.* at 2.

[13] *See* NERC, *2024 Long-Term Reliability Assessment* (Dec. 2024) (corrected July 11, 2025), https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/our-work/assessments/2024-ltra_corrected_july_2025.pdf.

[14] NERC ANOPR Comments at 5 (citations omitted).

using the [Bulk-Power System]."[15] NERC further states that "this environment creates a need for quick and decisive action to address potential reliability impacts."[16]

6. NERC also explains that it has initiated substantial work to assess and mitigate the reliability implications of large loads.[17] NERC states that its large load action plan includes registration analysis, review of whether revisions to existing Reliability Standards could mitigate impacts to the Bulk-Power System reliability, and development of additional findings, guidance and next steps regarding large loads through an open stakeholder process.[18]

7. NERC's March 20, 2026, supplemental ANOPR comments reiterate the urgency and feasibility of near-term standards development.[19] NERC states the electric grid is "entering a period of load growth unprecedented in recent memory,"[20] and that, after further reliability assessments and stakeholder engagement, NERC has concluded that it should accelerate its action plan and "initiate efforts to update registry criteria and develop initial Reliability Standards to include large loads."[21] NERC further states that under its accelerated large load action plan, it intends to file initial new or modified Reliability Standards, Glossary changes, and registry criteria revisions on or before December 31, 2026.[22] NERC anticipates additional Reliability Standards revisions applicable to large loads during 2027. NERC refers to the development of its initial intended filing as its Phase I Reliability Standards initiative, and it refers to the

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[15] *Id.* at 5-6.

[16] *Id.* at 6.

[17] *Id.* at 7, 12-15.

[18] *Id.* at 13-17.

[19] *Interconnection of Large Loads to the Interstate Transmission Sys.*, Letter from James B. Robb, President and CEO, NERC, to Chairman Swett and Commissioners, Docket No. RM26-4-000, at 2 (filed Mar. 20, 2026) (NERC ANOPR Supplemental Comments).

[20] *Id*. at 1.

[21] *Id.* at 2.

[22] *Id.* at 3. *See also* NERC, *Project 2026-02 Computational Loads* (last visited July 9, 2026), https://www.nerc.com/standards/reliability-standards-under-development/2026-02-computational-loads (providing additional detail on the two-phased plan).

development of subsequent filings on additional Reliability Standards pertaining to computational load integration as Phase II.

8. NERC states that on March 18, 2026, the NERC Standards Committee authorized a Standard Authorization Request proposing "Glossary updates for computational load and computational load entities along with a new Reliability Standard focused on essential actions for integrating computational loads in the near term."[23]

II. Discussion

9. We agree with NERC regarding the urgent need for action to assure that computational loads are reliably integrated into the operation of the Bulk-Power System. NERC has documented multiple grid disturbances in which computational loads have caused or contributed to the instability of the Bulk-Power System.[24] As noted above, NERC has developed an action plan to develop Reliability Standards for computational loads, as well as related Glossary changes and registry criteria revisions, by December 31, 2026.[25] While we support and encourage NERC's activities to date, in light of the unprecedented load growth driven by data centers, it is imperative that NERC address the reliability concerns associated with computational loads in a timely manner and with greater certainty than provided by voluntary timelines.

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[23] NERC ANOPR Supplemental Comments at 2. The Standard Authorization Request proposes to define "computational load" as "load comprised of power demand from information technology equipment, such as servers, storage, and networking hardware." NERC Standard Authorization Request, *Reliability Standards to Address Computational Load – Phase I*, at 3 (Feb. 20, 2026) (revised May 11, 2026), https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/standards/projects/2026-02/sar-comment-period/project-2026-02-computational-loads-sar-clean-052026.pdf.

[24] *E.g.*, NERC Supplemental ANOPR Comments at 1 n.1; *see also* NERC, *Incident Review: Considering Simultaneous Voltage-Sensitive Load Reduction*s (Jan. 8, 2025), https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/our-work/reports/event-reports/incident_review_large_load_loss.pdf; NERC, *Incident Review: Voltage-Sensitive Crypto Load Reductions* (Jan. 9, 2026), https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/our-work/reports/event-reports/incident_review_considering_voltage-sensitive_crypto_load_reductions.pdf; *see also* NERC, *2026 State of Reliability: Assessment Overview of 2025 Bulk Power System Performance* at 5-6 (June 24, 2026), https://www.nerc.com/globalassets/programs/rapa/pa/nerc_sor_2026_overview.pdf.

[25] NERC ANOPR Supplemental Comments at 1-3.

10. Accordingly, pursuant to section 215(d)(5) of the FPA, we direct NERC to develop one or more new or modified Reliability Standards that address reliability concerns associated with the integration of computational loads with the nation's Bulk-Power System and related Glossary changes. Consistent with NERC's action plan, NERC may submit computational load Reliability Standards in phases. To ensure timely action, we direct that NERC submit to the Commission initial "essential actions" Reliability Standards (i.e., Phase I), including any associated definitions and changes to NERC's Rules of Procedure, by December 31, 2026.[26] Likewise, we direct NERC to develop changes to NERC's Rules of Procedure, including registry criteria, necessary for the registration of computational load entities and expect NERC to submit the proposed revisions by December 31, 2026.

11. As mentioned above, we expect NERC to prioritize near-term measures capable of reducing identified reliability risks related to computational loads while preserving flexibility for subsequent refinements as additional experience is gained with large-load interconnections. NERC's ANOPR Supplemental Comments indicate that its accelerated action plan contemplates filing Reliability Standards resulting from Phase I by the end of 2026 and additional Reliability Standards in 2027 as needed.[27] Accordingly, in addition to the directives outlined above, we also direct NERC to submit by March 1, 2027 an informational filing detailing its workplan regarding its Phase II Reliability Standards pertaining to computational load integration. We recognize that both the nature of the computational load challenge and NERC's understanding of it continue to evolve and, as such, do not expect any submitted workplan to be fully comprehensive in its forecasting of future action.

The Commission orders:

(A) NERC is hereby directed to file one or more new or modified Reliability Standards to address the reliability risks associated with the integration of computational loads, including any associated Glossary definitions, by December 31, 2026, as discussed in the body of this order.

(B) NERC is hereby directed to submit revisions to NERC's Rules of Procedure, expected by December 31, 2026, as discussed in the body of this order.

[26] NERC ANOPR Comments at 12-17; NERC ANOPR Supplemental Comments at 1-3.

[27] NERC ANOPR Supplemental Comments at 3.

(C) NERC is hereby directed by March 1, 2027, to submit an informational filing detailing its workplan regarding its next steps in the standards development process for additional Reliability Standards pertaining to computational load integration, as discussed in the body of this order.

By the Commission.

(S E A L)

Carlos D. Clay,
Deputy Secretary.