



Grid Deployment Office

NIETC Designation Process and Timeline - Potential Southwestern Grid Connector Corridor

*January 15, 2025
3 PM Eastern*



HOUSEKEEPING

- Webinar will be recorded and posted to the NIETC website (<https://www.energy.gov/gdo/national-interest-electric-transmission-corridor-designation-process>)
- Chat function and microphones will be disabled
- Q&A function will be accessible; questions will be collected and used to develop an FAQ document
- Live transcript (closed captioning) is available. To enable:
 - Using 'More' button at bottom of screen, select 'closed captioning'

AGENDA

- Introduction
- What is GDO?
- NIETC Process
- Description of the Potential Southwestern Grid Connector Corridor
- Public Engagement & Feedback

WHAT IS GDO?



Ensure **resource adequacy** by supporting **critical generation sources** and expanding and enhancing **electricity markets**.



Catalyze the development of new and upgraded **high-capacity electric transmission lines** and an improved **distribution system** nationwide.



Prevent **outages** and enhance the **resilience** of the electric grid.

WHAT IS A NIETC?

A National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor (NIETC) is an area of the country where inadequate transmission harms consumers (currently or in the future) and that DOE has designated as a NIETC.

A NIETC focuses public and policymaker attention on greatest areas of transmission need and unlocks statutory tools to advance transmission deployment, including:

- Transmission Facilitation Program
- Transmission Facility Financing program
- Federal siting and permitting authority (carried out by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) under a separate process)

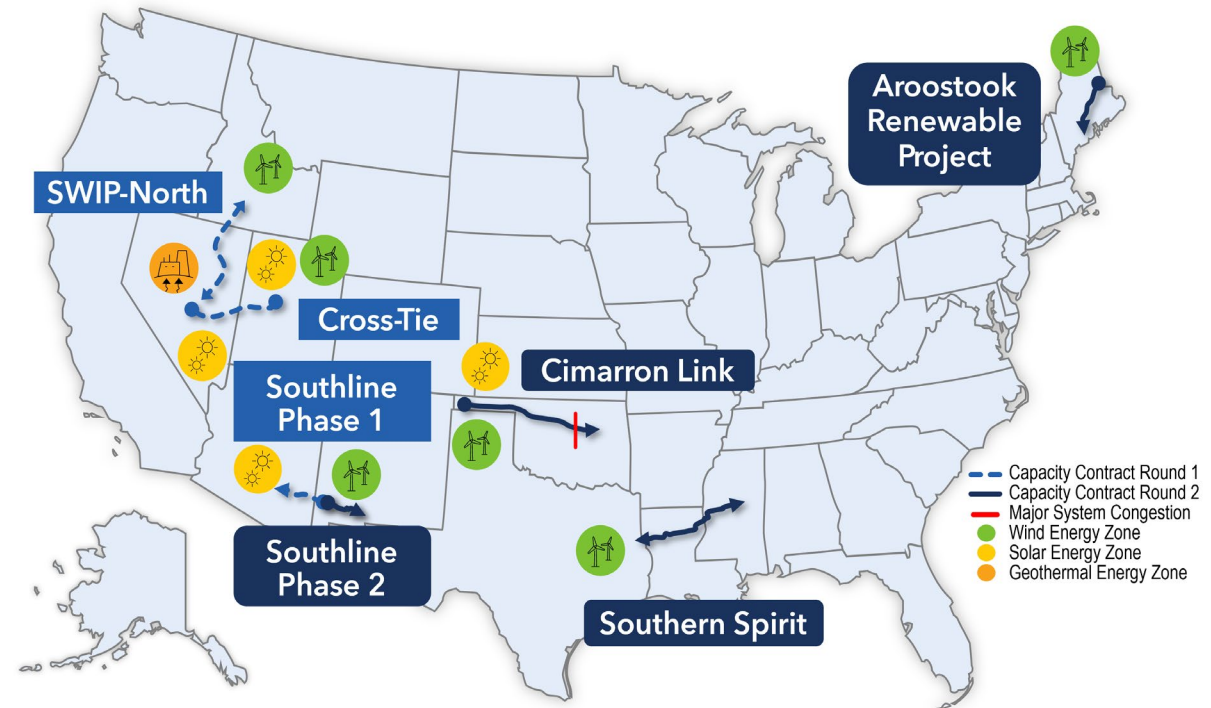
TRANSMISSION FACILITATION PROGRAM

BIPARTISAN INFRASTRUCTURE LAW § 40106

What is it?

