

FALL 2022  
JOINT CREPC-WIRAB  
MEETING SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

*The Joint CREPC-WIRAB Meeting is the premier biannual gathering of state, provincial, and federal representatives, consumer advocates, and industry experts from the Western Electricity 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., WECC) on matters pertaining to electric grid reliability in the Western Interconnection. WIRAB's membership is comprised of all states and provinces 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 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's Office of Electricity (DOE-OE)**, 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 Fall 2022 Joint CREPC-WIRAB Meeting held September 28-30, 2022 in Tempe, Arizona. The summary includes key takeaways from the various presentations and panel discussions, as well as links to all the meeting materials.*

WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 28, 2022

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17 YEARS AS A STATE REGULATOR IN AN RTO: A CONVERSATION WITH FERC  
COMMISSIONER CHRISTIE

FERC Commissioner Mark Christie, joined by Oregon Public Utility Commissioner Letha Tawney, shared his experiences and perspectives on markets and regionalization and how western representatives can

work together to develop a viable market option. Commissioner Christie began by noting that state regulators are the ones that should influence the structure of the markets as the regulators are representing the people. Commissioner Christie emphasized the importance of a regional organization, such as the OPSI, Organization of PJM States, where state regulators can have a forum to discuss the issues in market development and participation. Commissioner Tawney asked Commissioner Christie how a coalition of states can reach agreement in a multi-state RTO with varying perspectives and priorities. In response, Commissioner Christie emphasized the importance of wide and diverse viewpoints that are represented with a multi-state RTO, but noted that cost allocation and diverging state public policies will continue to be a challenge.

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## CALIFORNIA ISO UPDATE: EXTENDED DAY-AHEAD MARKET AND REGIONAL COOPERATION

Mark Rothleder, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer at the CAISO, provided updates on the current Extended Day Ahead Market (EDAM) design activity [[pdf](#)]. The design attempts to encourage confidence among balancing authority areas and increase reliability in the West.

After Mr. Rothleder's market design updates, Stacey Crowley, Vice President of the External Affairs, provided updates on the recent EDAM governance activity. The proposal supports the Joint Authority model and aims to build a governance structure that accommodates all market participants' engagement.

The CAISO is also working on Assembly Concurrent Resolution (ACR) 188 which aims to raise awareness about the economic and environmental benefits of regional collaboration and the importance of an affordable and reliable energy transition. As a part of the activity, CAISO has recently assembled a draft list of relevant studies to be considered for use in the summary report to California legislators and is looking for stakeholders' input on it.

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## REGIONAL STATES COMMITTEE FOR THE WEST

David Bobzien, Director of the Nevada Governor's Office of Energy, opened the session by setting the stage with a summary of the various market and regionalization efforts underway in the West. Mr. Bobzien also discussed the efforts of energy officials and commissions in the West to pursue funding from DOE for additional staff support to track, analyze, and represent state perspectives in these efforts. Eric Blank, Chairman of the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, shared the efforts over the summer to revitalize CREPC, so that its role, structure, and membership are more clearly defined to support sufficient participation in these efforts. Michael Freeman, Natural Resources Policy Advisor in the Montana Office of the Governor, echoed previous remarks and noted that states need a venue for these efforts. Ann Rendahl, Commissioner for the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, elaborated that WUEB has provided a good structure and ad hoc support but additional funding and staff is needed to fully support the states in a proactive manner.

There was broad discussion of a draft charter for CREPC. There were comments made in favor of retaining a Co-Chair structure, rather than a Chair and Vice Chair. There was also significant discussion on a proposed voting structure, with states recognizing that the body lacked consensus on the issue.

Additionally, there was acknowledgement that in CREPC's 40-year history, there has been a lot of value added, trust built, and collaboration across the West; the efforts to formalize CREPC are built on that strong foundation.

THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 29, 2022

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## WESTERN MARKETS EXPLORATORY GROUP – ROADMAP FOR THE WEST

Lea Márquez Peterson, Chairwoman of the Arizona Corporation Commission, moderated a conversation with three CEOs of utilities in the Western Markets Exploratory Group (WMEG). Jeff Guldner, CEO of Arizona Public Service Company, began by sharing the improvements in performance and cost-savings they have experienced from their participation in the Western Energy Imbalance Market. Mr. Guldner expressed optimism for a day-ahead market to further improve optimization and economics that flow back to the customer. Mr. Guldner noted that the need for additional transmission may prevent utilities from joining an RTO or market for the time being. John Hairston, CEO of Bonneville Power Administration, shared that WMEG provides a broader perspective on the market debate, allowing utilities a forum to learn from one another directly. Mr. Hairston noted that once a utility commits to an extended day-ahead market, it becomes difficult for it to leave and move to a different platform, and thus it is important to get it right the first time. Rounding out the discussion, Doug Cannon, President and CEO of NV Energy, began by noting that his company needs to decarbonize by 2050, and that while they have a good amount of solar and storage thus far, they will need resources outside of Nevada to reach this goal. NV Energy is also required to be a part of an RTO by 2030, making their need for a viable market option more pressing. As the current market options continue to develop, the WMEG group will be working on studies and research to better inform their decision-making around markets, resource adequacy, and RTOs and hope to share their findings with the respective utility commissions.

