

Announcement

NERC Finds Resources Sufficient to Meet Demand; COVID-19 Response Impacts Summer Preparation and Critical Workforce

June 2, 2020

ATLANTA – NERC’s [2020 Summer Reliability Assessment](#) finds that projected resources are at or above the levels needed to satisfy summer peak demand under anticipated weather in nearly all assessment areas. However, the unprecedented coronavirus pandemic has led to heightened uncertainty in demand projections, has disrupted preparation (i.e., preventative maintenance, supply stocking and training) for the summer peak operating season and threatens the health and safety of critical industry workforce.

Although the pandemic introduces significant uncertainty into demand and some risk to generation resource availability, the Anticipated Reserve Margins, which were based on pre-pandemic demand forecasts and anticipated resources, indicate that the assessment areas are prepared to meet potential peak demand with or without pandemic-related demand reductions. Further, in its continuing outreach and coordination with system operations and Reliability Coordinators, NERC did not identify any specific threat or degradation to the reliable operation of the bulk power system for the spring time frame.

“Industry appears well-positioned for the coming summer season,” said John Moura, director of Reliability Assessment and Performance Analysis. “As pandemic-related restrictions continue through the summer, we may see electricity peak demand lower than forecast, which could help offset potential challenges with unexpected generation outages or extreme weather impacts.”

The extensive pre-season preparation efforts that are normally conducted by generator and transmission owners and operators have been impinged by the global pandemic, with many deferring or canceling pre-summer maintenance. Monitoring the progress of ongoing efforts to prepare staff and equipment for summer will be important to ensuring the availability of anticipated resources to meet electricity demand.

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The assessment's key findings include:

- Sufficient capacity resources are expected to be in-service for the upcoming summer.
- Maintenance and preparations for summer operations impacted by pandemic.
- Protecting critical electric industry workforce during the COVID-19 pandemic remains a priority for reliability and resilience.
- Late-summer wildfire season in western United States and Canada poses risk to bulk power system reliability.

The assessment also finds that electricity and other critical infrastructure sectors face elevated cyber security risks arising from the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to ongoing risks. At NERC, the Electricity Infrastructure Sharing and Analysis Center (E-ISAC) continues to exchange information with its members and has posted communications and guidance from the Electricity Subsector Coordinating Council (ESCC) and government partners.

NERC develops its independent assessments to identify potential bulk power system reliability risks. The reliability assessment process is a coordinated reliability evaluation between the Reliability Assessment Subcommittee, the Regional Entities and NERC staff. The *2020 Summer Reliability Assessment* reflects NERC's independent assessment and is intended to inform industry leaders, planners, operators and regulatory bodies so they are better prepared to take necessary actions to ensure bulk power system reliability.

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Electricity is a key component of the fabric of modern society and the Electric Reliability Organization Enterprise serves to strengthen that fabric. The vision for the ERO Enterprise, which is comprised of NERC and the six Regional Entities, is a highly reliable and secure North American bulk power system. Our mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid.