

Testimony of David Morenoff
Deputy General Counsel
Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
before the
Committee on Energy and Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Energy
United States Senate
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Chairman McCormick, Ranking Member Gallego, and Members of the Subcommittee:

My name is David Morenoff. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today as a member of the staff of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (Commission).

I currently serve as the Commission's Deputy General Counsel. I am honored to have served in senior roles in the Commission's Office of the General Counsel since 2010. The views I express today are my own and are not necessarily those of the Commission or of any individual Commissioner.

The Commission's jurisdiction covers a range of vital, energy-related responsibilities. For example, pursuant to the Federal Power Act and the Natural Gas Act, it is the Commission's responsibility to ensure that rates for the wholesale sale and transmission of electricity, as well as the transportation of natural gas by pipeline, in interstate commerce are just and reasonable. The Commission also is responsible for overseeing the reliability of the Nation's bulk power system, as my colleague Kal Ayoub, Director of the Commission's Office of Electric Reliability, discusses in greater detail in his testimony. In addition, the Commission is responsible for siting needed energy infrastructure, including interstate natural gas pipelines and liquified natural gas and hydroelectric facilities. By fulfilling these responsibilities, the Commission helps to ensure that our country has a reliable and affordable supply of energy.

With these responsibilities in mind, Commission Chairman Laura Swett has recognized that our country is at a historic crossroads and has highlighted three priorities for the Commission: (1) Keeping the lights on and the pipelines flowing, at just and reasonable rates, (2) Doing everything within the Commission's power to facilitate the connection of large load and data centers, while also ensuring that the resulting costs are fairly allocated, and (3) Maximizing the Commission's ability to encourage and facilitate infrastructure development, which is critical to reliability, safety, and our economy.

These responsibilities and priorities both drive the Commission's actions and align with the themes of the proposed bills that are the subject of today's hearing. Spurred in part by the demands of emerging large loads such as data centers, our country is experiencing rapid growth of electric load unlike anything seen in at least several decades. To not only meet that growth, but also to do so in an affordable manner, it is important to interconnect new generation resources expeditiously. To advance that goal, the Commission has approved proposals from the grid operators for several large regions of the country (including the California Independent System Operator, PJM Interconnection, the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, and Southwest Power Pool) to expedite interconnection for generation resources that are more likely to be constructed and that will meet those regions' respective needs. The Commission also has acted on filings made by all jurisdictional transmission providers in compliance with Order No. 2023, the final rule that the Commission issued, unanimously, in 2023 to reform the rules governing the interconnection of new generation resources.

Addressing a related issue, the Commission in December directed PJM Interconnection, the nation's largest grid operator, to establish transparent rules to serve data centers and other large loads that are co-located with generation. Those rules will safeguard reliability and protect consumers, impacting over 67 million Americans. The Commission also has approved innovative proposals from other grid operators to expedite interconnection of large-load additions and associated generation in a manner that accommodates the unique operational demands of large loads while also facilitating reliable interconnection and protecting other transmission customers.

The bills that are the subject of today's hearing sound similar themes of reliability and affordability. Some of the bills identify potential reliability challenges, ranging from what too often have been frustratingly slow processes for the interconnection of new generation resources, to the potential for Federal agency actions that do not adequately account for reliability concerns. Others of the bills underscore the importance of making full use of existing electric infrastructure in support of affordability, including through appropriate application of grid-enhancing technologies. If Congress determines that these important issues warrant providing further direction to the Commission and authorizing further tools for the Commission's use in support of its mission, then the Commission stands ready to take on those additional responsibilities.

Thank you for the invitation to testify before the Subcommittee today. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.