
Powerful Planning
How States Can Secure a Clean and Reliable Grid
June 10th | 2:00PM ET
CLIMATE X CHANGE

Introduction

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State Climate Policy Network

Network of **15,000+**

- ➔ State and local elected officials
- ➔ NGO advocates
- ➔ Researchers
- ➔ State agency staffers
- ➔ Organizers and activists
- ➔ Business leaders

... working on state climate policy

www.climate-xchange.org/network

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Pro Bono Policy Assistance

We specialize in state climate policy design and analysis.
Reach out to kristen@climate-xchange.org with your requests on:

- **Example states** and **model rules** for a given policy
- **Gap analysis** of your state's climate policy landscape
- **Connections** to other actors working on similar issues

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Powerful Planning:
How States Can Secure a Clean and Reliable Grid

Cathy Boies
Director at Gridworks

Abby Watson
Co-Founder and President of
The Groundwire Group

Agenda

1. Transmission Authorities
2. Energy Zones
3. Discussion and Q&A

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Speaker

Cathy Boies

Director

Gridworks

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State Transmission Authorities in the Western U.S.

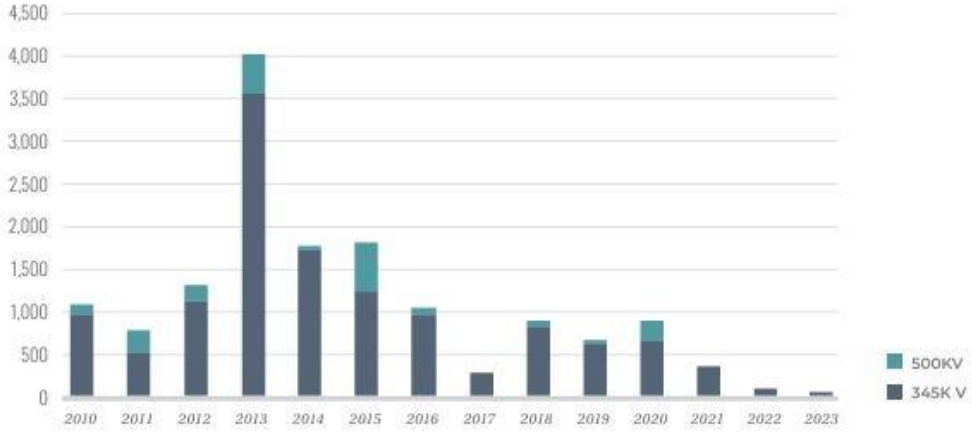
GRIDWORKS

June 10 | Noon MT
Virtual

Why are states exploring transmission authorities now?

- Aging grid, surging demand, reliability concerns
- Lack of (inter)regional lines, regulatory and/or market barriers
- Interconnection backlogs, escalating network upgrade costs
- State goals: energy export, local industry, policy goals

FIGURE 1 Investment in new high-voltage lines peaked in 2013 and has steadily fallen over the last 10 years.[3]



Source: ACEG and GridStrategies, Fewer New Miles: The U.S. Transmission Grid in the 2020s, July 2024.

State Transmission Authority

What it is…	What it is not…
✓ Public purpose transmission developer	X State agency regulator
✓ Project partner and convener	X Permitting office
✓ Catalyst for projects that stall	X Directed by a commission
✓ Financing and coordination platform	X Independent developer

The Different Flavors in the West

- Created 2005
- Idaho Energy Resources Authority Act
- Lending authority

- Created 2007
- New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority Act
- Renewable energy export

- Merged in 2020
- Wyoming Energy Authority Act
- Strategic hub to boost local industries

- Created 2021
- Colorado Electric Transmission Authority Act
- Grid reliability, state clean energy goals, economic development

The Policy Toolkit

Project Development Tools

- Corridor identification
- Public-private partnerships
- Convenor role

Financing Tools

- Revenue bonding
- Tax exemptions

Market/Regulatory Tools

- Developer-of-last resort
- Streamlined processes
- Eminent domain (as a last resort)

Not every authority has every power

Key Design Choices for Policymakers

Financing – Revenue bonding? Rate recovery? Affordability?

Permitting and siting – Accelerated timelines? Coordination?

Technology – GETs/ATTs? Wildfire hardening?

Governance – Relationship with utilities? Public purpose?

Implementation – Funding? Staffing? Launch runway?

The central question: what problem is the authority trying to solve?

Three Takeaways

- Transmission authorities are tools, not ends themselves
- States are customizing the model to solve different problems
- Design choices determine the authority's effectiveness

QUESTIONS?