- ▶ \$2.5 billion revolving fund borrowing authority
 - ▶ Provides federal support to overcome financial hurdles associated with developing large-scale new transmission lines, upgrading existing lines, and connecting microgrids in Alaska, Hawaii, and U.S. territories to the grid
- ▶ **Three tools:** (1) capacity contracts; (2) public-private partnerships; and (3) loans

TFP selections as of October 2024:



TRANSMISSION FACILITY FINANCING

INFLATION REDUCTION ACT § 50151

Authorizes DOE to provide direct loans for transmission designated by the Secretary to be necessary in the national interest

Appropriates \$2 billion to carry out program, which can be used for the credit subsidy cost of loans

Preliminary list of potential NIETCs announces TFF minimum eligibility criteria

- Non-federal borrower, constructing or modifying transmission, located within a NIETC, that addresses transmission need within the NIETC, and
- Loan must satisfy statutory requirements (for term, percentage of costs, and no subordination to other financing)

DOE invites input and will use data gathered to inform formal TFF application and evaluation process – opening in 2025

- Encourage any questions be sent to TFF email TFF@hq.doe.gov

NIETC Designation Process

National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETC)

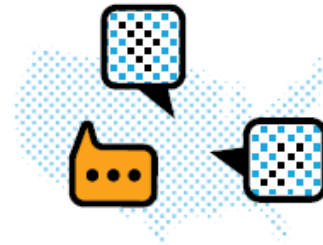
An area of the country where DOE has determined the lack of adequate transmission harms consumers

WE ARE HERE



PHASE 1 Information Gathering

- Reviews National Transmission Needs Study findings
- Begins identifying potential NIETCs



PHASE 2 Preliminary List & Comments

- Publishes preliminary list of potential NIETCs



PHASE 3 Public Engagement

- Refines geographic boundaries of potential NIETCs and prepares draft report
- Conducts community engagement and any required environmental reviews



PHASE 4 NIETC(s) Designated

- Issues final NIETC designation report(s) and any required environmental document(s)

DOE
activities

Public
activities

- Submits recommendations on where to designate NIETCs and why

- Provides comments, alternatives and recommendations, and additional information

- Participates in DOE-led community engagement activities focused on potential NIETCs

- Focuses on areas of greatest transmission need
- Transmission developers in NIETCs access federal financing and siting tools



Modernizing and expanding transmission infrastructure helps **increase reliability, resilience, and access to clean, affordable electricity**