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## MARKETS, TRANSMISSION, AND THE WEST: A CONVERSATION WITH FERC COMMISSIONER DANLY

FERC Commissioner James Danly provided remarks on the development of markets in the Western United States as well the ongoing efforts to transform FERC's transmission policy. Commissioner Danly noted that the benefits, in terms of operational costs, from markets are undeniable. He provided the caveat that governance will continue to be the main roadblock to market development and encouraged the Western representatives to learn from other operators such as those in the East that have gone through a similar experience. With regards to transmission, Commissioner Danly spoke about the current Notice of Proposed Rule Making at FERC. He emphasized that in determining benefits, one state should not be paying for another state's policy objectives, and the states must work out some agreement to move forward.

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## SOUTHWEST POWER POOL MARKETS+ SERVICE OFFERING

Paul Suskie, Executive Vice President and General Counsel, Steve Johnson, Director of Markets Administration, and Lanny Nickell, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, with the Southwest Power Pool provided an update and summary of their Markets+ Draft Service Offering [\[pdf\]](#). Mr. Suskie reviewed key elements of the governance design, such as the role of the Market+ Market Stakeholders, the working groups (e.g., Operations Reliability, Seams, and Market Design), and the relationship with the SPP Board of Directors. Mr. Johnson provided an overview of the next steps in market design, including a 30-day comment period on the Draft Service Offering. Mr. Nickell rounded out the panel by addressing important issues in Markets+, such as the interoperability with the Western Power Pool's Western Resource Adequacy Program, and the work that is still to come on this development.

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## UPDATE ON FEDERAL ACTIVITIES

Maria Robinson, Director of the Grid Deployment Office at the U.S. Department of Energy, provided an update on the new Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and Inflation Reduction Act [\[pdf\]](#). Ms. Robinson provided an overview of the new Grid Deployment Office (GDO) whose mission is to provide electricity to everyone, everywhere by maintaining and investing in critical generation facilities to ensure resource adequacy and by improving and expanding transmission and distribution systems to ensure all consumers have access to reliable, affordable electricity. She detailed how the GDO intends to roll out the funding through various grid resiliency and innovation grants and programs and how Western states can use these programs and work with the GDO on future energy projects. Ms. Robinson encouraged state representatives to stay engaged on these issues and submit comments whenever possible to keep the conversation going.

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## STATE ROUNDTABLE: LEVERAGING IIJA FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

The \$1.2 trillion dollar Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) includes funding for energy and power infrastructure. David Bobzien, Director of the Nevada Governor's Office of Energy, began the discussion by sharing experiences from Nevada. Mr. Bobzien shared that in Nevada, the utilities and rural cooperatives were prepared to identify issues that they currently had on the system, as well as those they anticipated with higher levels of electrification, to get a start on their IIJA proposals. Richard Stover, Administrator for the Idaho Governor's Office of Energy and Mineral Resources, shared how his office is working with the Idaho legislature to allocate funding for grid resiliency and required cost matching for the IIJA. Idaho has established working groups to craft policy and identify priorities for the funding. Jessica Reichers, Technology and Policy Manager for the Oregon Department of Energy, built on the conversation, noting that Oregon is taking advantage of the grant deadline extension from DOE to refine their proposal. By revisiting their proposal, Ms. Reichers explained that Oregon is able to take an "all hazards view" of grid resiliency issues and provide a framework for assessing projects. Andrew McAllister, Commissioner for the California Energy Commission, rounded out the conversation by acknowledging the historic nature of the IIJA and Investment Reduction Action (IRA). California is looking to make a generational investment through IIJA and IRA that is aligned with state policy goals for the

state legislature, and adding nearly 100 staff to manage the funds and resulting programs. There was a discussion on the importance of interregional coordination on grid resiliency as well as a discussion on ensuring equity in the distribution and beneficiaries of investments made through the IJA and IRA funding opportunities.

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## ENERGY EQUITY

Mark Thompson, Commissioner for the Oregon Public Utility Commission, opened the session on energy equity with an acknowledgement that there is a wide diversity of opinion on what energy equity is and a lot to be unpacked [\[PDF\]](#). He focused on how he has come to think about energy equity over his career as a Commissioner with the Oregon Public Utility Commission and how it intersects with the Commission's duties. Commissioner Thompson shared concepts that are often associated with the term including:

- Consideration of disadvantaged communities
- Fair distribution of benefits and burdens of energy system
- Access to energy efficiency and other beneficial programs
- Inclusion and participation of individuals in underserved or unrepresented communities
- Access to the basic levels of energy required by individuals and families

Commissioner Thompson posed the question as to whether energy equity fits within the scope of state energy regulation, concluding that based on the generally accepted purposes of state regulation (e.g., ensuring safe, adequate, reliable, and affordable service in light of monopoly utility structures), energy equity does indeed fit within the scope of the commission's role; energy equity recognizes an expanded view of the balance that regulators strike in many aspects of utility regulation.

