

## SPRING 2026 JOINT CREPC-WIRAB MEETING SUMMARY

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*The Joint CREPC-WIRAB Meeting is the premier biannual gathering of state, provincial, and federal representatives, and industry experts from across the Western Interconnection.*

*The **Committee on Regional Electric Power Cooperation (CREPC)** is a joint committee of the Western Interstate Energy Board (WIEB) and the Western Conference of Public Service Commissioners (WCPSC). Membership in CREPC is comprised of the public utility commissions and energy offices in the Western United States and Canadian Provinces. CREPC works to improve the efficiency of the western electric power system.*

*The **Western Interconnection Regional Advisory Body (WIRAB)** is a regional advisory body created by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) at the request of western governors. As such, WIRAB has the authority to advise FERC, the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), and the Western Regional Entity (i.e., then Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC) on matters pertaining to electric grid reliability in the Western Interconnection. WIRAB's membership is comprised of a representative of each state and province with load served in the Western Interconnection.*

*The **Western Interstate Energy Board (WIEB)** provides support to CREPC and WIRAB through financial and staffing agreements. To help facilitate discussion and improve common understanding between western state governor and provincial premier advisors, public utility commissioners, and energy office officials on electricity issues, WIEB has secured federal funding through a cooperative agreement with the **U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)**, as well as financial support from the **Western Conference of Public Service Commissioners (WCPSC)** to host policy advisors and regulatory officials at the biannual Joint CREPC-WIRAB Meetings.*

*The following is a summary of the Spring 2026 Joint CREPC-WIRAB Meeting held May 12-14, 2026, in San Diego, CA. The summary includes key takeaways from the various presentations and panel discussions.*

### TUESDAY, May 12, 2026

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#### Resource Adequacy: Analytics, Realities, and Solutions

Brian Rybarik, Chair of the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, moderated this panel on resource adequacy with Sarah Edmonds, President and CEO of the Western Power Pool; Ben Faulkinberry, Senior Power Marketer and Originator at PacifiCorp; Antoine Lucas, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the Southwest Power Pool; Anna McKenna, Vice President of Market Design and Analysis at the California Independent System Operator; and Vic Howell, Director of

Reliability Assessments and Modeling at the Western Electricity Coordinating Council. Panelists discussed how the West can turn a widely shared challenge of tightening supply into coordinated action.

Howell anchored the discussion in WECC's latest Long-Term Reliability Assessment, which predicts demand across the Western Interconnection will grow roughly 25 percent over the next decade, well above historical rates. Meeting it will require about 177 GW of new resources between 2026 and 2035, with mostly inverter-based resources. Even with those additions, he noted, the assessment shows a risk of loss of load as early as 2029 in some areas.

Edmonds framed the challenge as assigning clear accountability for reliability across participants, likening it to a "tragedy of the commons." She positioned WRAP as the structure built to do that, with binding participants now representing 58 GW of capacity. Despite the participant exits announced in October, she maintained that WRAP remains one of the largest resource adequacy frameworks in operation and that the program remains open to others, including EDAM participants.

Lucas described markets as the most valuable tool for reliability after transmission itself, effective only when day-ahead and real-time operations are tightly linked. He cautioned that regionalization depends on durable commitments, since planning assumptions shift whenever entities join or leave a program.

McKenna argued that resource adequacy is one tool among several, and that getting it right depends on aligning short-term operations with long-term planning while keeping frameworks simple enough to stay transparent. She pointed to CAISO's work with the CPUC and CEC to evaluate a ten-year horizon and feed the results into the state's integrated resource plans.

Faulkinberry presented the regional resource adequacy program taking shape among EDAM-leaning utilities. He traced it to a question raised roughly 15 months ago: whether there is enough load and resource diversity from the entities planning to join EDAM outside the CAISO balancing authority area to justify a separate solution. A Brattle study confirmed that there is, in fact, significant resource diversity within the EDAM footprint outside of California, supporting the case for broader regional framework. Faulkinberry noted that a key priority was to establish a transparent, public stakeholder process to gather broad input and ensure that any proposed framework is both practical and widely supported.

