PRESS RELEASE
Friday, October 28, 2022

CLEARPATH

Report: Energy Projects All Queued Up and Nowhere to Go

ClearPath looks at interconnection challenges making net-zero electricity deployment impossible

Washington, DC – Friday, October 28, 2022 – ClearPath released a new report today, ***All Queued Up and Nowhere to Go: The Massive Interconnection Challenge Facing Net-Zero Electricity Deployment***. The report examines the interconnection process used by transmission providers, regional grid operators or utilities, to determine the impact of new electricity facilities on the transmission system. Findings conclude that the list of projects under evaluation for grid connection is experiencing a massive backlog, making it incredibly difficult to deploy new generation and storage resources.

"The interconnection queue has become so dysfunctional that some transmission providers are freezing their process to work through the project backlog," **said Spencer Nelson, Managing Director for Research at ClearPath.** "Hundreds of gigawatts of new energy projects – predominantly wind, solar, natural gas, and storage – spend an increasingly long time in the interconnection process. This is now the biggest bottleneck for clean energy development"

ClearPath's report examines the current state of interconnection queues and the implications of current delays and withdrawals on achieving net-zero carbon dioxide emissions. The report also suggests potential policy solutions to remedy existing barriers to developing reliable, clean energy. Several key findings include:

1. Escalated queue delays make it harder to deploy all forms of electricity generation and storage;
2. Net-zero models project resource deployment levels that are unrealistic under the current state of the interconnection queue. Ultimately transformational and flexible reforms are needed;
3. Retirement of existing energy capacity is anticipated to outpace new additions due to interconnection inefficiencies.

In 2022, the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) passed a unanimous Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) on interconnection queue reform. This analysis finds that the reforms are likely not transformative or flexible enough for the speed and scale of deployment required.

Policy action proposed in ***All Queued Up and Nowhere to Go*** include:

- Coordinate the interconnection and transmission planning processes.
- Better prioritization of recent funds available through the Department of Energy based on reliability, resilience, and decarbonization.
- Expedite opportunities to pre-site and permit projects in existing rights of way.
- Provide Grants and scholarships for electrical engineers working on interconnection.
- Develop cutting-edge tools and provide technical assistance to states, other agencies, or non-governmental organizations (such as RTOs and utilities).

“Failure to address the current interconnection process at scale will limit the ability to reduce emissions affordably and could hurt grid reliability,” Nelson added. “At this point, achieving net-zero emissions in the U.S. by 2050 is impossible without major interconnection improvements.”

Access the report here.

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ABOUT CLEARPATH
ClearPath (501(c)(3)) was established by businessman Jay Faison in 2014. ClearPath’s mission is to develop and advance policies that accelerate breakthrough innovations that reduce emissions in the energy and industrial sectors. To advance that mission, we develop cutting-edge policy solutions on clean energy and industrial innovation. An entrepreneurial, strategic nonprofit, ClearPath (501(c)(3)) collaborates with public and private sector stakeholders on innovations in nuclear energy, carbon capture, hydropower, natural gas, geothermal, energy storage, and heavy industry to enable private-sector deployment of critical technologies. Learn more at clearpath.org. Follow us on Twitter: @powellrich, @ClearPathAction