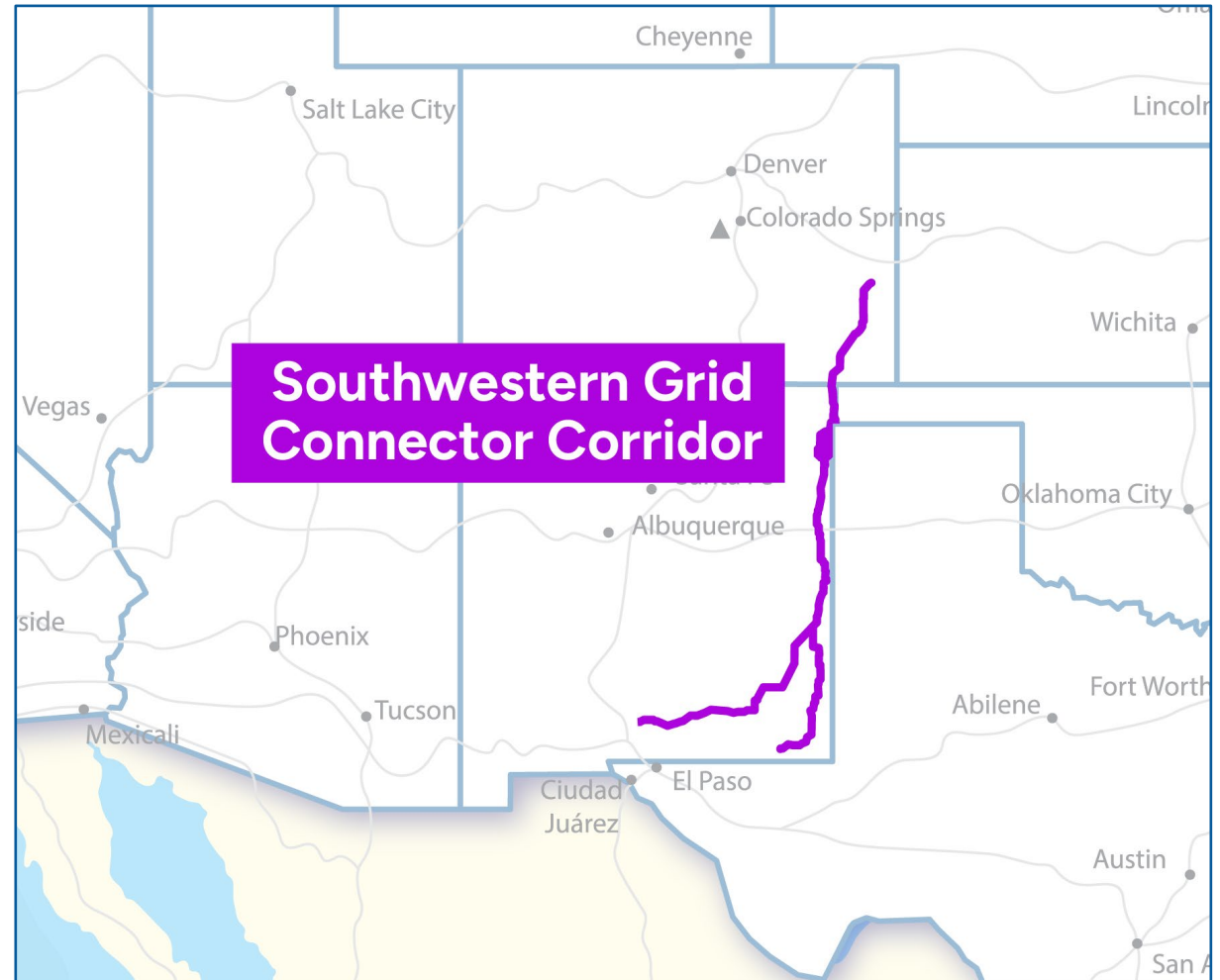
PHASE 3 POTENTIAL NIETCS

Each potential NIETC –

- Supports critical transmission development to address needs unmet through existing planning processes
- Addresses key findings in DOE's 2023 Needs Study + aligns with other DOE priorities
- Demonstrates clear utility of NIETC designation to further transmission in the near term in these areas (i.e., timely deployment of tools unlocked within NIETCs)
- Contains sufficient information to narrow boundaries to facilitate timely environmental review (if required)
- Balances DOE resources to achieve timely, durable designations that follow from robust public engagement

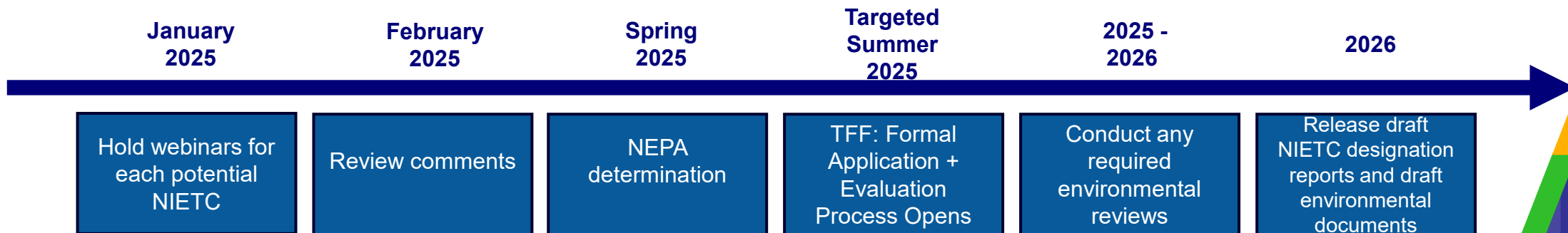
POTENTIAL SOUTHWESTERN GRID CONNECTOR CORRIDOR

- **Geographic Description**
 - Includes parts of Colorado, New Mexico, and the western edge of the Oklahoma panhandle
 - Follows existing transmission line rights-of-way for parts of its path
 - Ranges from 5-15 miles wide
- **Transmission in this potential corridor could:**
 - Maintain and improve reliability and resilience
 - Alleviate congestion
 - Increase integration of new energy supplies and meet future demand growth
 - Provide cross-interconnection and interregional connections between the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and WestConnect regions
- **In this potential corridor, DOE is aware of:**
 - Heartland Spirit Connector project
 - By NextEra Energy Transmission, LLC
 - Southline Phase 3 project
 - By Grid United



