

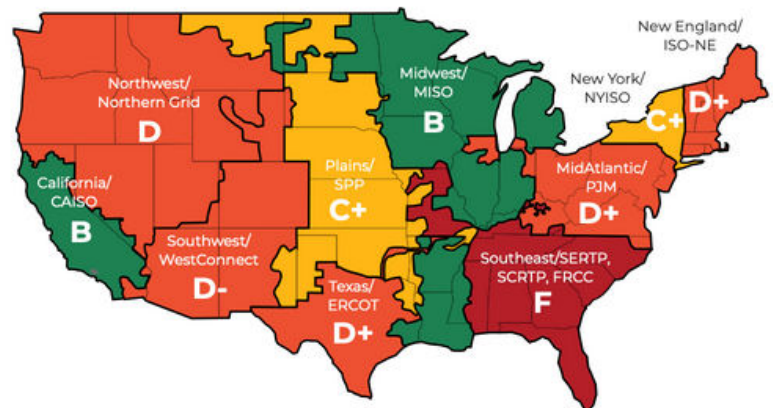
# TRANSMISSION PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT REGIONAL REPORT CARD

**Americans for a Clean Energy Grid** evaluated transmission planning and development efforts across the country. While no region earned an A – and many have a long way to go – there is growing recognition of the need to proactively and holistically plan new transmission that will facilitate America’s energy transition, safeguard the grid against extreme weather, and lower electricity costs for consumers.

Building transmission incrementally is inefficient and expensive. By contrast, an analysis within the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) found its long-term, comprehensive transmission plan would result in benefits more than twice as large as costs.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) is now considering a rule that would improve regional transmission planning, but it has been pending since April 2022. All regions—and the transmission owners and operators within them—can act immediately to improve their planning methods. In fact, every region in this report has adopted innovative practices in at least one category that others can replicate to make progress.

## REGIONAL GRADES



## METHODOLOGY

### 65% Use of best practices for proactive transmission planning

- Proactively plan for future generation and load.
- Use a holistic Multi-Value Planning process.
- Address high-stress grid conditions through Scenario-Based Planning.
- Assess projects as a portfolio, not line-by-line.
- Jointly plan interregional transmission across neighboring systems.
- Conduct robust stakeholder engagement.
- Consider all transmission business models.
- Allow for balanced governance of the regional planning process.

### 20% Miles of transmission built and planned

### 7.5% Transmission capacity available for new resources

### 7.5% Congestion



# SCORE DETAILS: SOUTHWEST

**OVERALL SCORE :** 62.3%

**RANKING :** 9 / 10

**Who plans transmission in the Southwest?** The Southwest does not have an RTO or ISO. The region is defined by the planning authority WestConnect. Within its footprint, states, utilities, and independent developers primarily develop transmission.

## PLANNING METHODS

**GRADE: F**

- There has been minimal proactive transmission planning coordinated at the regional level in the Southwest. Instead, states, utilities, and merchant developers have largely been driving planning.
- WestConnect largely relies on generation and load inputs, as well as local transmission plans from its member entities, while conducting limited analysis to find the most effective and efficient regional projects.
- There is minimal interregional coordination conducted by the Southwest.

## MILES BUILT & PLANNED

**GRADE: B-**

- From 2019-2021, the West (which includes the Southwest and Northwest) built 88% of the new high-capacity transmission compared to the best recent period of high-capacity transmission build-out.
- Some states and utilities within the region have been successful at developing transmission. In Colorado, Xcel has planned nearly 600 miles of high-voltage lines that will help interconnect 5.5 GWs of resources; in New Mexico, the Renewable Energy Transmission Authority has nearly 1,200 miles of high-voltage transmission under development that will interconnect nearly 9 GW of resources.

## CAPACITY AVAILABLE FOR NEW RESOURCES

**GRADE: B-**

- Available interconnection data combines the Northwest and Southwest into one region, the West. The West is experiencing similar trends in interconnection, with low completion rates and rising wait times. Not all of this can be attributed to transmission capacity, but development of proactive regional transmission plans would likely improve this score.

## CONGESTION

**GRADE: D**

- As the Southwest is outside an organized market, there is little data related to congestion. Given congestion is generally rising throughout the country, that trend likely extends to the Southwest.