

Cooperation Among States in the Western Interconnection on Electric Resource Planning and Priorities

The awardee must complete the following at a minimum:

1. Continued development of the Western Renewable Energy Zone (WREZ) analysis, currently performed by the Western Governors' Association (WGA) under DOE Cooperative Agreement (DE-FC26-08NT01788) in order to identify those areas in the West with vast renewable resources to expedite the development and delivery of renewable energy to where it is needed. Specifically, the awardee must complete the following tasks.

- a. Coordinating Energy Purchasing from the WREZs

Aggregating demand for renewable energy can stimulate the development of commercial renewable generation and supporting transmission projects. Many public power, cooperative, state, federal and provincial electric systems have renewable energy procurement goals. Proposals to coordinate the purchasing cycles of regulated utilities are already under discussion. Yet the mechanisms to integrate renewable energy targets into state or region-wide procurement remain to be developed. The awardee would need to work with stakeholders to bring together state and provincial utility commissions, utilities, and generators to increase the coordination of power purchasing to facilitate development of a region-wide market for renewable power, including the building of any cross-jurisdictional transmission needed to transport the purchased renewable-based electricity.

- b. Fostering Interstate Cooperation for Renewable Energy Generation and Transmission

The WREZ initiative seeks to aggregate the regional demand for and supply of renewable energy to benefit the entire region. This will require addressing the political and regulatory obstacles to the permitting and construction of cross jurisdictional transmission lines and renewable energy projects, as well as addressing any barriers to coordinated purchasing by load-serving entities. In pursuing solutions to these obstacles, the awardee should address cost allocation issues and opportunities to streamline and coordinate inter-jurisdictional permitting processes. Also, the awardee should describe how they would work with stakeholders to facilitate collaboration among the private sector and regulators to advance the goals of the WREZ initiative. While these are difficult issues, the viability of large-scale projects and the ability to meet Western Interconnection renewable goals may hinge on resolving them.

2. Analyze current key issues related to reliable integration of variable and non-variable renewables (such as wind, concentrated solar, solar photovoltaics, ocean generation, storage, geothermal, hydro, ocean and other waterpower generation, and biomass for power production) into the Western Interconnection. The awardee may also consider collecting resource mapping information for options related to carbon capture and

sequestration.

3. Propose and perform studies in coordination with state and federal wildlife officials on identification and uniform mapping of crucial wildlife habitats and migration corridors. The objective is to aid the development by each western state of its own “decision support system” (DSS) that is capable of compiling all data on wildlife relevant to the development of renewable and other generation capacity and associated transmission facilities. Each state’s DSS is to be a GIS-based system that builds upon existing data. Full funding is not available through this FOA to complete DSS’s for each state; rather, the intention is to provide a limited amount of seed funding to verify the approach and scope out problems associated with its application. Better information on wildlife habitats and migration corridors would improve key decisions affecting the development of energy facilities in the West and other land uses.
4. Develop other inputs relevant to planning and coordination as needed to go into the interconnection-level analyses prepared under Topic A.
5. Provide insight into the economic and environmental implications of the alternative electricity supply futures and their associated transmission requirements developed for the Western Interconnection under Topic A.
6. Demonstrate (and develop if necessary), a process for reaching decisions and consensus appropriate for an interconnection-wide entity representing all of the States and Provinces in the Western Interconnection so as to participate in the development and updating of the long-term interconnection-level plan under Topic A. This process shall be open to all relevant technologies and afford ample opportunity for participation by state governors, provincial ministers, their designees, and state or provincial utility regulatory officials.