Siva Gunda, Commissioner for the California Energy Commission, spoke next, providing an overview of how California policy makers and the Energy Commission are addressing energy equity [\[PDF\]](#). Commissioner Gunda noted that foundational to the discussion is an understanding of the difference between equality and equity, in which the latter takes into consideration the uneven distribution of starting points and access to opportunities. Commissioner Gunda laid out the various efforts in California, such as an executive order from Governor Newsom, the California Public Utility Commission's Social Justice Action Plan, and the California Energy Commission's Diversity Resolution and Integrated Energy Plan Update, all of which aim to improve energy equity in California through various channels.

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 30, 2022

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## LESSONS LEARNED ON CROSS-JURISDICTIONAL COMMUNICATIONS FROM WILDFIRE EVENTS

David Morton, Chair and CEO of the British Columbia Utilities Commission, lead a discussion on communication during wildfire events and how critical it is for mitigating disaster. Sarah Cottrell Propst, Cabinet Secretary for the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, gave a

presentation on the most recent fire season in New Mexico and what the state has been doing to combat these events [\[pdf\]](#). Ms. Propst noted that New Mexico uses a Forest Action Plan that is updated every ten years and includes strategies to manage the utility right of ways and mitigate wildfire risk. Additionally, Ms. Propst shared concerns over the post-fire recovery process, explaining that while there is a lot of focus and attention of the response during the event, the impacts after the fire itself can be equally devastating and states lack sufficient planning and recovery resources to adequately manage. Les W.J. Montoya, General Manager of the Mora-San Miguel Electric Cooperative, shared a firsthand account of utility response during a large scale fire event in rural New Mexico [\[pdf\]](#). Mr. Montoya described the Hermit Peak-Calf Canyon complex fire of 2022, which covered 95% of the Co-op's service territory and left the area without power for an extended period of time. There was a discussion on the need for mutual aid provisions, as well as post-event recovery coordination, funding, and planning to ensure that affected communities get the help they need after a wildfire event.

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## GREENHOUSE GAS PRICING IN WESTERN ELECTRICITY MARKETS

Mary Wienke, Executive Director of Public Generating Pool, opened up the discussion by describing three clean energy policy regimes prevailing in the West, including Renewable Portfolio Standards, Fuel mix, and emissions reporting. Ms. Wienke then captured the complexities and challenges around GHG accounting, emphasizing that reconciling different state policies and fuel types under the organized market is complex. Ms. Wienke advised that the proper market pricing signal will help solve these challenges. Rajinder Sahota from California Air Resource Board provided an overview of Greenhouse Gas Pricing in Western Electricity Markets [\[pdf\]](#). Ms. Sahota pointed out the importance of organized market design that can minimize emissions leakage rather than eliminate it. Alisa Kaseweter, from Bonneville Power Administration, shared her perspective on the GHG issue as a market participant with a broad footprint in the West. Ms. Kaseweter acknowledged the challenges that stem from the different state policies and the difficulties of accounting for GHG in an organized market. Ms. Kaseweter advocated robust coordination across state regulators and policymakers from various states and state rules to solve these problems. Finally, Clare Breidenich, from Western Power Trading Forum advocated for the convergence of each clean energy policy and its GHG accounting methodologies.

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## WESTERN RESOURCE ADEQUACY PROGRAM AND ELECTRICITY MARKET INTEROPERABILITY

The Western Resource Adequacy Program (WRAP) is a regional reliability planning and compliance program for the West. Sarah Edmonds, President & CEO, and Ryan Roy, Director of Technology, Modeling and Analytics, of the Western Power Pool [\[pdf\]](#), led the session with an overview of the WRAP and market interoperability. Ms. Edmonds emphasized that the single highest priority is reliability through the implementation of a west-wide resource adequacy program. Partha Malvadkar, Director of Resource Adequacy and Infrastructure Policy with the California ISO, shared perspectives on how the WRAP will integrate with the California Extended Day Ahead Market (EDAM). Mr. Malvadkar acknowledged that there will be design challenges with the EDAM and rollout of the WRAP, but regardless, a robust sufficiency evaluation should address resource sufficiency concerns from a market perspective. Steven Johnson, Director of Markets Administration for Southwest Power Pool (SPP), then shared his perspectives on the issue and how Markets+ interacts with the WRAP [\[pdf\]](#). Mr. Johnson

noted that SPP believes a common resource adequacy requirement is a prerequisite for SPP Markets+ participants and that the WRAP will be the default programs for Markets+. As the market options continue to develop, these experts will be working through interoperability and incorporating it into their final service offerings.