

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE THE
FEDERAL ENERGY REGULATORY COMMISSION**

Interregional High Voltage Direct)
Current Merchant Transmission)

Docket No. AD22-13-000

**RESPONSE OF THE ISO/RTO COUNCIL TO
REQUEST FOR TECHNICAL CONFERENCE**

The ISO-RTO Council (“IRC”)¹ submits this Response² to Invenergy Transmission LLC’s (“Invenergy”) request that the Commission hold a technical conference to address issues related to the development of interregional merchant high voltage direct current (“MHVDC”) transmission facilities.³ The IRC respectfully requests that the Commission decline to initiate a technical conference narrowly focused on a single technology type. Instead, as discussed below, the IRC recommends that the Commission first address the larger outstanding threshold issues that are currently pending before the Commission in the various administrative and rulemaking dockets discussed below.⁴

¹ The IRC comprises the following independent system operators (“ISOs”) and regional transmission organization (“RTOs”): Alberta Electric System Operator (“AESO”); California Independent System Operator (“CAISO”); Electric Reliability Council of Texas, Inc. (“ERCOT”); the Independent Electricity System Operator of Ontario, Inc. (“IESO”); ISO New England Inc. (“ISO-NE”); Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. (“MISO”); New York Independent System Operator, Inc. (“NYISO”); PJM Interconnection, L.L.C. (“PJM”); and Southwest Power Pool, Inc. (“SPP”). AESO and IESO are not subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction, and do not join in this filing. ERCOT is not subject to the Commission’s jurisdiction with respect to the subject matter of the request at issue, and therefore does not join this filing.

² The IRC submits this Response pursuant to Rules 212 and 213 of the Rules of Practice and Procedure of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“Commission”). 18 C.F.R. §§ 385.212 and 385.213 (2022).

³ *Interregional Merchant High Voltage Direct Current Systems*, Invenergy Transmission LLC Request for Technical Conference, Docket No. AD22-13-000 (Nov. 10, 2022) (“Invenergy Request”). Invenergy also filed (i) a request for a technical conference to explore reliability services associated with interregional MHVDC systems in the same docket in July 2022; and (ii) supplemental comments in support of its request for a technical conference. *See Interregional High Voltage Direct Current Merchant Transmission*, Notice of Request for Technical Conference, Docket No. AD22-13-000 (July 27, 2022); *Interregional High Voltage Direct Current Merchant Transmission*, Supplemental Comments of Invenergy Transmission LLC in Support of Request for Technical Conference, Docket No. AD22-13-000 (Feb. 10, 2023) (“Invenergy Supplemental Comments”).

⁴ *See supra* Section I.

I. RESPONSE

In support of its request for a technical conference focused on issues surrounding interregional MHVDC facilities, Invenergy argues that deployment of this specific technology requires greater regulatory certainty in light of: (i) increasing threats from extreme weather events and climate change; (ii) nationwide interconnection queue backlogs; (iii) the need for improved interregional power transfer capability; and (iv) alleged issues associated with the siting, interconnection and integration of renewable resources.⁵ Invenergy's request suggests that deployment of interregional MHVDC facilities could potentially solve all of these problems.⁶

Invenergy states that a technical conference is needed to standardize the MHVDC process between the different regions.⁷ It would be unwieldy to explore the current processes within each ISO/RTO region and craft a standardized solution for MHVDC when there are foundational questions pending before the Commission in the broadly-applicable NOPRs related to interconnection and transmission planning. The IRC requests that the Commission decline to initiate a technical conference on standardizing the MHVDC processes until such time as the Commission has resolved the open questions on regional and interregional transmission planning, interconnection, and, where necessary, cost allocation. The IRC does not agree that it is necessary to have a uniform process for MHVDC interconnection between the different regions, but the framework for MHVDC could change substantially depending on the resolution of the issues pending before the Commission in other dockets. The regions have different interconnection and planning processes, built to respect the unique needs of the regions and their varied stakeholder

⁵ See Invenergy Request at 4-6. *See also* Invenergy Supplemental Comments (arguing that the Commission's recent staff-lead workshop on interregional transfer capability and the impacts from the December 2022 Winter Storm Elliott highlight the importance of holding a technical conference to explore the benefits of MHVDC transmission facilities).

⁶ See Invenergy Request at 5-6. *See also* Invenergy Supplemental Comments at 1-2.

⁷ See Invenergy Request at 20-23.

interests, including those of state commissions. The role of MHVDC and its place within existing ISO/RTO processes will be clearer once the Commission issues its determination on the foundational issues pending before it.