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### Making It Real: The Next Phase of Western Transmission Development

James Lester, Senior Advisor at the Colorado Energy Office, moderated this panel on the next phase of Western transmission development with Ravi Aggarwal, Manager and Senior Electrical Engineer at the Bonneville Power Administration; Sarah Edmonds, President and CEO of the Western Power Pool; Neil Millar, Vice President of Transmission Planning and Infrastructure Development at the California Independent System Operator; Keegan Moyer, Principal at Energy Strategies; Bob Rowe, Trail Boss at the Western Transmission Consortium; Janea Scott, Senior Fellow at Gridworks; and Jack Wadleigh, Senior Regulatory and Market Affairs Manager at Pattern Energy. Panelists discussed how the region's planning efforts fit together and how to move projects from planning into construction.

Aggarwal opened by calling for faster transmission expansion paired with disciplined long-term planning, so that near-term builds and the broader regional vision stay aligned with efforts like WestTEC.

Edmonds asked what the grid could look like if Western entities planned collectively, without the constraints that normally shape each utility's footprint. She said WestTEC released its 10-year plan earlier this year, with a 20-year plan to follow, and that a stakeholder advisory group will guide the next phase, WestTEC 2.0, on questions of funding, participation, and governance. WestTEC is also formalizing a partnership with the Western Transmission Consortium through a memorandum of understanding now in progress. Throughout, Edmonds argued that states should lead rather than wait on federal action, pointing to the groundwork already laid on cost allocation

Moyer walked through the 10-year study, which identifies roughly \$60 billion in new lines, rebuilds, and reconductoring. About two-thirds of those projects are already planned and now need to be prioritized, he said, so the more conceptual, forward-looking work is shifting to the 20-year study expected later this year. He flagged the difficulty of quantifying transmission benefits as the central unresolved problem, one that Order 1920 has begun to address.

Millar pointed to the scale and pace of recent development, noting that most of it has come from upgrading existing infrastructure rather than new builds. CAISO has approved roughly \$22 billion in transmission over the past four years, with another \$6.7 billion planned. He said the region is now transitioning to Order 1920, even as planning remains largely bottom-up and driven by specific reliability needs and local constraints.

Scott framed the division of labor: WestTEC identifies which projects matter, while the Gridworks study focuses on how to move them forward, working within existing legal frameworks to improve coordination rather than pursuing broad permitting reform. Wadleigh added that permitting has to be worked at the local, state, and federal levels at once, and that without a shared cost allocation method, each project needs a clear, value-driven case tailored to the jurisdictions it crosses. Rowe noted that the WestTEC partnership is non-exclusive and open to others, while cautioning that federal policy uncertainty, including around transmission corridor designations and possible permitting-reform legislation, continues to complicate planning.

THURSDAY, October 2, 2025

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### Oversight at the Seams

John Hammond, Commissioner at the Idaho Public Utilities Commission, moderated this panel on managing the boundaries between Western markets with Mark Rothleder, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the California Independent System Operator; Carrie Simpson, Vice President of Markets at the Southwest Power Pool; Joe Taylor, Senior Director of Western Markets at Xcel Energy; and Mike Wilding, Vice President of Energy Supply Management at PacifiCorp. With CAISO's Extended Day-Ahead Market having gone live and SPP's Markets+ moving toward operations, panelists discussed how states, utilities, and market operators can manage the seams that will form between them.

