

U.S. Department of Energy Transmission Needs Study: Guide for Maryland

Why is it Important for Maryland to Work with Regional Partners on Transmission Now?

The POWER Act, signed into law earlier this year, sets the stage for Maryland to lead the way in clean energy development and decarbonization. The legislation targets 8.5 GW of offshore wind production – nearly a third of President Biden’s 30 GW target for the entire nation. By tapping into its massive offshore wind energy potential, Maryland can become a net exporter of energy in the next decade. But that future depends on the simultaneous buildout of transmission resources.

Development of a modern, well-networked transmission grid will ensure reliable, affordable, and clean electricity powers Maryland’s economy through the 21st century. Transmission grid infrastructure is as fundamental as our highways or water supplies, but the Old Line State’s aging grid wasn’t made for today’s increasingly digital and electrified economy—or the threat of climate change. Conditions on the PJM 13-state regional grid have deteriorated to the point that Americans for a Clean Energy Grid recently released a [scorecard](#) that gave the Mid-Atlantic a D+ for its transmission planning and development efforts.

We need to move quickly and decisively to ensure our grid is prepared for the scale of the energy transition. To aid in that effort, the Biden Administration’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law mandated a [Transmission Needs Study](#) laying out the steps necessary for each region to meet the moment. The study’s recommendations, if implemented expeditiously, will help smooth the energy transition and protect consumers from high prices and threats to grid reliability.

Below are two key findings from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s National Transmission Needs Study highlighting why Maryland must prioritize transmission:

- **FINDING #1: Lack of transmission is raising energy prices for overburdened Maryland consumers.**

Marylanders are paying more than they need to for power. Because of a lack of transmission, they are forced to buy from more expensive sources of power when cheaper options are available. The Transmission Needs Study notes that, in particular, the southern tip of the Delmarva Peninsula has suffered high prices and congestion costs due to a lack of transmission capacity.

- **FINDING #2: Maryland must work with regional partners to meet renewable energy goals.**

Maryland – and the entire mid-Atlantic region – is projected to experience both significant demand growth from rising population and load growth from new renewables coming online. Current utility transmission plans will not meet the moment. The state needs to work with regional partners to ensure that the transmission system will be ready and able to bring new generation projects online even as demand for electricity grows in aggregate.

Further Benefits of Investing in Transmission

Keeping the Lights On in Maryland

During major stressors, like 2022's Winter Storm Elliott, transmission capacity allows operators to surge power to regions that might otherwise lose electricity. According to a [report](#) from the American Council on Renewable Energy, additional interregional transmission during the storm would have yielded nearly \$100 million in economic benefits.

Lowering Costs for Consumers

Regional coordination and transmission expansion can lower the costs of meeting Maryland's goals and deliver lower electricity bills. Cheaper and cleaner resources exist in neighboring states, but an additional 2 GW of transmission is required to deliver that energy throughout the region.



Recommendations: Steps Maryland Can Take to Meet the Moment

- Engage directly with other PJM states to identify sub-regional opportunities for coordination, pro-active transmission planning, and multi-state transmission solicitations.
- PJM, Maryland's grid operator, needs to hear more from the state when making its decisions. State decisionmakers need to be vocal about incorporating clean energy targets into grid planning in forums, such as the Organization of PJM States (OPSI) and PJM's Independent State Agency Committee (ISAC), or they risk being drowned out by the utilities.
- The Moore administration should make clear to other states and advocacy partners what individual or team will be responsible for engaging in transmission conversations going forward.
- Ensure the Maryland Public Service Commission (PSC) and other relevant state agencies have the funding and staffing necessary to devote the required resources to transmission planning, which can be technical and time-consuming.
- As required by the POWER Act, the PSC is currently preparing a study of what transmission resources will be necessary to accommodate the state's ambitious offshore wind goal. Once publicized, the recommendations of those reports should be seriously considered and, assuming they're sufficient to meet the state's transmission needs, expedited.
- Encourage federal lawmakers to extend the tax incentives afforded to renewable generation projects to the transmission projects necessary to bring clean power to communities and businesses.
- Explore [legislation creating a state grid modernization task force](#), bringing together an inclusive set of renewable energy developers, utilities, advocates, and labor to develop a comprehensive master plan for Maryland's electric grid. [Massachusetts passed such legislation](#), and the task force recently began meeting.
- Prioritize expedited siting and permitting processes for transmission lines that help Maryland meet its climate policy goals while ensuring that meaningful local community engagement still exists during the project review stage.
- Explore the possibility of an independent body tasked with transmission planning, siting, and coordination issues.

