WORLD POWER SYSTEMS REVIEW

1 June 2026

15 May 2026

UK grants development consent for offshore wind farms

The UK Government has granted development consent for the Dogger Bank South (DBS) offshore wind projects and the North Falls offshore wind farm, paving the way for an increase in offshore wind capacity.

The consent, given by Lord Whitehead on behalf of the UK Energy Secretary, covers two DBS wind farms – DBS West and DBS East – which are being developed as a joint venture (JV) between RWE (51%) and Masdar (49%).

Each wind farm will have an installed capacity of 1.5 GW, together providing a capacity of 3 GW. The DBS projects are situated in the North Sea, more than 100 km off England's north-east coast, with the output anticipated to meet the annual electricity needs of roughly three million UK households. Approval for the DBS wind farms follows a development consent order (DCO) application submitted in June 2024. The Planning Inspectorate reviewed more than 1,000 documents and hosted ten online examination hearings before consent was granted on 14 May 2026. This DCO allows for the installation of up to 100 turbines at each site, along with subsea export cables delivering power to shore near Skipsea, underground cabling and new converter stations south-west of Beverley in the East Riding of Yorkshire.

The electricity will be transferred to the proposed Birkhill Wood National Grid substation near Creyke Beck, with construction roads and compounds supporting onshore and offshore works. The projects secured contracts for difference through the UK Government's Allocation Round 7 in January 2026. RWE and Masdar now plan to carry out final design and procurement activities, targeting a final investment decision in 2027. The developers say the wind farms could benefit businesses and communities across Yorkshire, the Humber and the wider UK.

In addition to the DBS announcement, the North Falls offshore wind farm received approval for its DCO. North Falls will be developed by RWE and SSE Renewables as a JV, and will be located approximately 40 km from the East Anglia Coast. It will serve as an extension to the Greater Gabbard offshore wind farm.

Approved plans include up to 57 turbines, two offshore substation platforms and supporting infrastructure. North Falls is expected to produce around 1 GW of electricity, enough to supply several hundred thousand UK homes annually. Detailed design work will continue to determine the final capacity to be installed.

The government stated that these approvals contribute to a total of up to 4 GW of new offshore wind capacity.

Modern Power Systems
http://www.modernpowersystems.com/

18 May 2026

Pennsylvania releases 'first-of-its-kind' large-load model tariff

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission last week released a final order establishing a "first-of-its-kind" model tariff framework for large-load customers, including data centers, the PUC said.

Notably, the order — which is nonbinding — recommends utilities charge large-load customers for any system upgrades that "would not have been needed 'but for' the interconnection" of that customer, "irrespective of whether other customers will benefit" from the infrastructure. It also instructs utilities to allow large-load customers to self-construct certain upgrades.

The Environmental Defense Fund, which submitted comments on an earlier proposal, noted that while many states are weighing similar rules to assign costs to large-load

customers, Pennsylvania may be the first to push for them to pay up front through "Contributions in Aid of Construction" payments.

Large load tariffs have proliferated as the artificial intelligence boom fuels a surge in interconnection requests, raising concerns about the impact to the grid and electricity costs.

In 2025, state regulators approved 29 large load tariffs, compared to 14 between 2018 and 2024, according to the Smart Electric Power Alliance. As of March, there were more than 75 such tariffs pending or in place across 36 states, according a Database of Emerging Large Load Tariffs maintained by SEPA and the North Carolina Clean Energy Technology Center. Pennsylvania's model tariff, which is intended to apply to any customer exceeding 50 MW individually or 100 MW in aggregate, aims to "guide" Pennsylvania's electric distribution companies as they evaluate potential large load customers, the PUC said.

In addition to cost protections, the tariff model includes provisions on collateral and financial security, including deposits, intended to mitigate the risk of stranded assets; expectations for utilities to complete interconnection studies within six months; guidance related to load ramping schedules, minimum contract terms and customer exit provisions; and recommendations for maintaining public-facing information regarding large load interconnection requests and study status.