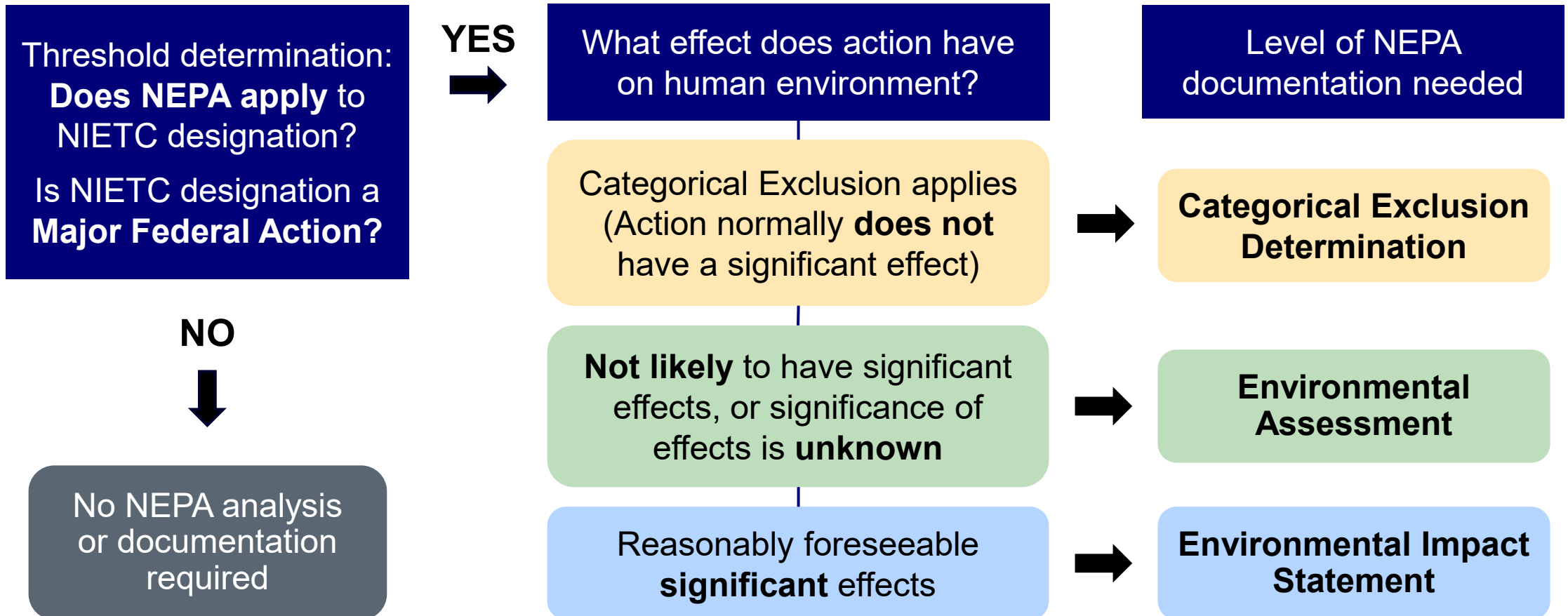
TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS

- Collect, consolidate, and consider comments received during the early engagement comment period.
- Determine whether NEPA applies to corridor designations and, if so, then determine the appropriate level of NEPA analysis for each corridor and begin such analysis.
- Conduct additional public engagement on transmission need and potential environmental impacts to inform designation report and environmental documents.





NOTE: Each corridor proceeds through this timeline independently

NEPA DETERMINATION PROCESS SUMMARY





GEOSPATIAL ENERGY MAPPER (GEM)


**GEM** Geospatial Energy Mapper


**Find suitable areas**
Use models to highlight locations meeting multiple siting requirements for specific energy infrastructure types


Mapping themes
Choose one of the themes below to rapidly view sets of mapping layers


