The Western Interconnection Stands at a Pivotal Moment

1

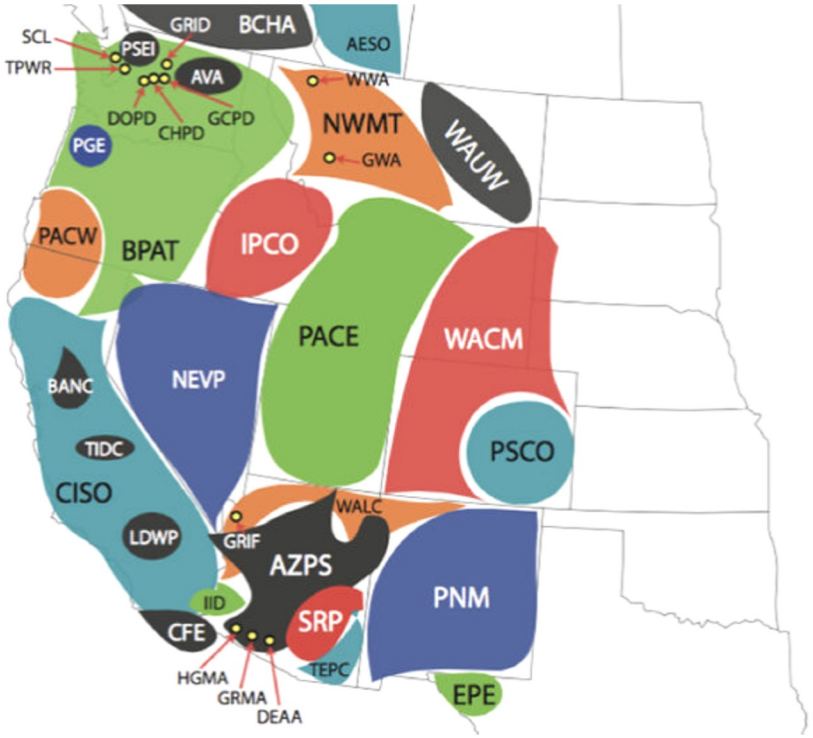
Rising Grid Pressures

Rapid electrification, data-center growth, extreme weather, and **aging infrastructure** are putting major stress on the grid.

2

Fragmented Transmission

Yet, transmission planning currently operates in silos, divided among **more than 30 Balancing Authorities.**



ROUTE FIFTY

Why a Power Line Project Can Take 14 Years to Permit

CNBC

Why it's so hard to build new electrical transmission lines in the U.S.

PUBLISHED TUE, FEB 21 2023•1:23 PM EST | UPDATED WED, FEB 22 2023•4:51 PM EST

Sightline INSTITUTE

The High Cost of Slow Permitting

Sluggish approval of Cascadian transmission projects inflates electricity bills and strands renewable energy.

E&E NEWS By POLITICO

ENERGYWIRE

Western transmission line breaks ground after 18-year wait

By JASON PLAUTZ | 06/21/2023 06:42 AM EDT

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland and Energy Secretary Jennifer Granholm traveled to Wyoming to hail the project and call for faster electric transmission development.



Harvard Business School

Institute for Business in Global Society

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Permitting gridlock threatens America's energy future

Bloomberg

U.S. Permitting Delays Hold Back Economy, Cost Jobs



AMERICANS for PROSPERITY

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Permitting Purgatory: Higher Prices, Thousands of Lost Jobs, and Billions in Missed Economic Opportunity

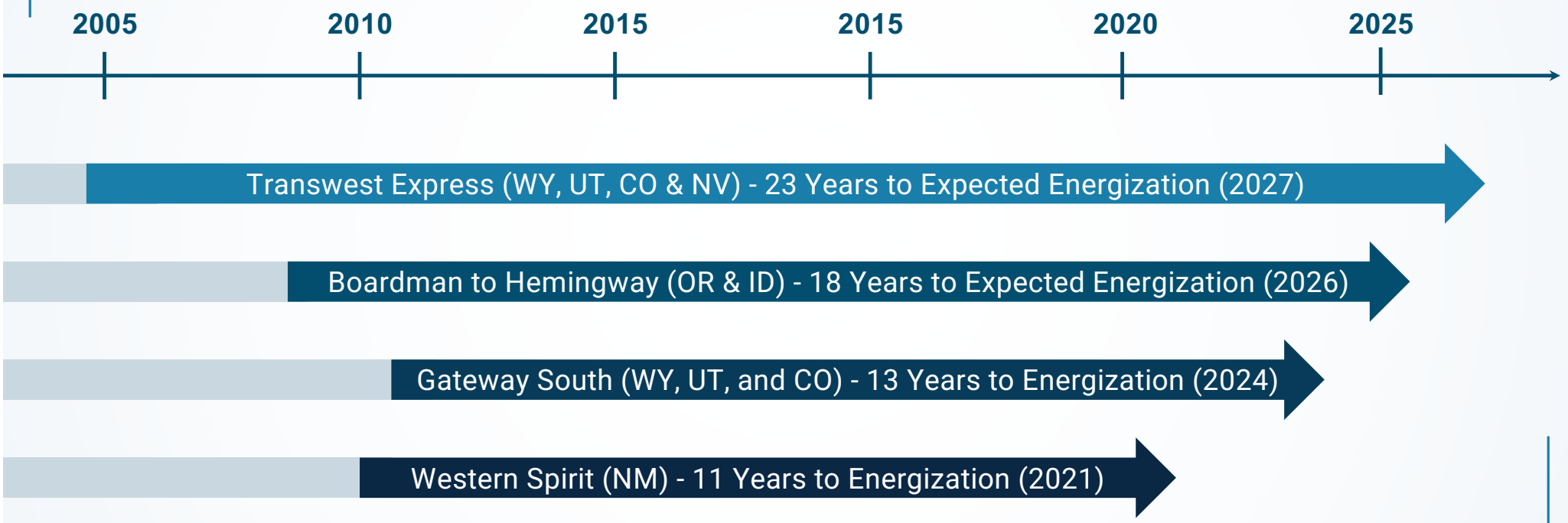
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OPINION