"Pennsylvania is confronting a level of electric load growth that has not been seen in generations, driven largely by data centers and advanced manufacturing," PUC Chairman Steve DeFrank said in a statement. "Rather than waiting for these challenges to overwhelm the system, this Commission chose to lead. This Final Order establishes a thoughtful framework that supports economic development, strengthens transparency and planning, and protects existing ratepayers from bearing the financial risks associated with unprecedented new demand."

The EDF praised the PUC in a statement for establishing a "strong foundation for fair cost allocation," while emphasizing that regulators and utilities must follow through by applying the voluntary guidelines. For example, implementing "but-for" cost allocation "will not always be simple," the organization warned.

"Determining which customer(s) triggered a transmission upgrade can be technically complex and difficult to track," it said. "Many of the relevant discussions occur deep within PJM subcommittee meetings that most consumer advocates lack the resources to monitor closely." The EDF also expressed disappointment that the order did not "make significant progress" on "non-firm" or "interruptible" service, which allows utilities to curtail electricity to large load customers during periods of grid stress.

"Expanding interruptible service is one of policymakers' most effective tools for limiting near-term grid costs tied to data center growth," the EDF said. "Rather than creating a new framework tailored to large loads, the Commission opted to rely largely on utilities' existing interruptible service tariffs, which will often not be a good fit for large loads."

Lucas Fykes, senior director of energy policy and regulatory counsel at the Data Center Coalition, told Utility Dive in an email that the DCC is in the process of reviewing the order with members. "We appreciate the Commission's effort to establish a framework that is structured, transparent, and grounded in core cost-causation principles, while also recognizing the importance of continued investment and economic growth in Pennsylvania," Fykes said. "The final order importantly maintains an end-use-neutral framework, applies prospectively to new large load interconnections and incremental load growth, and recognizes the importance of evaluating contract terms, collateral, and other risk-management tools as part of an integrated package."

Utility Dive
http://www.utilitydive.com/

18 May 2026

European Energy breaks ground on 225.5-MW Italian agrivoltaic park

Danish renewable energy company European Energy has launched the construction of what will be Italy's largest agrivoltaic park, a site in Sicily with an installed capacity of 225.5 MW.

The Troia solar park in Italy. Image by: European Energy. The start of building activities follows a positive final investment decision for the over EUR-200-million (USD 232.7m) project, the Danish developer said on Monday. As previously announced, the complex is due to be commissioned by the end of 2027. To be located near Vizzini, the photovoltaic (PV) farm will be built across 260 hectares of land and is expected to produce roughly 405 GWh of green electricity annually, or enough to cover the consumption of more than 135,000 homes. The power generation of the elevated PV structures will be combined with agricultural activities such as sheep grazing, as well as reforestation and biodiversity initiatives

European Energy secured the project in Italy's FER X Transitional Contract for Difference auction in late 2025. The Danish firm is managing all engineering, procurement and construction activities in partnership with local contractors and partners. The Vizzini scheme is one of European Energy's five projects in Sicily, Puglia and Molise that emerged among the winners in the FER X auction. The company has already built a number of solar farms in the country, including the 130-MW Troia project in Puglia, which went online in 2020.

Renewables Now
http://renewablesnow.com/

19 May 2026

UP cabinet approves 2,400MW expansion of Meja thermal power project

The Uttar Pradesh cabinet has approved the expansion of the Meja Super Thermal Power Project in Prayagraj with the addition of three new power generation units of 800MW each, taking the proposed new capacity to 2,400MW. The project will be developed through a 50:50 joint venture between UP govt and NTPC at an estimated investment of around Rs 38,157 crore.