 Agriculture


 Biology


 Electric Vehicles


 Environmental Justice


 **Potential NIETCs**


 Solar


 Wildfire Risk


 Air Quality


 Cultural Resources

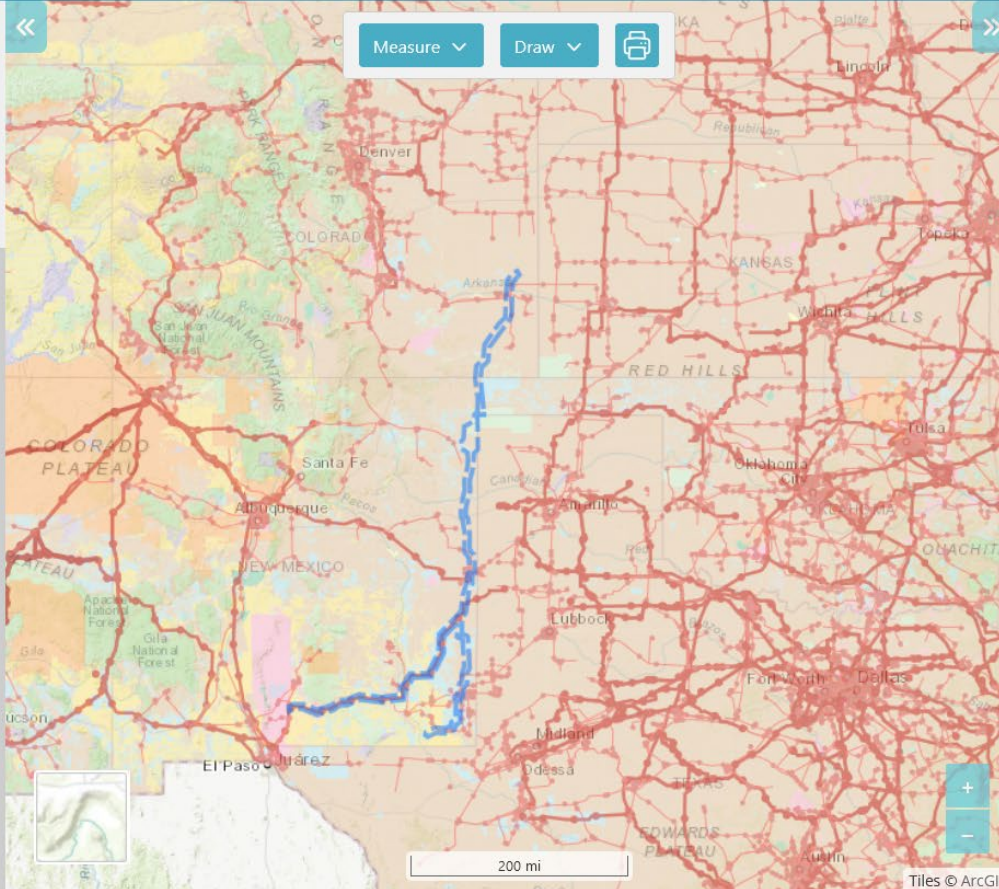
 Electrical Infrastructure


 Hydropower

 Protected Areas


 Water Resources







 Wind






Measure ▾ Draw ▾ 

Legend Layers File

Phase 3 Potential National Interest Electrical Transmission Corridors (12/16/2024)


Transmission Lines
 Under 100kV or Unknown
 100 - 161kV
 220 - 287kV
 345kV
 500kV and Higher
 DC

Federal Land (Surface Management Agency)
Jurisdiction
 Bureau of Land Management
 Bureau of Reclamation
 Department of Defense

My Models
The models that you create will be listed here.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & FEEDBACK

On December 16, 2024, GDO published a Notice in the Federal Register seeking comment on the next steps of analysis and public engagement for NIETC. Comments are due February 14, 2025.

GDO is seeking input and comments on the possible scope of analysis for each of the potential NIETCs, including:

- environmental, cultural, or socioeconomic effects that may occur should DOE designate any of the potential NIETCs,
- the contents of DOE's proposed public engagement framework, and
- the unique public engagement and governmental consultation factors that DOE should account for in each potential NIETC.

GDO is accepting meeting requests as well; email NIETC@hq.doe.gov.

NOTE: DOE may not have capacity to accept all requests and may organize group meetings based on topic, geography, or other common feature.

HOW TO SUBMIT COMMENTS

Mail: U.S. Department of Energy, Grid Deployment Office, 1000 Independence Ave. SW, Suite 4H-065, Washington, DC 20585.

Email: NIETC@hq.doe.gov

[Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov)

- General: DOE-HQ-2024-0096- Potential Designation of Tribal Energy Access, Southwestern Grid Connector, and Lake Erie-Canada National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors
- Southwestern Grid Connector Corridor: DOE-HQ-2024-0089—Potential Designation of the Southwestern Grid Connector National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor