Critical Transmission Reforms Needed for Economic Growth

The U.S. must modernize and expand its power grid to support new and growing industries, including the resurgence of American manufacturing and digital innovation. But the current network of powerlines is aging rapidly, and additional transmission capacity is desperately needed to connect generation sources critical to meeting electricity demand and alleviating pressure on customers' utility bills.

The stakes are enormous. Interregional transmission lines could save consumers hundreds of billions of dollars, keep the lights on during extreme weather, and unlock affordable power across the country. Yet only a handful of projects exist today because approvals are fragmented, voluntary, and painfully slow. With bipartisan action, Congress can cut red tape, accelerate nationally significant projects, and build a 21st-century grid that fuels innovation, creates jobs, and keeps America's economy strong.

Joint Transmission Planning: Improve Reliability and Reduce Costs

CEBA Supports a Mandate for Interregional and Regional Transmission Planning

- Direct the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to issue and finalize a rule requiring neighboring grid planning regions to jointly plan interregional transmission projects — power lines spanning multiple grid regions.
- Affirm the importance of FERC's regional transmission planning rule, Order 1920.
- In both cases, mandatory planning should also use shared assumptions, criteria, and scenarios, and synchronize timelines.
- Codify FERC's regional transmission planning rule, Order 1920, requiring transmission providers to conduct least-regrets planning over a 20-year horizon.

Standardize a National Definition of "Transmission Benefits" Across Regions

- Create a shared definition of transmission benefits, such as improving reliability, reducing congestion, reducing power losses, adding carrying capacity, reducing operating reserve requirements, and improving access to lower-cost generation.

Why it matters: Only through coordinated, common-sense joint planning can we lower costs, boost reliability, balance power supplies, and avoid overbuilding the system. CEBA members agree that those who benefit from new transmission should cover its costs. But regions need a shared framework to define and measure those benefits, so costs and gains are distributed fairly.

Unlock Existing Grid Capacity: Deploy Advanced Transmission Technologies

CEBA Supports Directing FERC to Accelerate the Deployment of Next-Gen Technologies

- To unlock new capacity without the delays associated with building new transmission lines, Congress should fast-track Advanced Transmission Technologies (ATTs) — including grid-enhancing technologies (GETs) and high-performance conductors (HPCs) — along existing rights-of-way, while directing FERC to accelerate adoption through incentives, such as shared-savings mechanisms for utilities that deploy cutting-edge tools and optimize grid planning.

Why it matters: ATTs offer a faster solution to meet growing demand, while regional and interregional lines are constructed to meet longer-term needs.

Cut Red Tape: Accelerate New Transmission Decisions

CEBA Supports Creating Dual Paths for Interregional and Regional Line Approvals

- Establish two distinct transmission project approval pathways:
    - Maintain and favor the existing state permitting processes for transmission projects but add a deadline for decisions.
    - For nationally significant transmission lines, where projects have stalled at the state level, allow project applicants to file with FERC, authorizing the agency to backstop the permitting process and allocate costs to jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional entities, excluding the Texas grid.
- Where there's a federal nexus, designate FERC as the lead coordinating agency for the siting of transmission lines and corresponding environmental reviews.

Increase Interregional and Regional Transfer Capacity Between Grids

- Direct FERC to open a public process to develop recommendations to increase interregional transfer capacity. The North American Electric Reliability Corporation found that, to maintain reliability, the U.S. needs to build grid infrastructure capable of carrying 35 gigawatts of electricity across the country.
- Any proposed rulemaking should establish a framework for planning, paying for, and permitting interregional transmission lines, requiring coordinated regional planning and shared-cost methodologies based on reliability benefits.

Why it matters: Giving FERC authority to backstop interregional and regional transmission permitting streamlines approvals, fosters state cooperation, speeds nationally significant projects, and delivers reliable and lower-cost electricity to consumers more quickly. Expanding regional transfer capacity allows regions to share power during emergencies, improving reliability and lowering the costs and frequency of weather-driven outages.

The Clean Energy Buyers Association *is a business trade association that represents the largest energy buyers in the world. We activate a community of energy customers and partners to deploy market and policy solutions for a carbon emissions-free energy system. CEBA's members represent $38 trillion in market capitalization and include institutional energy customers of every type and size — corporate and industrial companies, universities, and cities. For more information, visit cebuyers.org and follow us on X and LinkedIn.*