State energy minister Arvind Kumar Sharma said the decision followed a revision in the original plan prepared during the UP Global Investors Summit 2023.Sharma said, "State govt had initially signed an MOU with NTPC for setting up two 660MW units at Meja. However, during the planning and land assessment stage, it was found that the available land and infrastructure could support a larger and more cost efficient project."He said the proposal was subsequently revised to establish three units of 800MW each instead of two 660MW units.

The revised proposal received cabinet approval on Monday, paving the way for the creation of an additional 2,400MW generation capacity in the state.The minister said the first unit is targeted to be commissioned within five years, while the second and third units are expected to become operational within 69 months and 78 months, respectively.

Sharma said Meja already has operational power generation units under a joint venture with NTPC and the electricity produced there has remained comparatively cost efficient. According to state govt, the levelised tariff for the new project is estimated at around Rs 6.64 per unit at current prices and could reduce to around Rs 6.20 per unit after completion. The water source for the Meja Super Thermal Power Project will be taken from river Ganga.In a separate decision, the cabinet approved the construction of the 765/400 kV (4×1500 MVA) Mirzapur pooling substation along with associated transmission lines. The

transmission project is estimated to cost Rs 2799.47 crore, including Rs 1315.91 crore for substation and bay construction and Rs 1483.56 crore for transmission lines.A pooling substation is a central facility where electricity from multiple generation projects (like thermal plants, solar parks, pumped storage projects) are aggregated or collected, and transmitted to the main power grid.

World Energy
http://www.world-energy.org/

19 May 2026

ISO Board of Governors approves 2025-2026 transmission plan

The California Independent System Operator Board of Governors today approved the ISO's 2025-2026 Transmission Plan, recommending 38 infrastructure projects to accommodate rising electricity demand and support the state's energy goals.

In addition to continuing to expand access to lower-cost resources, the plan prioritizes transmission needed to serve growing customer demand reliably and economically.

More than half the projects – and more than half the $6.7 billion estimated cost – are driven by forecasted load growth. Most of the remaining projects are needed to access resource development basins identified by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and to serve load and meet state reliability and greenhouse gas reduction goals. Initial draft estimates released in April projected $7 billion in upgrades but updated cost assumptions have reduced the total projected costs to $6.7 billion at full buildout over the next decade.

"We are constantly striving to find ways to meet system needs in the most affordable way possible," Neil Millar, the ISO's Vice President, Transmission Planning and Infrastructure Development, said. "This year's plan does that in a number of different ways while also making sure we have the right infrastructure in place to accommodate all of the new resources that are being added to the system." This year's plan includes 12 reconductoring projects that increase transmission capacity without having to build new transmission from scratch. Three of these will employ advanced conductors, which are one of a suite of grid-enhancing-technologies, or GETs, that the ISO routinely considers in its planning efforts.

Responding to updated cost information from transmission owners, the approved plan cancels the Serrano-Del Amo-Mesa 500-kilovolt Transmission Reinforcement project in the LA Basin, originally approved in the 2022-2023 planning cycle. The reliability needs will instead be addressed by a number of smaller, lower-cost upgrades and increased reliance on energy storage development planned in key areas on the grid. Another hallmark of the ISO's planning process is ongoing analysis of grid congestion which can result in dispatching higher-priced generation to serve load when transmission limitations restrict access to lower-cost power. Planners use production cost modeling to compare the cost of new infrastructure against the customer savings from reducing congestion. This helps determine when it is more economical to reinforce the system rather than continue operating with recurring bottlenecks.

In the 2025-2026 plan, this analysis identified the need for a new 500-kilovolt line to relieve congestion along the Path 15 corridor, a major north-south transmission corridor. The recommended alternative needs additional engineering and will be refined in next year's planning cycle prior to a final recommendation. This upgrade will also support renewable development in the Westlands area in Fresno and Kings counties in southern California.

The plan is based on California Energy Commission (CEC) projections showing that California's load will grow by 15 gigawatts (GW) by 2035 and 20 GW by 2040, while the installed resource capacity, provided by the CPUC, will need to increase by more than 74

GW and 107 GW by those same timelines. As described in the CEC's load forecast, the increasing demand is being driven by building and transportation electrification, manufacturing, and large loads, including data centers.

