



Our Earth Is Worth Fighting For



FACT SHEET

Biden-Harris Administration and FERC Actions Are Driving Transmission Improvements and Buildout, and Permitting for Clean Energy

Currently, clean renewable energy projects are waiting far too long to connect to regional electricity grids across the country. Our regional grids need to be even more robust and interconnected as we electrify transportation and buildings, manufacturing rapidly grows with IRA investments, and data centers and AI computing supercharge electricity demand. Growing interconnection queues and utilities lagging behind on improvements to their transmission systems are slowing deployment of wind, solar, and energy storage projects needed to cut pollution from power generation and transition to 100% clean energy. **Thankfully, the Biden-Harris administration is leveraging \$560 billion in federal investment and existing authority to advance over 68,000 clean energy projects.**

Highlighted below are policies and investments that will allow clean energy projects to more rapidly connect to the grid so they can quickly help drive prices down for people.

Biden-Harris Actions on Siting & Permitting Transmission & Clean Energy

The Biden-Harris Administration is making historic investments in transmission and clean energy deployment, siting and permitting by:

- **Investing \$4.5B in interregional transmission lines.** The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act secured funding to build out interregional transmission lines with the [Transmission Facilitation Program](#), which has allocated its entire \$2.5B for nearly 2,000 miles of 7 new projects, and the [Transmission Facility Financing Program](#), which will soon provide loans for projects in DOE's proposed [National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors](#).
- **Updating and strengthening grids with \$7.6B.** DOE's [Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships](#) funding helps keep the lights on when climate disasters strike, boost grid capacity to add affordable clean energy enough for 40 million homes, and reduce families' energy costs.
- **Investing \$1B for permitting, including agency personnel.** The Inflation Reduction Act secured funding [to improve permitting](#), including \$165 million to support agency personnel and increase the permitting workforce by 14%.
- **Tasking DOE to lead on transmission permitting.** The Biden-Harris administration established and opened applications for the [Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits Program \(CITAP\)](#), which will cut review time for transmission projects in half.
 - DOE's final rule confirmed it as lead agency for transmission siting, set a two-year schedule for environmental reviews, created new categorical exclusions for using existing rights-of-way such as reconductoring, and strengthened public participation.
- **Bolstering the case for more transmission capacity.** DOE finalized the [National Transmission Planning study](#), providing tools and modeling for transmission planners, and finding that \$1 invested in improving regional and interregional transmission saves consumers \$1.60-1.80.
- **Prioritizing critical mineral projects essential to batteries and other clean energy technologies.** The Federal Permitting Improvement Steering Council [moved](#) to allow the critical minerals supply chain to receive FAST-41 coverage in the permitting process, which will provide stronger and more efficient federal coordination and assistance.
 - Also, the administration has ensured robust Tribal engagement in reviews, including a [\\$5 million](#) investment in FAST-41 projects, [better](#) transparency and collaboration, and [interagency recommendations](#) to ensure responsible mining on public lands.
 - The Permitting Council also [allocated](#) \$30 million across federal agencies to improve the critical IT tools necessary to make permitting more efficient.

FERC Actions That Will Bring Clean Energy to Cities and Communities

FERC is driving urgent transmission lines forward and clean energy project deployment by:

- **Finalizing the Landmark Regional Transmission Planning and Cost Allocation Rule ([FERC Order 1920](#))** which requires utility transmission providers to:
 - **Develop long-term plans for grid expansions and upgrades looking far into the future**—across a 20-year planning horizon, updated every 5 years—to allow stakeholders to more effectively weigh in on the path to clean energy, facilitate a more dynamic process, and better account for technological advancements, climate change impacts, changes in load growth, and evolving reliability needs.
 - **Measure and utilize at least seven benefits**—(1) avoided or deferred reliability transmission facilities and aging infrastructure replacement; (2) either reduced loss of load probability or reduced planning reserve margin; (3) production cost savings; (4) reduced transmission energy losses; (5) reduced congestion due to transmission outages; (6) mitigation of extreme weather events and unexpected system conditions; and (7) capacity cost benefits from reduced peak energy losses—to determine whether a proposed facility is cost effective and addresses long-term needs.
 - **Develop default and project-specific cost allocation methodologies** by holding a 6-month engagement period with relevant state entities regarding cost allocation methods and/or a state agreement process prior to filing one or more cost-allocation methodologies. It also provided a process for transmission providers to work with affected state entities and other relevant stakeholders to determine a cost allocation method for a specific transmission facility. (Currently, states can refuse to negotiate on sharing the cost of new interstate or regional transmission—even if significant economic and reliability benefits would accrue to the state's residents—in most cases, effectively preventing a project from proceeding.)
 - **Consider adopting Grid Enhancing Technologies**, which can effectively increase the capacity of existing transmission infrastructure, reduce congestion, and allow more clean energy to be interconnected. GETs are lower cost for customers and can reduce the urgency of needed transmission upgrades and expansions.
- **Implementing backstop siting authority for vital transmission projects.** FERC unanimously approved its own backstop authority, required by the IJJA, to site transmission lines in 10 national interest electric transmission corridors. These corridors are being [designated by DOE](#) to prioritize, fund, and expedite transmission projects that are critical to our grids.
- **Finalizing an interconnection rule that allows new energy generating facilities to connect to the grid.** FERC reformed the grid study and approval procedures to help viable projects more quickly receive approval for interconnection, and allowed facilities to share interconnection requests to address the massive backlog of 10,000+ clean energy and storage projects awaiting interconnection.

