

Central: Maine: Power News



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Public: Affairs: News: Line: (media: inquiries: only):: (207): 622: NEWS:

Release:: Immediate

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Central Maine Power gains regional funding for transmission line

AUGUSTA, ME – February 1, 2010 – Central Maine Power Company (CMP) has received confirmation from the Independent System Operator for New England (ISO-NE) that its Maine Power Reliability Program (MPRP) will qualify for regional cost sharing. After a year of study, ISO-NE concluded that \$1.4 billion of the company's planned \$1.5 billion transmission system investment will benefit utility customers throughout New England, while the remainder of the cost is still being reviewed by the ISO. Under the ISO's regional tariff, Maine consumers will pay about 8 percent of the project costs, and the balance will be paid by utility customers in the rest of the New England.

“The ISO approved our proposal after a year-long review by stakeholders and industry experts from all across New England,” said Sara Burns, CMP president and chief executive officer. “Their decision confirms that the Maine Power Reliability Program is a critical investment for people and businesses in Maine and throughout the region.”

CMP's Maine Power Reliability Program includes the construction of five new 345-kilovolt substations and related facilities linked by approximately 500 miles of new or upgraded transmission lines to be built in the company's existing transmission corridors. The lines run through 78 cities and towns from Eliot to Orrington, Maine.

The company has received local approval in 36 towns. The MPRP is also under review by the Maine Public Utilities Commission, the Maine Department of Environment Protection, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and planning officials in numerous communities. The company hopes to begin construction this year and complete work by 2015. Economist Charles Colgan of the University of Southern Maine's Muskie School of Public Service estimates that constructing the project will create an average of over

2100 jobs per year and inject an annual average of \$61 million in wages and salary income into the Maine economy.

“While these investments are first and foremost to ensure reliability, the project will also create jobs and add critical capacity in our system for the state’s growing renewable electricity industry,” said Burns. “Our state will benefit for decades, but it will add less than 50 cents a month to an average residential customer’s bill when it’s completed in 2015.”

ISO New England is the federally authorized, regional transmission organization for the New England states. The ISO planning process is designed to ensure the reliability of the New England transmission system and compliance with national and regional standards, while accounting for market performance and economic, environmental and other considerations. In its decision, the ISO noted that state or local siting authorities may impose conditions on the project that could change its costs or reliability benefits to the region, either of which could affect the project’s eligibility for regional cost sharing under the ISO tariff.

More information on the project can be found at www.maine-power.com/.