



5. **ELECTRICITY: Eastern governors say transmission plans biased toward Midwest wind** (05/05/2009)

Katherine Ling, E&E reporter

House and Senate bills on transmission siting "jeopardize" the East Coast's wind power industry, 10 governors from mid-Atlantic and New England states said in a letter to congressional leaders yesterday.

The transmission proposals are biased against the significant onshore and offshore wind development of the Northeast and mid-Atlantic coast, while making all customers pay for the transmission to the Midwest wind generation, the governors **wrote**.

"This ratepayer-funded revenue guarantee for land-based wind and other generation resources in the Great Plains would have significant, negative consequences for our region: It would hinder our efforts to meet regional renewable energy goals with regional resources and would establish financial conditions in our electricity markets that would impede development of the vast wind resources onshore and just off our shores for decades to come," the letter states.

The governors also stressed the benefits in reliability of having more local generation -- including offshore which is currently more expensive but costs are expected to continue to drop -- shorter transmission lines and the need for regional solutions. Governors from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Vermont and Virginia signed the letter.

There are three major transmission siting proposals before Congress, all of which support the need for some sort of federal siting power and a plan to develop a larger grid with in interconnections to connect renewable energy in remote places to demand centers in the cities. The United States is basically made up of three interconnections or grids: one east of the Rocky Mountain states, the Rocky Mountain states and to the west, and Texas.

The Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee will mark up a majority staff draft tomorrow that would allow the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to site "high priority" transmission lines -- as defined in a interconnection-wide planning process -- after states have a chance to site the projects ([E&E Daily](#), May 4).

Lawmakers and proponents do often refer to the need for transmission to connect the plethora of wind farms in South Dakota to Chicago and from there to the East Coast, but no legislation so far has details about the location of "corridors," instead leaving it up to planning entities.

But political rhetoric calling for a "national grid superhighway," similar to the nation's transportation highway, is perhaps not addressing the development of renewable energy or transmission issue in the most economical way, according to Edward Krapels, CEO of Anbaric Holdings LLC, a company that builds transmission lines. "I don't think [the superhighway road model] is that germane to the power system," Krapels said. "The opposition to the power system is so intense that you are better off letting the regions figure out how to do it."

Krapels said a study should be undertaken of what would be cheapest and easiest to plan -- by region or several regions versus the interconnection. He added intermittency issues could be handled by a well-managed regional grid as well as a large interconnection. "Before you commission a coast-to-coast grid, my guess is that it would be cheaper to develop nearby winds terrestrially, then offshore and then the distant onshore" resources, he said.

[Click here](#) to view the governors' letter.

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