

Incentives for Midwest 'green' transmission superhighway

The US Federal Energy Regulatory Commission has approved transmission infrastructure investment rate incentives for a proposed 4,800 kilometre regional "green power superhighway" designed to deliver wind-powered renewable energy from the upper Midwest to consumers in and around Chicago, Minneapolis and other load centres. FERC Chair Jon Wellinghoff highlights the importance of new transmission infrastructure to fulfilling the promise of renewable energy and notes that getting these types of projects built will require effective transmission planning that looks beyond the needs of a single utility, a single state or even a single region. "Meeting our nation's energy goals will require developing extra-high voltage transmission infrastructure that is needed to bring clean, renewable energy from areas where it is produced most efficiently to areas where most of our nation's power is consumed," Wellinghoff says. "The Commission is examining the adequacy of transmission planning processes and is committed to working with transmission providers and state and regional entities to provide consumers with greater access to renewable resources." Project developer Green Power Express estimates that its proposed 765 kV transmission network will cost between US\$10 billion and US\$12 billion, eventually span seven states and deliver up to 12,000 MW of wind energy and stored energy from the Dakotas, Minnesota and Iowa to Midwestern load centres in Chicago, Minneapolis and south-eastern Wisconsin.

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