Along with projects from previous cycles, this year's plan enables the grid to accommodate forecasted load growth and critical resource development identified by the CPUC in its Integrated Resource Plan, including:

- 45 GW of solar generation in the Westlands area in the Central Valley, Tehachapi, the Kramer area in San Bernardino County, Riverside County, as well as southern Nevada and western Arizona;
- 8 GW of in-state wind generation in Tehachapi;
- Over 2 GW of geothermal development, primarily in the Imperial Valley and in southern Nevada;
- Access for battery storage projects co-located with renewable generation projects across the state, as well as stand-alone storage located closer to major load centers in the LA Basin, greater Bay Area, and San Diego;
- The import of over 10 GW of wind generation from Idaho, Wyoming and New Mexico, largely over out-of-state transmission that is already in development, by enhancing corridors from the ISO border in southeastern Nevada and from western Arizona into California load centers. (The in-development transmission projects include SWIP North and Subscriber Participating Transmission Owner projects); and
- Over 4.5 GW of offshore wind with 2.9 GW in Central Coast Morro Bay and 1.6 GW in the North Coast Humboldt.

Specific transmission upgrades in the current plan, most notably related to load growth in the Greater Bay area, include:

- Greater Bay Area Tesla – Trimble – Metcalf 230 kV Corridor Expansion to supply the south Greater Bay area;
- Trout Canyon – Lugo 500 kV Line to access resources in the East of Pisgah area;
- Short-circuit duty upgrades at a number of stations to accommodate increases in resources in the CPUC portfolio;
- Gates – Los Banos #3 500 kV Line Series Compensation to address congestion on Path 15; and
- A host of smaller upgrades improving supply of load and access to other smaller resource zones.

CAISO
http://www.caiso.com/

20 May 2026

PJM accelerates backstop auction amid uncertainty over data center cost allocation

The PJM Interconnection intends to move up a planned backstop reliability auction to address rising demand from data centers to September, instead of holding it in March as originally proposed, the grid operator said Tuesday.

In a letter to stakeholders announcing the change, the PJM board urged member states to "immediately" start work to set up rules to shield residential and other existing customers from the planned auction's costs. "After PJM runs the Backstop procurement, if states have not established frameworks to appropriately allocate costs to new data center loads, it is unclear to which customers those costs would be assigned," the board said.

The auction is part of a one-time, two-part procurement process PJM proposed in April that also included a dedicated phase for bilateral contracting between large loads and suppliers to take place between September and March. The board said the revised plan will

mitigate near-term reliability risks while "not precluding future bilateral contracting opportunities," without giving details.

The proposed auction comes as PJM is working to develop rules governing how data centers and other large loads can interconnect to its system, which spans 13 Mid-Atlantic and Midwest states and the District of Columbia. The effort comes amid heightened concerns about electricity prices across the region, partly caused by a data center-driven jump in capacity prices. The auction proposal released in April was originally aimed at adding roughly 14.9 GW of new resources to serve data centers and other large loads that were expected to be online by the summer of 2029. The auction portion was designed to procure any shortfall that wasn't acquired via bilateral deals. Under the revised process laid out by the board, the auction will meet any shortfalls from PJM's next base capacity auction, set to begin June 30 for the 2028/29 delivery year. The changes to the planned backstop auction likely reduces its target to roughly 9 MW, according to Jefferies equity analysts.

It remains unclear how the auction's costs will be allocated only to hyperscalers, and not existing ratepayers, they added. The board's decision to move the proposed procurement auction to September follows criticism from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Chairman Laura Swett. In April, she said she was "perplexed" by PJM's plan to hold the auction in March when the Trump administration and governors of PJM states had jointly called for it to be held in September. She also criticized PJM's governance process and said the agency would review it during a technical conference in July.

