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CAISO transmission planning and CEC's data center forecast

CEC Demand Analysis Working Group July 16, 2025

California ISO – Public

Memorandum of Understanding between the CAISO and California energy agencies establishes a strategic direction for long-term electric system planning to meet reliability targets and state policy goals

Resource Planning

Resource planning based on CEC forecasts and led by CPUC identifies optimal areas for adding new resources.

Interconnection Process ISO interconnection process prioritizes requests in zones targeted for transmission upgrades. **Transmission Planning** Using CEC forecasts and CPUC resource portfolios, the ISO recommends best geographic zones for upgrades and expansion.

Resource Procurement Load-serving entities focus on areas where transmission capacity exists or is being developed. MOU signed in December 2022 among the CAISO, CPUC, and CEC:

- Reaffirms existing state agency and CAISO coordination
- Tightens the linkage between resource and transmission planning, procurement direction, and the CAISO interconnection process to the greatest extent possible.
- Creates formal linkage between CEC SB 100/long-term demand forecasting activities and CAISO and CPUC processes

https://www.caiso.com/documents/iso-cec-and-cpuc-memorandum-of-understanding-dec-2022.pdf



CAISO annual transmission planning process timeline



ISO Board for approval of transmission plan



Use of the CEC data center forecasts in transmission planning

- CEC's single managed forecast set includes data center scenarios used in CAISO studies:
 - Data center mid case economic, policy, and bulk system studies
 - Data center high case local reliability studies and local capacity technical studies
- The CEC provides the CAISO data center loads at the transmission bus level
- Power flow modeling requires forward load forecasts at transmission bus level to:
 - Accurately identify potential transmission constraints and reliability issues at granular levels in local reliability area(s)
 - Identify appropriate transmission solutions, if needed, to meet national, regional and CAISO reliability standards
- CEC's data center forecast amounts, timing, and locations should reflect scenarios reasonably likely to occur to accurately study, identify, and approve transmission solutions