Expediting NEPA, Protecting Stakeholders, & Ensuring Projects Get Built

Federal permitting is not broadly delaying clean energy projects; according to an upcoming law review study, 95% of clean energy projects constructed from 2010 to 2021 did not trigger, or received expedited, federal review. **And, the Fiscal Responsibility Act of 2024 significantly changed environmental reviews, allowing the Biden-Harris Administration to further speed projects by:**

- **Quickly permitting low-risk clean energy projects.** The administration finalized [CEQ's Bipartisan Permitting Reform Implementation Rule](#), which required a lead agency, one- or two-year review deadlines, page limits, early-stage stakeholder and community engagement, and established new and more flexible methods for agencies to use categorical exclusions – the fastest form of environmental review reserved for projects with little or no impacts
 - Over 15 agencies have developed, expanded, or adopted 125 categorical exclusions for low-risk clean energy projects, such as EV charging infrastructure and [geothermal](#) exploration. Categorical exclusions accounted for 99% of DOE's project decisions. Projects like stringing new high performance transmission wires on existing towers are low-impact and ripe for using categorical exclusions.
- **Completing more environmental impact statements.** Agencies have completed a higher proportion of environmental impact statements in under two years than under the previous administration. In its first three years, the Biden-Harris administration completed environmental assessments in an average of 9.6 months compared to 15.4 months for the same number of projects during the Trump administration, highlighting a 6 month reduction in the median EIS completion time. Specifically:
 - DOE cut EIS review timelines in half and completed 15% more environmental reviews than the previous administration.
 - DOT cut its average environmental review time by more than one third while also completing 20% more reviews than under Trump.

The Biden-Harris Administration is Deploying Clean Energy on Public Lands at Historic Pace by:

- **Exceeding its clean energy permitting targets and doubled its project approvals.** More than 18 months ahead of DOI's target to reach 25 GWs of clean energy projects on public lands, it [permitted](#) nearly 29 GWs of clean energy projects, which are capable of powering more than 12 million homes. The Biden-Harris administration has more than doubled the amount of projects approved under the Trump administration.
 - This [included](#) 13 geothermal, 9 solar, 18 transmission-related projects.

- **Slashing fees for clean energy projects on public land by 80%.** [In April](#), DOI finalized its Renewable Energy Rule to reduce capacity fees for solar and wind projects on public lands by 80%, and it also included incentives to use project labor agreements and American-made materials.
 - The Renewable Energy Rule also streamlined the application review process in priority areas and provided the wind and solar industry greater predictability for how future leases will be issued and managed.
- **Approving 15 GWs of offshore wind.** DOI [approved](#) the nation's first 10 large-scale offshore wind projects – up from zero approvals before the start of the Biden-Harris administration. These projects will provide enough power for 5.25 million homes.
- **Modernizing offshore wind regulations to make them more streamlined and effective.** DOI [finalized a rule](#) that will save offshore wind developers about \$1.9 billion over 20 years by modernizing regulations, streamlining overly complex processes and removing unnecessary ones, clarifying ambiguous regulatory provisions, and enhancing compliance requirements.
 - The rule also included a process to regularly update a five-year offshore wind leasing schedule, which includes up to 12 potential lease sales.
 - These regulatory reforms accelerated projects that will produce more than 80 GWs, which is enough offshore wind to power more than 26 million homes if fully developed.
- **Managing efficient and responsible solar energy siting and permitting.** BLM [recently released](#) its Western Solar Plan to guide solar projects toward previously disturbed areas with high potential and away from protected lands with wildlife and cultural conflicts. This will allow quicker, safer, and more responsible and predictable permitting.
 - The Western Solar Plan would make 31 million public acres available for solar development across 11 Western states.

The Biden-Harris Administration is Supporting State, Tribe, and Local Government Participation by:

- **Bringing states, tribes and local governments into the transmission siting process with the resources needed to support their engagement.** Through the IRA's [Transmission Siting and Economic Development Program](#), DOE [recently announced](#) \$371 million for 20 projects that support local efforts to accelerate and strengthen transmission siting and permitting processes across 16 states.
- **Investing \$22 million in permitting and siting for clean energy.** DOE [invested](#) \$22 million in siting and permitting for large-scale renewable energy facilities under the [Renewable Energy Siting through Technical Engagement and Planning \(R-STEP\) Program](#).
- **Streamlining residential solar permitting.** DOE signed up over 125 communities for its [Solar Automated Permit Processing \(Solar APP+\) tool](#), allowing local governments to instantly approve residential solar permits.