Rothleder argued that seams are not new, and that the real question is how well they are managed. His guiding principle was to avoid creating a seam where none exists and, where one is unavoidable, to make it as easy and efficient as possible to cross. He said CAISO and SPP have met three times at the executive level to understand each other's markets and build toward a regular cadence, and that a workshop series open to regulators is scheduled from July through September, to be followed by a road

map. He named the synchronization of market timing as the largest challenge, since timing divergences may not show up in market design but will be felt in daily operations

Simpson reported that Markets+ remains on track for a 2027 launch and echoed that seams discussions should not be used to relitigate market design choices already approved by FERC. She noted that even full consolidation of the West's 40 balancing authorities would not eliminate seams between transmission operators, so the goal is optimization rather than elimination. The technical teams have identified five focus areas, she said, including timing divergences and congestion management, and pointed to the lack of a uniform congestion framework in the West. To address that, a new flow-based standard, the Western Interconnection Loading Relief, is in development to manage constraints in real time across the interconnection.

Wilding offered a utility view, reporting that PacifiCorp had been live in EDAM for roughly two weeks with operations running smoothly, while still managing congestion complexity across its neighbors in RTO West. He acknowledged that the WEIM footprint will shrink as entities make their own market choices, and urged the region to move past conflict, saying participants need to stop throwing rocks and get out of each other's dockets. He flagged gas-electric coordination in the day-ahead timeframe and real-time dispatch as the most difficult and costly seams, the latter made harder as the footprint shifts and two market operators converge

Taylor described why Public Service Company of Colorado is joining Markets+ as a binding participant in 2027 despite neighbors choosing other organizations, noting that Xcel has built more transmission than any other utility in the country over the past several years. He pointed to a significant seam with its RTO West neighbors that the Colorado Commission has asked it to report on formally. Two tools in development would help, he said: Real-Time Dispatchable Transactions, targeted for late 2026, to protect against congestion risk at the borders, and an Intermarket Optimization Tool, expected in 2028, to identify and execute trades between markets automatically. His largest concern was also that the two day-ahead markets close four hours apart.

Closing the session, Commissioner Hammond asked what regulators can do, raising the idea that the varying jurisdictions are all each other's stakeholders and customers. Panelists encouraged regulators to use existing governance forums to request regular progress updates, to call operators directly and keep steady pressure on what is being done to make seams more efficient, and to ask pointed questions of any utility leaving the WEIM about the benefits being given up and how the losses will be mitigated.

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### The Large Load Conundrum

Lea Márquez Peterson, Commissioner at the Arizona Corporation Commission, moderated this panel on accommodating large loads with David Rosner, Commissioner at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Lauren Schwisberg, Principal of Electricity Resource Planning and VPPs at RMI; and Jeff Spires, Managing Director of Power at Powerex. Panelists discussed how states can serve data centers and other large loads seeking interconnection on accelerated timelines without also shifting costs onto existing ratepayers.

Spires described Powerex's experience serving a growing number of large load customers, noting that their needs vary widely, from clean versus conventional supply to firm versus flexible service, and that successful arrangements require collaboration rather than a single template. He pointed to a Microsoft

data center in Douglas County, Washington, that brings its own renewable supply, which Powerex balances with battery services. Tariff clarity is what separates serious customers from speculative ones, he said, through transparent commitments on ramp requirements, exit fees, and deposits. He also cited the January cold snap around the MLK Day holiday as a case study in the Northwest's growing resource gap, with record peaks and emergencies sustained across multiple balancing authorities for hours, and argued that interregional transmission between the Northwest and Southwest is the highest-leverage opportunity because it would unlock stranded seasonal capacity.

Schwisberg reported that current integrated resource plans anticipate 24 percent load growth by 2035, with forecasts still being revised upward across the West even as some Eastern forecasts come down. RMI's review of 60 large load tariffs found an average size threshold of 60 MW and an average contract term of about 11 years, though confidence that those terms fully recover costs remains limited. She said the demand side is consistently undervalued, both through on-site resources and system-level programs, and that states should prioritize creating headroom through demand-side management. She recommended a layered approach to large load tariff design, with a baseline tariff, an optional resource-sourcing tier that lets customers move up the queue in exchange for reducing risk, and a flexibility tier, citing Kansas and Colorado as examples.