"We are not surprised to see PJM's swift response following last week's FERC's Chair comments that PJM may be 'too big to function,'" the Jefferies analysts said. "Ultimate reform of the PJM market will remain as an overhang, but we believe swiftly moving to resolve near term capacity needs should remove some of the pressure from FERC on PJM."

Among other things, PJM is developing "connect and manage" rules for adding large loads that agree to be curtailed during times when power supplies may not be enough to meet demand, such as during heat waves. In its letter, PJM's board said the grid operator will combine its stakeholders processes for connect and manage and the one-time backstop procurement because of their intertwined nature.

"It has become clear that the Backstop and C&M are too substantively linked to continue to be discussed in separate stakeholder processes," it said. "Data center participation in the Backstop, whether through the proposed bilateral framework or the centralized procurement, is meant to remove that load from C&M consideration." Certainty in the C&M rules is needed to support bilateral transactions, but with potential rehearing requests at FERC and legal challenges, final certainty may not be possible until "sometime" in 2027, according to the board.

Moving up the backstop auction will allow PJM and its stakeholders to focus on potential market reforms outlined in a recent report from the grid operator and "allow for a more rapid return to market fundamentals," the board said. PJM will soon issue a revised stakeholder meeting schedule combining the backstop auction and C&M reviews, the board said.

Utility Dive
http://www.utilitydive.com/

20 May 2026

China Encourages Multi-User Renewable Power Supply Projects to Boost Local Consumption

China released a new policy today encouraging investment in multi-user direct green power connection projects to promote traceable green production and boost local consumption of renewable electricity.

The move comes as global carbon regulation tightens and China advances its dual-carbon agenda. The policy marks another major step by Chinese energy regulators to improve local renewable energy consumption and support the transition toward greener industrial production.

The policy, jointly issued by China's top economic planner, the National Development and Reform Commission, and the National Energy Administration, said users with green electricity demand can utilize nearby renewable energy resources to develop multi-user direct green power connection projects. Industrial parks, zero-carbon parks, and incremental power distribution networks may also organize such projects independently for all or some of their users.

The document added that priority support will be given to emerging and future industries, including computing infrastructure and green hydrogen, ammonia, and methanol production projects, to adopt direct green power connection models.

Push for Local Renewable Energy Consumption

Multi-user direct green power connection projects involve multiple green electricity users that are independent legal entities. Under the off-grid model, renewable energy generated by the project is supplied entirely to users through self-built regional power networks. Under the grid-connected model, renewable power is first delivered to users through the project's dedicated network, while surplus electricity is transmitted to the public grid through designated interfaces.

Because the project's internal power supply system is strictly separated from the public grid in terms of infrastructure, operational responsibilities, and electricity metering, users can clearly trace the source of their electricity.

"This new policy provides a more economical green electricity consumption model compared with single-user direct green power connection projects and represents an important measure to improve the nearby consumption mechanism for renewable energy," Lin Boqiang, dean of the China Institute for Studies in Energy Policy at Xiamen University, told Yicai. In a policy interpretation released today, the NEA said the multi-user model represents a further upgrade from the single-user direct green power connection policy introduced last year and is intended to improve the local consumption of renewable energy at a higher level.

Stricter Consumption Requirements Set for Projects

According to the policy, annual self-consumed electricity must account for at least 60 percent of a project's total available power generation. Self-used green electricity must currently account for at least 30 percent of total electricity consumption and rise to at least 35 percent by 2030. To increase local green power consumption, grid-connected projects are generally prohibited from transmitting more than 20 percent of their total available generation to the public grid after operations begin.

The policy also stated that the leading operating entity of a multi-user direct green power connection project must be an independent legal entity. Such entities should generally be jointly established by power generators and power users, although either side may establish them independently. For industrial park-based projects, park management committees may jointly invest with non-power third-party institutions to establish project operators.

