



California Public Utilities Commission
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PRESS RELEASE

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CPUC Streamlines Electric Transmission Permitting Process

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 30, 2025 – The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC), in ongoing efforts to address electricity reliability and meet the state’s clean energy goals, today updated its electric utility transmission siting regulations to modernize and accelerate how transmission infrastructure is planned, permitted, and built.

The new electric transmission process adjustments under [General Order \(GO\) 131-D](#) (now updated to GO 131-E), are part of the CPUC’s process to implement [Senate Bill \(SB\) 529](#) (Hertzberg, 2022), which requires reforms to the permitting, approval, and construction processes for electric transmission projects.

“I am pleased that these important updates to the CPUC’s permitting processes for electric transmission projects have been adopted today,” said Commissioner Karen Douglas, who is assigned to the proceeding. “These changes will accelerate permitting timelines by reducing redundancy and shifting environmental analysis earlier in the application process. This modernization of the CPUC’s approach to permitting is an important step in preparing the CPUC to address the scale of grid upgrades that will be needed to maintain a reliable electricity system over time and meet the state’s climate goals.”

“This decision adopts thoughtful process improvements to speed up how transmission infrastructure is permitted and constructed,” said CPUC President Alice Reynolds. “I appreciate how this decision strikes a balance between creating government efficiencies while preserving California’s environmental review process.”

Key Highlights

Transmission regulation updates are essential as the CPUC modernizes infrastructure planning and permitting. The new regulations include:

- *Pre-Filing Consultation*: Transmission project applicants are now required to meet with CPUC staff at least six months before submitting their applications in order to help better prepare applicants and create a smoother review process.
- *Applicant-Prepared Documents*: Transmission project applicants are now allowed to submit their own draft versions of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) documents with their transmission project applications in order to expedite environmental review by minimizing duplication and enabling applicants to complete more of the analysis before filing an application.
- *Pilot Program to Explore Faster Environmental Review*: A pilot program has been created to track CPUC CEQA review timelines and explore the potential for a faster CEQA review process for certain electric transmission projects.
- *Presumption of Need for Projects*: A “rebuttable presumption” has been implemented per Assembly Bill (AB) 1373, such that when the California Independent System Operator (CAISO) has determined that a project is needed, the CPUC will defer to that determination of need. This streamlines CEQA review by avoiding duplicative need determinations and unnecessary alternatives analyses.

“Today’s decision updating General Order 131-E provides for a more efficient and transparent transmission permitting process,” said Commissioner Darcie L. Houck. “Changes to the General Order will promote acceleration of the permitting process, require early coordination between the applicant and the CPUC on environmental documentation, clarify terms, and incorporate a rebuttable presumption as to the need for proposed projects that are CAISO-approved pursuant to Public Utilities Code section 1001.1. These and other provisions of the decision will allow for expedited development of transmission projects to meet California’s clean energy goals.”

Added Commissioner John Reynolds, “Building a clean energy future requires getting renewable power to where it’s needed most; we can’t meet our climate goals without significantly expanding our transmission infrastructure. Today’s decision streamlines how we approve transmission projects while maintaining environmental safeguards. This reform represents one piece of a larger puzzle that requires coordination with our partner agencies, but the CPUC is committed to doing our part to accelerate clean energy infrastructure development and meet California’s climate goals.”

More Information

- [Proposal Approved](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#)
- [Proceeding Docket Card](#)
- [Information on CEQA](#)

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The CPUC regulates services and utilities, protects consumers, safeguards the environment, and assures Californians access to safe and reliable utility infrastructure and services. Visit www.cpuc.ca.gov for more information.