To be clear, the IRC takes no position on the benefits of interregional MHVDC facilities in this Response, or on the issue of interregional transfer capabilities.⁸ And, while Invenergy maintains that MHVDC facilities may be one of the options or alternatives that could be used in resolving some of the challenges it identifies in its Request, the IRC believes there are threshold issues that need to be addressed in the pending administrative and rulemaking dockets before focusing specifically on MHVDC facilities. Simply stated, Invenergy's request to promote a pathway for regulatory certainty for MHVDC facilities alone is out-of-step. Rather, the more appropriate place for the Commission to address concerns regarding the deployment of interregional MHVDC facilities is in the numerous open rulemaking and administrative proceedings, which already have extensive records.

As Invenergy acknowledges,⁹ the Commission currently has active proceedings addressing: (i) proposed reforms to North American Electric Reliability Corporation reliability standards to address transmission system planning for extreme heat or cold weather events;¹⁰

⁸ The IRC notes, however, increasing the transfer of energy between the regions is not simply solved by building more transmission lines between the regions. The comments of the Midcontinent Independent System Operator, Inc. ("MISO"), the California Independent System Operator Corporation ("CAISO"), and the Eastern Interconnection Planning Collaborative ("EPIC") demonstrate that improving interregional transfer capability can also be accomplished by improving operational coordination, market coordination, and long-term planning. *See Establishing Interregional Transfer Capability Transmission Planning and Cost Allocation Requirements*, Notice of Staff-Led Workshop, Docket No. AD23-3-000 (Oct. 6, 2022) (held on December 5-6, 2022); Prepared Remarks of Laura Rauch on behalf of MISO, Docket No. AD23-3-000 (Dec. 9, 2022); Prepared Statement of Neil Millar on behalf of CAISO, Docket No. AD23-3-000 (Dec. 9, 2022); Testimony of David W. Souder on behalf of EIPC, AD23-3-000 (Dec. 9, 2022).

⁹ *See* Invenergy Request at 2.

¹⁰ *See Transmission System Planning Performance Requirements for Extreme Weather*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 179 FERC ¶ 61,195 (2022). *See also One-Time Informational Reports on Extreme Weather Vulnerability Assessments Climate Change, Extreme Weather, and Electric System Reliability*, 179 FERC ¶ 61,196 (2022).

(ii) proposed reforms to the Commission’s standard generator interconnection procedures and agreements;¹¹ (iii) whether and how the Commission could establish a minimum requirement for Interregional Transfer Capability;¹² and (iv) proposed reforms to existing regional transmission planning and cost allocation processes that would require transmission providers to conduct long-term regional transmission planning to meet transmission needs driven by changes in the resource mix and demand.¹³

The IRC anticipates that, through these proceedings, the Commission will provide industry-wide guidance on issues surrounding regional and interregional long-term transmission planning and generator interconnection, including, among other things, whether to account for extreme weather events and changing generation profiles. Initiating a proceeding to focus on how a single specific technology type could potentially address these issues before the Commission issues guidance in the various rulemaking and administrative proceedings would deflect from these larger questions.¹⁴ In short, convening a technical conference at this time as requested by Invenenergy would distract attention from the above-described issues.¹⁵

Given the more significant threshold issues currently before the Commission in its open

¹¹ See *Improvements to Generator Interconnection Procedures and Agreements*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 179 FERC ¶ 61,194 (2022).

¹² See *Establishing Interregional Transfer Capability Transmission Planning and Cost Allocation Requirements*, Notice of Staff-Led Workshop, Docket No. AD23-3-000 (Oct. 6, 2022).

¹³ *Building for the Future Through Electric Regional Transmission Planning and Cost Allocation and Generator Interconnection*, Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 179 FERC ¶ 61,028, 87 Fed. Reg. 26,504 (May 4, 2022).

¹⁴ Convening such a technical conference now could also set a precedent pursuant to which the Commission would have to hold technical conferences covering each new transmission technology before it could issue guidance to assist all technologies. It is not practical for every technology or business plan to have an open generic proceeding requiring all industry participants to participate and respond to new questions, particularly where more generalized proceedings are already pending before the Commission.

¹⁵ For example, Invenenergy has proposed that the technical conference explore eliminating wheel-out charges and allowing MHVDC customers to pause payments on Transmission Service Agreements when facilities experience construction delays. See Invenenergy Request at 19-20. Wheel-out charges and construction delays are issues that broadly impact numerous stakeholders and should be considered in the appropriate forum as opposed to one devoted to a single technology. Additionally, it would be unduly discriminatory to provide relief to only MHVDC developers on broad issues as requested by Invenenergy.

dockets, the IRC recommends that the Commission decline to grant Invenergy's request for a technical conference at this time.

II. CONCLUSION

For the reasons set forth above, the IRC requests that the Commission (i) decline to convene a technical conference as requested by Invenergy and (ii) focus instead on providing guidance in the several pending dockets that address many of the same issues raised in the Invenergy Request.

Respectfully submitted,

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CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby that I have this day served the foregoing document on those parties on the official Service List compiled by the Secretary in these proceedings.

Dated at Audubon, Pennsylvania this 8th day of March, 2023.

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