Rosner framed the pace of load additions as an opportunity rather than only a challenge, saying he does not accept that affordability and growth must be in conflict, and that his priority is durable solutions that give regulatory certainty to everyone with skin in the game. He said FERC's approach is to make all business models legal, from fully off-grid to front-of-meter co-location, and pointed to enabling steps already underway, including flexible transmission services in PJM and SPP's newly approved 90-day study process for adding load. Lastly, Commissioner Rosner also noted that FERC was expected to take action on the large loads ANOPR proceeding by the end of June.

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#### How do states and provinces get informative data from the entire West?

Letha Tawney, Chair of the Oregon Public Utilities Commission, moderated this panel on how states and provinces can access reliable data from across the West with Amelia Blanke, Principal Economist and Director of Market Strategy and Governance at the California Independent System Operator; Kim O'Guinn, Director of State Regulatory Policy at Southwest Power Pool; Ryan Roy, Chief Operating Officer of the Western Power Pool; and Branden Sudduth, Vice President of Reliability Planning and Performance Analysis at the Western Electricity Coordinating Council.

Sudduth described WECC's data portals, maps, and reliability modeling, available at varying levels of access. In most cases, he said, a state only needs to submit a request with a statement of legitimate need and sign a nondisclosure agreement to access confidential information. Sudduth shared that data is most useful when the need is scoped precisely in advance, since WECC can provide data bumps but specificity makes them actionable.

Roy explained that the Western Power Pool's tariff treats data as confidential by default, given its commercial sensitivity. A range of material is nonetheless public, he said, including WRAP reliability metrics, the WRAP tariff and business practices, WestTEC study results and GIS files, and NorthernGrid work products. He flagged data quality as a continuous challenge, often maintained by junior staff and siloed across operational units, and stressed that open communication about what data is needed and how it will be used protects the integrity of the program.

O’Guinn pointed to SPP’s portal as the access point for Western services data, integrated marketplace information, Markets+ documents, the generation interconnection queue at both regional and state levels, and market monitor reports. She emphasized that SPP’s governance structure, in which the board rather than staff approves what is released, strengthens confidence in data integrity and that the organization recognizes state authority over resource adequacy, transmission rights, and cost allocation.

Lastly, Blanke noted that CAISO publishes markets data, performance reports, governance and market monitor materials, and participant data, with FERC public reports and a formal process for requesting additional data. She described the Body of State Regulators as a valuable forum for assessing data needs and refining how data is shared and noted that market participation itself requires public reporting on whether the market is operating competitively, which builds in a measure of transparency. Blanke also mentioned that CAISO is also working with other system operators to identify best practices for AI and data integration but noted the effort would take time to develop.

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### Major Milestones for Western Markets

Gabriel Aguilera, Chair of the New Mexico Public Regulation Commission, moderated this session with Judy Chang, Commissioner at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Elliot Mainzer, President and CEO of the California Independent System Operator; and Lanny Nickell, President and CEO of the Southwest Power Pool. With CAISO’s Extended Day-Ahead Market now live, SPP’s RTO expanded into the West, and SPP’s Markets+ set to launch in 2027, the discussion centered on what regulators should watch as the region shifts from single footprints to a multi-market ecosystem, and on how the markets will work together across their seams.

Nickell opened by noting that both SPP’s RTO expansion and the EDAM launch went live without incident, which he said is exactly how such transitions should work. He framed SPP’s expansion as bringing established RTO value west, citing roughly \$3 billion in market savings over the past year for the 18 million customers in its eastern footprint, and pointed to regional resource adequacy, transmission planning, and cost allocation as the benefits that follow. The most strategic opportunity, he said, is increasing transfer capability between East and West across the direct-current ties, and he drew a lesson from the years-long MISO-SPP seams dispute: the parties need to identify what works best for those affected and resolve it together rather than litigate.