CATHY BOIES

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GRIDWORKS

Case Study: Western Spirit

The Bottleneck
World-class wind resources lacking transmission; multi-year development logjam

NM RETA's Role
Public interest co-developer with Pattern Energy

The Mechanism
Public-private joint venture powers and tax-exemptions to de-risk project finance

The Outcome
800 MW transfer capacity transmitting 100% renewable energy

Speaker

Abby Watson

Co-Founder and President

The Groundwire Group

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Energy Zones

Holistic energy system planning that reduces costs and impacts

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The solution to energy affordability is **investment.**

Smart, well-planned investments in the grid can enable growth while making the most of what we have – and we can bring communities along in the process.

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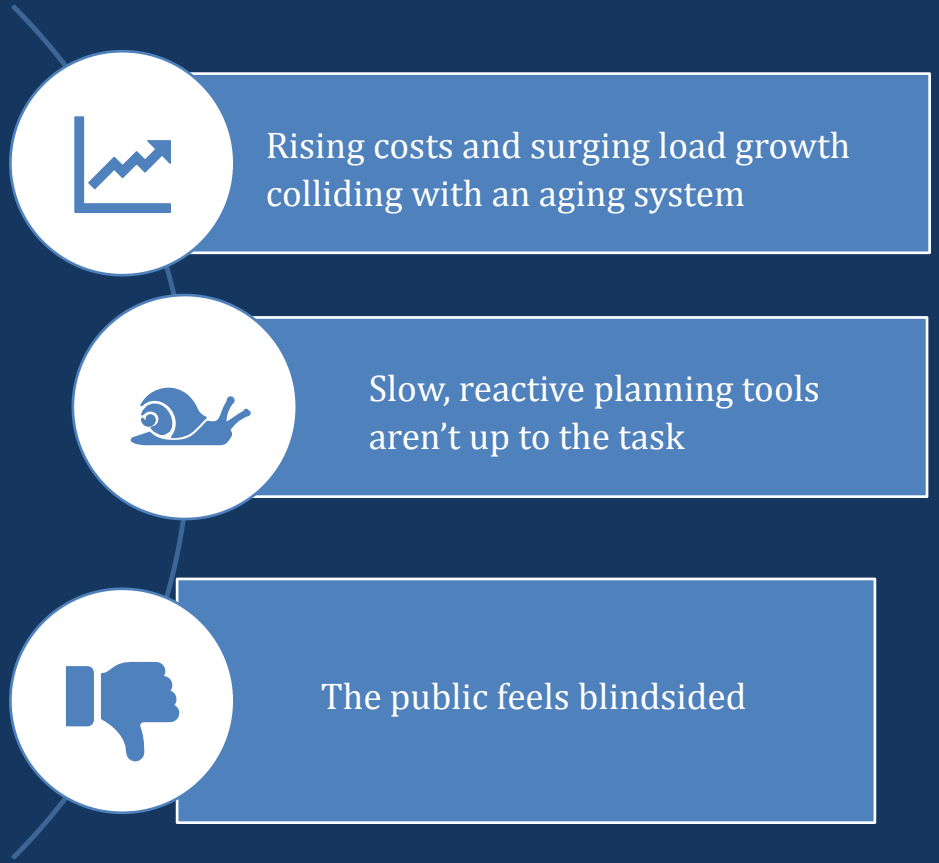
The **Challenge**

Energy affordability and a system under pressure

After decades of flat growth and deferred investment, demands on the grid are growing at precisely the moment when inflation is driving prices higher for everything.



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The Energy Zone Solution

Initiate a public dialogue

State officials can launch a stakeholder engagement process to identify preferred zones for energy-related development (including large loads).

Iterative zone identification process

A multistep process can then refine initial proposed zones to take into account stakeholder feedback, commercial interest, and system analysis.

Energy system investments that maximize economic growth

States can then use these zones to offer economic incentives, designate eligibility for expedited permitting provisions, and supply inputs to regional transmission planning processes.

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The Energy Zone Solution

A process built for engagement

This type of state-driven process can improve public awareness of the realities of the grid and engage communities in the decision-making process much earlier.

A new era of transparency

Lack of understanding and access to information about how energy investment decisions are made systematically undermines trust in those decisions. Energy Zones make needs and trade-offs explicit and quantifiable.

A system designed for least cost and impact

Energy Zones can be designed to encourage development of large loads in places that trigger the fewest upgrade needs, optimize for cogeneration, and open access to areas with strong development potential and support.

THE GROUNDWIRE GROUP

Get In **Touch**

www.groundwiregroup.com

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Q&A

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Thank you for joining!

Reach out to kristen@climate-xchange.org with any additional questions!

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