TRANSMISSION POSSIBLE

National Wildlife Federation

Transmission: The Link to a Clean Energy Future

A more reliable grid. New jobs. Cleaner power. Transmission makes it possible.

Did you know? There are enough renewable energy projects in development today to reach 80% clean energy by 2030. So why are we still getting most of our electricity from dirty coal and gas? We simply don't have the transmission infrastructure to transport all that clean energy from the places where it's generated to the places where we live, work, and play.

A robust transmission grid is the key to unlocking the clean energy future.

Without Transmission, There is No Transition.

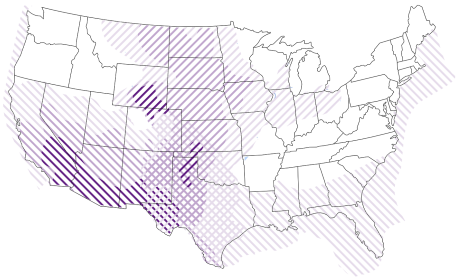
Today, 30 U.S. states have renewable portfolio standards, and to meet our climate goals, all 50 states will need to transition off of fossil fuels. But just 15 states hold two-thirds of the country's clean energy potential. To move all that carbon-free electricity to the places where it's consumed, we'll need to build approximately 91,000 miles of new transmission and upgrade the infrastructure we already have with grid-enhancing technologies (like flexible demand response, advanced reconductoring, optimization software, and dynamic line rating).

Failing to build new transmission lines will extend the lifespan of dozens of coal-fired power plants and lead to the construction of hundreds of new natural gas plants, as utilities look for new ways to meet energy demand.

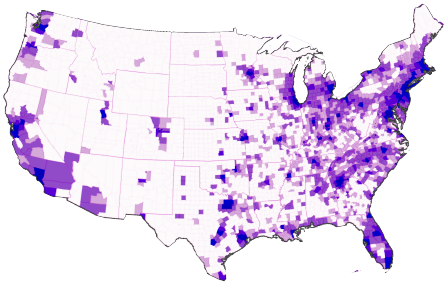
Cleaner Air, Healthier Communities.

Millions of Americans today live within three miles of a fossil fuel plant, and a disproportionate number of whom are Black and Hispanic. This proximity increases exposure to air pollution, which is linked to respiratory illness and millions of premature deaths every year. Responsibly building transmission lines will allow us to transport clean energy to everyone and retire fossil fuel plants, so we can all breathe freely.

WHERE CLEAN ENERGY POTENTIAL IS



WHERE CLEAN ENERGY IS NEEDED



Research shows that new clean energy projects made possible by The Inflation Reduction Act could prevent more than 35,000 premature deaths and avoid $315 billion in damages over the next decade. Lives — and livelihoods — depend on building a transmission grid that is built for a climate-impacted future.

Siting With Stewardship in Mind.

It's not just members of the clean energy industry who understand the urgent need for transmission investment. Many environmental organizations agree that transmission is essential to meeting our nation's climate goals and rapidly reducing carbon emissions. Building transmission responsibly means having difficult conversations early to find solutions that benefit everyone. This will minimize the impacts of new projects on communities, landowners, Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples, cultural resources, and wildlife, while simultaneously delivering the energy we all rely on.

How do we build smart from the start?

- **Start with a big-picture**, long-term view of the power grid in your state.
- **Plan regionally** and invite local conservationists, communities, Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples to participate. Where communities are involved, apply early, often, and consistent meaningful engagement. Where Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples are involved, apply Free, Prior, and Informed Consent. This will enable each state to decide their own energy futures. **Deploy new grid-enhancing technologies** to get the most benefit from transmission systems and maximize the use of existing rights-of-way to minimize impacts to people and wildlife.
- **Agree with neighboring states** upon a cost-sharing framework and a holistic set of benefits within the state and with nearby states to guide all projects to avoid inefficient project-by-project negotiations.
- **Apply the most up-to-date science** from state agencies, local conservationists, and Tribal Nations and Indigenous Peoples to identify areas that will impact wildlife and communities the least, including critical habitat and wildlife migratory corridors.
- **Additionally, use the same science and local input** to identify the areas where proposed projects will have the greatest negative impacts, including wildlife migration corridors and critical habitat, and already overburdened communities.
- **Where possible, incentivize developers** to site projects in places that are already impacted and away from overly burdened communities (e.g. brownfields, already disturbed public lands, public lands already designated for renewables, and abandoned mine lands).
- **Share the benefits of the transmission** projects equitably with communities.
- **Create mitigation plans** informed by the best available science that promote biodiversity where there are unavoidable impacts.

By working together to responsibly build new transmission lines, embracing grid-enhancing technologies, and plugging big clean energy projects into an updated grid, we can make a clean break from the past and breathe easier.

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