Data released by the NEA in February showed that 84 direct green power connection projects had been approved nationwide at the time, with a combined installed capacity of 325.9 gigawatts. Investors included central state-owned enterprises, local state-owned enterprises, and private companies.

Yicai Global
http://www.yicaiglobal.com

21 May 2026

Ofgem sets rules for 2028 to 2033 grid investment to meet growing electricity demand

Ofgem has today (Thursday 21 May) set out a challenging but fair rulebook for assessing investment plans and controlling costs for Britain's regional and local electricity distribution grid into the 2030s.

The Sector Specific Methodology Decision (SSMD) sets out the rules for how networks should keep pace with projected electricity demand across the economy – and tells the five DNOs how their 2028-2033 business plans will be assessed once they are submitted in December.

The full Electricity Distribution Price Control (ED3) settlement, to be approved by the end of 2027, will map out each company's financial settlement over the five-year price control period.

The SSMD judges that while demand on distribution grids will rise, uncertainty in the scale, timing and location of electrification requires a more phased approach for network investment.

This updates Ofgem's consultation position last November so it now requires DNOs to demonstrate that investment is highly likely to be needed, even after flexible technologies are deployed to maximise existing grid capacity. It means network companies must show projects will meet expended demand growth and prevent grid bottlenecks.

The five-year period is a critical stage for the unprecedented grid investment needed to expand the existing 800,000 kilometres of networks which connects 30 million customers – with planning on projected demand based on detailed analysis including NESO's transitional Regional Energy Strategic Plan published in January 2026.

The SSMD sets out key principles:

Tighter rules on baseline capital: ED3 will set the networks' baseline allowances from 2028 onwards for essential investment in grid capacity and resilience. This will come with clear conditions on delivery; strict cost of capital rules set in line with market conditions; and networks' revenues set in line with performance and consumer service delivery. Stricter cost controls to manage uncertainty: DNO's capital will be tightly controlled through strong evidence thresholds and in-period adjustments, allowing costs to be approved, increased or deferred as demand materialises.

'Build and flex' as the default: networks will be required to maximise existing grid capacity using smart, flexible demand management – with investment signed-off for new build when the economic need is clear and sustained. SSMD requires networks to use tools like smart EV charging, demand-side response, battery storage and controlled exports to shift demand and reduce network constraints.

Stronger consumer protection: tighter cost controls designed to prevent unnecessary, excessive or speculative upfront investment being recovered through bills. It will minimise costs for consumers while ensuring new infrastructure is delivered on time and in line with demand. DNOs will be required to improve the identification of vulnerable customers, submit more robust delivery plans, strengthen their power cut response and tighter accountability, enforced by financial rewards and penalties.

Financial rewards and penalties: ED3 will build in stronger incentives, penalties and clawbacks to drive good performance. There will be greater scrutiny of network companies, with clear financial consequences for failing to meet their business plan commitments. This includes standardised reporting, performance dashboards and comparative data to ensure companies are transparent, benchmarked and accountable.

Faster grid connections with stronger enforcement: strengthened rules to accelerate connections for low carbon technologies and major projects with financial penalties for

delays and underperformance and rewards for DNOs that can deliver great service. This covers connections from low-voltage, high-volume assets like EV charge points or rooftop solar to large-scale, complex grid connections for housing, commercial and industry.

Ofgem Director of Network Price Controls Steve McMahon said:

"We know electrification across the economy will drive unprecedented demand but its precise pace, scale and location remain uncertain. Our rulebook strikes a tough but fair balance in expanding grid capacity to meet the demands placed on them. It ensures investment is targeted, justified and delivers value for money – that's why we're putting strong controls in place to protect consumers from projects that are not delivered on time and on budget.