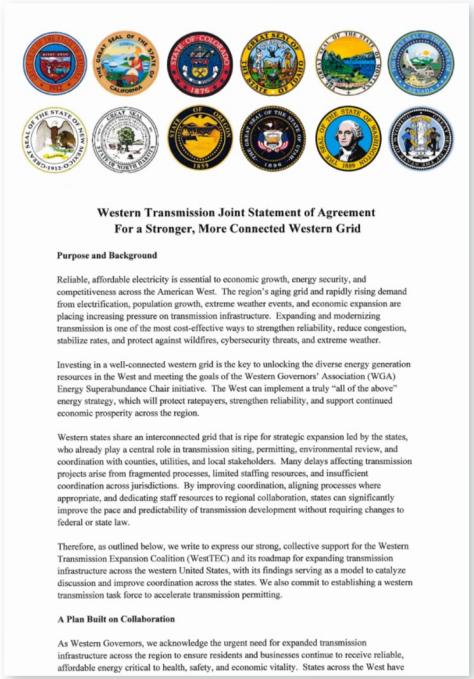
The TransWest Express transmission line is a win for rural communities. Why did approval take 15 years?

Challenge: Regional Transmission Takes Decades to Build



Twelve Governors Committing to Plan Differently





Western Transmission Joint Statement of Agreement
For a Stronger, More Connected Western Grid

Purpose and Background

Reliable, affordable electricity is essential to economic growth, energy security, and competitiveness across the American West. The region's aging grid and rapidly rising demand from electrification, population growth, extreme weather events, and economic expansion are placing increasing pressure on transmission infrastructure. Expanding and modernizing transmission is one of the most cost-effective ways to strengthen reliability, reduce congestion, stabilize rates, and protect against wildfires, cybersecurity threats, and extreme weather.

Investing in a well-connected western grid is the key to unlocking the diverse energy generation resources in the West and meeting the goals of the Western Governors' Association (WGA) Energy Superabundance Chair initiative. The West can implement a truly "all of the above" energy strategy, which will protect ratepayers, strengthen reliability, and support continued economic prosperity across the region.

Western states share an interconnected grid that is ripe for strategic expansion led by the states, who already play a central role in transmission siting, permitting, environmental review, and coordination with counties, utilities, and local stakeholders. Many delays affecting transmission projects arise from fragmented processes, limited staffing resources, and insufficient coordination across jurisdictions. By improving coordination, aligning processes where appropriate, and dedicating staff resources to regional collaboration, states can significantly improve the pace and predictability of transmission development without requiring changes to federal or state law.

Therefore, as outlined below, we write to express our strong, collective support for the Western Transmission Expansion Coalition (WestTEC) and its roadmap for expanding transmission infrastructure across the western United States, with its findings serving as a model to catalyze discussion and improve coordination across the states. We also commit to establishing a western transmission task force to accelerate transmission permitting.

A Plan Built on Collaboration

As Western Governors, we acknowledge the urgent need for expanded transmission infrastructure across the region to ensure residents and businesses continue to receive reliable, affordable energy critical to health, safety, and economic vitality. States across the West have



Signed on June 30, 2026:

Spencer Cox
Governor of Utah

Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado

Mark Gordon
Governor of Wyoming

Joe Lombardo
Governor of Nevada

Brad Little
Governor of Idaho

Tina Kotek
Governor of Oregon

Greg Gianforte
Governor of Montana

Kelly Armstrong
Governor of North Dakota

Katie Hobbs
Governor of Arizona

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Governor of New Mexico

Bob Ferguson
Governor of Washington

Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
Signed on July 17, 2026

On June 30, 2026, 12 Western governors signed a joint agreement to endorse the WestTEC study and establish a state-led permitting task force at the Western Governors' Association Annual Meeting in Utah.

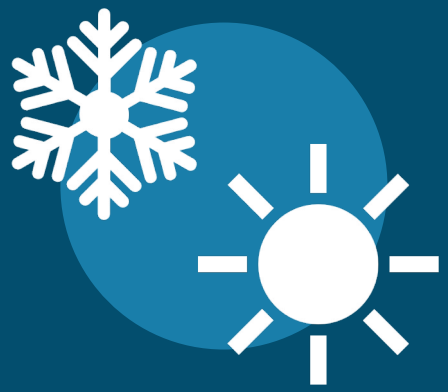
Our Goal is to Develop Solutions that Cut Deployment Time in Half

Old Western Permitting Paradigm	New Approach for Western Permitting
10-20 years for transmission lines to be energized	**4-8 years** for transmission lines to be energized
5+ years for state and federal permitting decision	**Less than 2 years** for state and federal permitting decision
Siloed siting and permitting process for each state	**Interstate coordination** on siting and permitting
Minimal prioritization	**High-impact regional** lines are prioritized
Uncertain review timelines for proposed lines	**Predictable** multi-state permitting schedules



Regional transmission expansion can unlock billion-dollar economic opportunities

Increased resilience and savings from **extreme weather events**



Increased investment opportunity in the West.



Increased **sharing enabled by load and supply diversity**

