

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Date: September 23, 2011
Contact: Loyd G. Drain
Email: loyd.drain@wyo.gov
Phone: 307.635.3573



Wyoming announces that the newly released WECC 10-Year Regional Transmission Plan favorably positions Wyoming wind and transmission; and outlines economic and environmental advantages of regional energy solutions

CHEYENNE, Sept. 23, 2011 – Wyoming is the best source of cost-effective, high-capacity renewable energy to help meet the demands of California’s future energy market, according to a new study released by the Western Electricity Coordinating Council (WECC), which coordinates the bulk electric system across the Western U.S. and Canada.

Approved by the WECC board on Sept. 22, the U.S. Department of Energy-funded “[10-Year Regional Transmission Plan](#)” study provides WECC’s first interconnection-wide transmission plan and an interconnection-wide perspective on future energy transmission and generation.

In the year 2020, the demand for additional renewable energy to meet Renewable Portfolio Standards is greater in California than in any other Western state – representing 66% of all of the renewable energy demand in the WECC region through 2020, the 10-Year Plan notes.

California currently intends to meet its demand using renewable energy projects developed in California and has policies that generally favor in-state renewable development. However, WECC’s analysis indicates that if California met just 20% of its demand with deliveries of high-capacity wind energy from Wyoming instead, California ratepayers could save on the order of \$600 million every year, translating to billions of dollars in savings for those customers over time.

“Results presented in the Plan suggest there are opportunities for regional transmission and renewable resource development that should not be overlooked as states implement their own energy policies... so as not to forego potential economic and environmental benefits that may accrue to their ratepayers,” the Plan says.

“This information is helpful in our efforts to encourage California to look to Wyoming for its renewable requirements and to see that Wyoming can efficiently provide a portion of their renewable energy tomorrow, just as Wyoming efficiently provides Californians with significant affordable energy today,” [Governor Matt Mead](#) said.

“This study highlights how if California were to import only 20% of its incremental requirement for renewable energy between now and 2020, we can help them meet a portion of their RPS requirements in a more cost-effective manner, even with the cost of transmission factored-in,” said Loyd Drain, Executive Director, Wyoming Infrastructure Authority.

“We hope all decision-makers implement WECC’s recommendation to ‘accept the challenges of increased regional cooperation in transmission planning and development’ to achieve these economic benefits.”

Two of Wyoming’s six major transmission projects under development were highlighted in WECC’s 10-Year Plan as providing the most cost-effective remote renewable energy resource alternatives to satisfy a portion of California’s needs: The 3,000 MW, 600 kV HVDC [TransWest Express Transmission Project](#), jointly developed by TransWest Express LLC and Western Area Power Administration; and the 3,000 MW, 500 kV DC Zephyr Transmission Project, from near Chugwater, Wyoming to the Eldorado Valley.