"The 'build and flex' model is a critical evolution of our approach. We will sign-off new investment only where the strategic need is clear and networks have maximised existing grid capacity to control demand using smart, flexible grid technology. This blocks unnecessary physical upgrades and reinforcements based on speculative forecasts being recouped prematurely from bills. It gives networks and investors a robust, transparent and predictable rulebook that targets capital when and where needed.

"There is no short cut to securing the investment needed to support electrification and there are tough decisions ahead. We now have 18 months to get this right working with all the networks; the UK, Scottish and Welsh governments; key sectors across the economy and consumer bodies".

The SSMD includes no assessment of the overall investment, allowed revenues, financial penalties or rewards – and their projected impact on customer bills.

The five DNOs' business plans for 2028 to 2033, covering 14 licence areas across Britain, must be submitted in December this year. Ofgem's draft determinations will be made next summer with the final decision for each company made by the end of 2027, including the projected cost impact on consumers. The new price control period starts on 1 April 2028.

Ofgem
http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/

22 May 2026

FERC: US summer generating capacity increases by 75 GW since 2025

U.S. generating capacity will increase by about 75 GW this summer compared to a year ago — mainly solar, wind and batteries — while power plant retirements will slow to about 8 GW, helping to improve the outlook for grid reliability for this summer, according to Federal Energy Regulatory Commission staff.

"The pace of these changes is notable," Alec Stirling, a FERC economist, said during the agency's monthly open meeting on Thursday. "New capacity additions are accelerating to the largest year-over-year increase in gigawatts in over a decade, while the rate of plant retirements has slowed by more than 50% since last summer." The capacity additions include nearly 26 GW in the Electric Reliability Council of Texas footprint, close to 13 GW in the Western Electric Coordinating Council region and 11 GW in the Midcontinent Independent System Operator market, FERC said in its annual summer market and reliability assessment.

Generation additions are outpacing demand growth, leading to an improved reliability outlook compared to last summer, Suzanne Edwards, a North American Electric Reliability Corp. analyst, told the commission. Even so, three areas in the United States face risks of power supply shortfalls during extreme conditions, Edwards said. They are the Pacific Northwest, New England and part of western Texas, she said. Also, low water levels in the Colorado River Basin could affect about 4.5 GW of hydroelectric generation by August, FERC staff said.

The U.S. Department of Interior's Bureau of Reclamation is taking emergency actions to keep enough water in Lake Powell so that the Glen Canyon dam can continue operating and water can be released downriver, according to Monica Ferrera, a FERC engineer. The loss of the hydro capacity on the Colorado River, which includes the 2-GW Hoover Dam, would create operational challenges Ferrara said. "Operators may experience increased congestion, reduced operational flexibility and increased need for mitigation measures during times of elevated demand," she said.

FERC staff expects gas-fired generators will provide 39% of all capacity this summer, followed by solar at 14%, coal at 13%, wind at 12%, and nuclear and hydropower at 7% each. Citing Energy Information Administration data, FERC staff said wholesale power prices this summer are expected to average $46.81/MWh, down 5% from the year-ago period. However, prices will vary by region, with shifts in prices ranging from a 41% drop in the Northwest to an 11% increase in ERCOT. On the gas front, FERC staff expects natural gas prices at the Henry Hub in Louisiana to average $3.07/MMBtu this summer, down 1% from last summer. Gas prices are expected to be higher at Northeast gas trading hubs, reflecting low storage levels driven by a cold winter, staff said. FERC expects Western gas prices will be lower because of the region's mild winter, which left storage facilities at higher than normal levels.

FERC and data centers

With data centers facing local, state and financial challenges, the potential for less data center demand to materialize than expected isn't factoring into how FERC is addressing the issue, according to FERC Chairman Laura Swett. "We are facing exploding demand for electricity for various factors as our economy grows, and FERC's job is to ensure that that type of load is connected in a responsible and economic and reliable way," Swett said during a media briefing. The politics surrounding data centers are irrelevant to FERC's work, she said.