Mainzer argued that any market conversation should start with reliability, calling it CAISO’s first priority heading into a hot summer, with new capacity and resource adequacy preparation underway alongside utilities and regulators. He stressed that transmission planning has to lead load growth, pointing to roughly \$24 billion in new transmission and the buildout needed to keep pace, and described infrastructure and resource adequacy as the foundations of an integrated grid that still preserves members’ autonomy over their own decisions. He valued the electrical connectivity and resource diversity built across the West over the past twelve years, now spanning 24 entities in 12 states, and noted that CAISO and SPP teams are working to translate between the Markets+ and EDAM designs, including building a shared glossary so the two markets speak the same language.

Commissioner Chang congratulated the operators on their recent achievements but kept her focus on how the markets will work together rather than how each performs alone. She cautioned that the Western situation is more complex than the East’s, where similar market designs and consolidated balancing authorities eased coordination. In the West, market operators will not control transmission,

and congestion will be managed by the balancing authorities. She illustrated the core complication through transmission rights, noting that rights can be offered into Markets+ over the same physical lines used within EDAM, so two markets may rely on the same capacity at once, raising unresolved questions of whose rights are honored, how flows are scheduled, and how parallel flows across the seam are managed. Drawing on the East's history of seams litigation between MISO, PJM, and SPP, she said the ideal outcome would be joint operating agreements in place between the operators before Markets+ goes live, and signaled that FERC is weighing some form of reporting requirements to keep the work on track, while acknowledging the Commission cannot solve the problem alone.

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#### A Discussion with DOE Deputy General Counsel for Compliance Holly Rachel Smith

Maren Mahoney, Director of the Arizona Governor's Office of Resiliency, moderated a discussion with Holly Rachel Smith, Deputy General Counsel for Compliance in the Office of the General Counsel at the U.S. Department of Energy, followed by a roundtable with state representatives.

Mahoney opened by emphasizing the federal government's long partnership with the West, noting DOE's sustained support for WIEB and its member states, including help convening past meetings and backing state-led work such as studies exploring transmission cost frameworks. She pointed to Arizona's own use of that support, including more than \$15 million administered to utilities in rural areas to mitigate wildfire risk, state energy security planning, and next-generation geothermal work.

Smith framed DOE as a collaborator entering a new era of American vitality and innovation. She described the surge in demand from artificial intelligence, data centers, and the reshoring of critical supply chains not as a burden but as a signal that the country is building again, and argued that the question is not whether to welcome that growth but how to support it. This requires a grid that can keep pace with larger loads, more complex resource planning, and harsher operating conditions, which the West already knows well from wildfire, drought, and water variability.

Lastly, Smith described an approach to stabilize, optimize, and grow: addressing immediate reliability risks, getting more out of existing infrastructure through advanced conductors and grid-enhancing technologies, and expanding the system to serve new industries without compromising reliability, supported by DOE tools including SPARK and a focus on speed to power.

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FRIDAY, OCTOBER 3, 2025

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#### Geothermal Opportunities, Constraints, and the Role of States

Rebecca Puck Stair, Director of the New Mexico Energy Conservation and Management Division, moderated this panel on the potential of geothermal energy with Bryce Carter, Program Manager of Emerging Markets for Geothermal at the Colorado Energy Office; Michael O'Connor, Director at the Center for Public Enterprise; Rebecca Eden, Director of Business Development at Baseload Power; and Ben Serrurier, Director of Government Affairs and Policy at Fervo Energy.

Serrurier described the innovation happening above ground, where developers are standardizing on targets for temperature, chemistry, and flow rate so that surface equipment can be standardized as well, making projects easier to sell and reducing capital costs. He emphasized that geothermal provides clean, firm power, and that lowering the cost of capital is what would let the industry move faster. On the

question of what a regulator could do to help, he pointed to a clearer understanding of geothermal's grid services and peak-shaving abilities.

Carter highlighted the direct-use and heating applications often overlooked in conversations focused on drilling, pointing to geothermal piped to 1,500 homes in Colorado, district heating opportunities in downtown Denver, and next-generation work underway at CU Boulder.