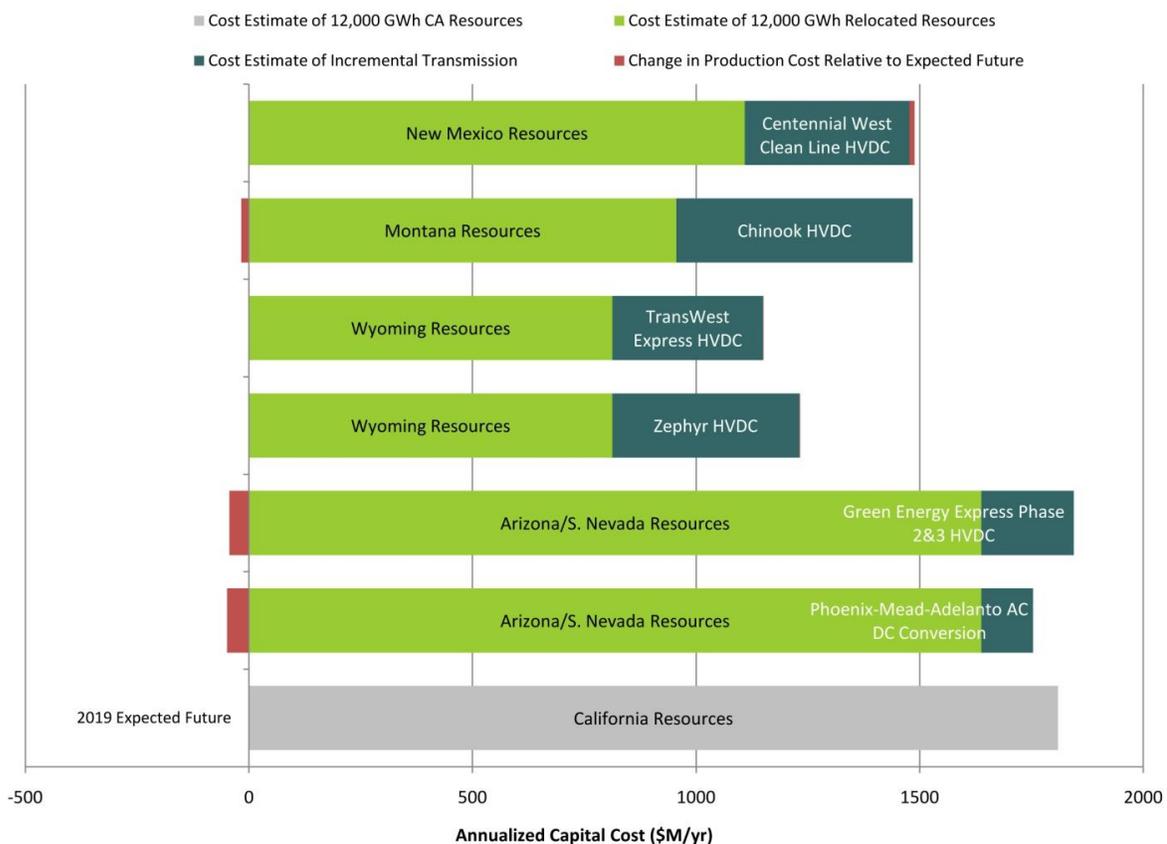
Despite WECC’s significant modeled cost advantages of Wyoming wind energy over portions of California’s renewable energy – and previous industry studies that have demonstrated the cost advantages of Wyoming wind energy as well – Drain cautioned that “Wyoming still must compete to ensure California utilities seek to purchase renewable power from Wyoming.”

“California sees, as Wyoming sees, that building more power plants creates more jobs and tax revenues and has been very eager to keep those benefits in California,” Drain says. “However, overall long-term economic growth really comes from keeping electricity costs as low as possible, and already California ratepayers have the highest average electricity retail prices in the West – [almost double the electricity costs of Wyoming](#). We believe all California consumers and businesses will benefit if their utilities can provide a balanced mix of energy that includes not only in-state generation but also renewable resources from efficient producers like Wyoming.”

The full WECC 10-Year Regional Transmission Plan Summary can be found at www.wecc.biz. The Plan was produced using a broad stakeholder process including state regulators, utilities, environmental groups and federal agencies such as the Department of Energy and the Department of the Interior.

- XXX -

Capital Cost Comparison of Potentially Cost-Effective Resource Relocation Alternatives with Large-Scale Transmission Expansion



Contact Information:

For more information, contact Loyd Drain, Executive Director, Wyoming Infrastructure Authority at 307.635.3573 or loyd.drain@wyo.gov. Visit the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority website at www.wyia.org to learn more about the transmission activity in Wyoming.

About the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority:

The **WIA**, an instrumentality of the State, was created by the State Legislature in 2004 to diversify and expand the Wyoming economy through improvements in the state's electric transmission infrastructure and to facilitate the consumption of Wyoming energy. The authority is governed by a Board of Directors composed of five (5) members appointed by the Governor, with the advice and consent of the Senate. It is responsible for promoting the planning, development and financing of transmission facilities in the State including associated generation. In addition, the WIA has \$1 Billion in bonding authority relative to the financing of transmission infrastructure in Wyoming.