"We are looking at the facts and every market, every load, anything that comes under our jurisdiction — not to imply that load necessarily is — but we just have to ensure that we have transparency, we have well-functioning markets, and that the grid is reliable, and that doesn't change," Swett said.

FERC is expected to release a decision at its open meeting in June on the U.S. Department of Energy's proposal for rules governing how data centers can interconnect to the transmission system.

FERC rejects complaint over PJM upgrade costs

FERC rejected a complaint brought by the developers of two solar projects in North Carolina. After they made about $14.4 million in total "readiness deposits," the PJM Interconnection increased their estimated network upgrade costs from a total of $33.7 million to $54.9 million. FERC rejected their argument that it is unfair that they should have to forfeit their readiness deposits if they withdraw their projects in the face of a massive increase in upgrade costs.

During the open meeting, FERC Commissioner David Rosner said he supported dismissing the complaint but that he remains "very concerned about the unpredictability and variability that the interconnection process yields with respect to surprises on costs of connecting new power plants to the grid." FERC commissioners raised similar concerns in March when the agency rejected a complaint by RWE Clean Energy that argued PJM violated its network upgrade cost allocation rules for generators seeking to connect to the grid.

LaCerte touts MISO, SPP fast-track generation

After being confirmed by the Senate for a second term on May 18, FERC Commissioner David LaCerte praised MISO and Southwest Power Pool initiatives that aim

to get power supplies online quickly through fast-track interconnection reviews. SPP is advancing about 13.3 GW of resources — concentrated in Oklahoma, Kansas and Texas — with 2029/2030 online targets, LaCerte said. MISO is moving forward with 20.9 GW — largely in Louisiana, Indiana and Wisconsin — with 2027/2028 inservice dates, he said.

"These are the types of reforms that we sorely need in these areas," LaCerte said. His second term at FERC runs to June 30, 2031.

FERC proposes expanded gas project 'blanket' authorization

The agency on Thursday proposed expanding its "blanket certificate" program for certain types of "routine" gas pipeline projects so they wouldn't need project-specific authorizations. The program was last updated in 2006. "We're not cutting any corners here, and we never have," Swett said. "Projects identified as high risk will continue to undergo comprehensive review." FERC is also advancing blanket authorization initiatives for liquefied natural gas and hydro facilities, she noted.

Utility Dive
http://www.utilitydive.com/

25 May 2026

BHA issues UK guidance on pumped storage reservoir safety

The British Hydropower Association (BHA) has published new technical guidance on reservoir safety for pumped storage hydropower (PSH) schemes in the UK, reflecting growing industry focus on long-duration energy storage infrastructure.

The document, developed by a working group of reservoir engineers, hydropower developers, consultants and operators, sets out a risk-informed framework for the planning, design, construction and operation of pumped storage reservoirs.

The guidance responds to increasing deployment of pumped storage projects intended to support the integration of renewable energy into the electricity system. According to the document, many proposed schemes involve high pumping capacities, rapid operational cycling and greater reliance on control and automation systems than conventional reservoirs.

The publication states that existing reservoir safety guidance was largely developed for passive, naturally fed reservoirs and does not always address the operational characteristics of modern pumped storage systems. Key areas covered include spillway provision, drawdown capability, hydraulic infrastructure interfaces, operational safety, control systems and risk management. The guidance also examines the interaction between civil infrastructure and automated operational controls.

A central theme is the distinction between natural flood risks and operational risks associated with pumped inflows. The guidance notes that pumped inflows can exceed natural inflows by several orders of magnitude, meaning that control-system failures, operational errors and abnormal plant behaviour can become significant safety considerations. The document does not introduce new regulatory requirements but is intended to support professional judgement within the existing UK reservoir safety framework. It promotes an approach based on reducing risks to levels considered "as low as reasonably practicable" (ALARP).

The BHA said the guidance would be updated over time as further pumped storage projects are developed in the UK and internationally.

Water Power Magazine
http://www.waterpowermagazine.com/