

Siting critical to new US transmission grid

A new national high-voltage electric transmission system overlaid on the current grid could be a reality in the US, enabling renewable energy sources and reducing electricity costs, but federal siting authority is critical to this goal, according to a report from *Platts*. US Federal Energy Regulatory Commissioner Philip Moeller says that even with historical initiatives such as the US interstate highway system in the 1950s, “it was not simply waving a magic wand and Congress passing a big infrastructure bill”. Moeller says that siting is the biggest issue facing regulators when it comes to transmission, adding that “we’ve got to get past these cost-allocation issues”. Peter Huber, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute Center for Energy Policy and the Environment says a “backbone grid” would help address the lack of efficiency in electricity markets. He estimates the cost to build this type of grid is US0.5 cents/kWh. Huber says that state-of-the-art high-voltage technology across the US could move 25 per cent of the national electricity load over very long distances. Huber touts the efficiency gains that would come with a national electricity market. “We should turn this into a serious national market on the double,” Huber says. “The economic benefits can be reaped at both ends of the line, whichever way the power moves and the savings that a backbone grid delivers will only increase as environmental costs are progressively folded into the economic spreadsheets,” he says.

[Source essa news]