Eden offered Iceland as an illustration of the resource's reach, where roughly 90 percent of energy use is geothermal and a single well can support a cascade of uses from home heating to greenhouses to aquaculture. She noted that geology constrains where projects can go, often to places without nearby transmission capacity or load, and explained that while traditional geothermal is not dispatchable, next-generation approaches allow more flexibility by varying injection rates, including shifting between district heating and electricity generation.

O'Connor addressed why development has not accelerated despite strong market interest, walking through the escalating risk at each stage of a project, from inexpensive early exploration to appraisal drilling where costs and risk climb steeply, which is where public financial support matters most. He encouraged utilities to learn the geothermal development process so they can make commitments earlier, and urged every integrated resource plan to consider geothermal realistically, supported by tariff structures that create market certainty.

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#### A Discussion with FERC Commissioner Lindsay S. See

Tammy Cordova, Commissioner at the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada, moderated this conversation with FERC Commissioner Lindsay See on her priorities at the Commission and how its decisions could affect the West.

Drawing on her background in West Virginia state government, See emphasized the intersection of state and federal roles, calling the state perspective essential both for regional insight and for understanding grid impacts that cross state lines. She stressed that maintaining the confidence of stakeholders and ratepayers is central, and that FERC respects the different market choices regions make, particularly as demand grows in ways that differ in character from the past.

On ratepayers, See acknowledged that state commissioners sit on the front lines while FERC is more removed, but argued the Commission should not lose sight of how its actions reach them. She framed the task as balancing economic benefits against cost and making the most of existing infrastructure, noting that current incentives are not built that way and that better data is needed, since both overbuilding and underbuilding carry costs.

Turning to large loads, See described their growth as a major opportunity best grounded in FERC's existing legal authorities, with an emphasis on the flexibility she sees as a real value-add for reliability. She pointed to accurate load forecasting, readiness standards, and higher stakes for participants with financial skin in the game as ways to curb speculation, and noted that the gas and electric sectors are less siloed than ever. Closing the discussion, she returned to the ratepayer, asking how regulators can keep the people who are not in the room in view even while responding to urgent industry matters.

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## Affordability Under Pressure: Keeping Western Reliability and Market Transitions Cost Disciplined

Eric Blank, Chairman of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, moderated this panel on keeping reliability and market transitions cost-disciplined with Janine Benner, Director of the Oregon Department of Energy; Cairns Price, Commissioner at the Alberta Utilities Commission; and Shahzad Lateef, Senior Director for Transmission Development at NV Energy.

Blank framed affordability as the thread running through every other issue at the meeting, citing rate pressure in Colorado, California rates that have tripled over fourteen years, and financial-community pressure for utility earnings growth. He described Colorado's approach of weighing need against cost by separating expenses a utility can control from those it cannot and applying different cost-sharing ratios to each, so the utility benefits when customers do.

Benner reported that demand in the Northwest is expected to grow 30 percent over the next decade, driven largely by technology loads, with conservative models showing a need for 3 GW of new supply by 2030. Though Oregon's rates sit below the national average, she noted ratepayers do not judge their bills in relative terms, and pointed to a 2025 law creating a new rate class so large loads pay their fair share. She described Oregon's energy strategy of five pathways and more than 40 actions, singling out efficiency as the step that makes the others easier and wildfire as a major cost driver.

Price drew out the Canadian context, explaining there is no federal role in electricity regulation and no national affordability policy, leaving regulation to vary by province. Commissioners are bound by their enabling legislation, he said, and while Ontario and Manitoba allow affordability to enter rate-setting, Alberta's statute does not, though tools like winter disconnection bans exist. He recounted how a transmission crisis roughly fifteen years ago led Alberta to pass critical infrastructure legislation that reshaped its approval process and sped up builds.

Lateef described transmission development as a common bottleneck that can take decades, noting that NV Energy's seven-year build of a 500 kV line was the fastest of its kind despite supply chain and tariff changes along the way. He stressed that transmission cost has to be balanced against the value customers are seeking, pointing to Nevada's Greenlink line, approved through both the integrated resource plan and the legislature.