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## FACT SHEET: Biden-Harris Administration Launches Federal-State Initiative to Bolster America's Power Grid

Since Day One, President Biden has positioned America as a leader in the global race for a clean energy future, including by taking ambitious action to deliver a clean, reliable electric grid, which will help ensure that communities don't lose power during extreme weather events, lower energy costs for hardworking families, and create good-paying jobs – all while tackling the climate crisis. Under the President's leadership, the U.S. is projected to build more new electric generation capacity this year than we have in two decades – 96 percent of that clean energy. In addition, ten major transmission projects have begun construction, expected to connect nearly 20 gigawatts of new power to the grid. America is investing tens of billions to strengthen our grid to bolster resiliency, strengthen energy security, and drive innovation. And in recent weeks, the Biden-Harris Administration has taken critical steps to build out the nation's power grid – from making the federal permitting process for new transmission lines more efficient to launching a public-private mobilization to upgrade 100,000 miles of existing lines.

**Today, the Biden-Harris Administration is building on this momentum by launching a Federal-State Modern Grid Deployment Initiative, with commitments from 21 leading states:** Arizona, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawai'i, Illinois, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Washington, and Wisconsin. Building on the Biden-Harris Administration's legislative accomplishments and executive actions in tackling the grid modernization challenge, the initiative aims to bring together states, federal entities, and power sector stakeholders to help drive grid adaptation quickly and cost-effectively to meet the challenges and opportunities that the power sector faces in the twenty-first century.

Participating states have committed to prioritize efforts that support the adoption of modern grid solutions to expand grid capacity and build modern grid capabilities on both new and existing transmission and distribution lines. Historically, expanding the capacity of the U.S. power grid has typically relied on building new transmission lines with technologies that have not changed since the mid-twentieth century. Today, a new generation of modern grid technologies provides a significant opportunity to achieve power system capacity expansion, including through high-performance conductors that have the benefit of being able to carry double or more of the amount of power of conventional transmission wires, as well as Grid Enhancing Technologies that maximize electricity transmission across the existing system through a family of technologies that includes sensors, power flow control devices, and analytical tools. These solutions increase the capacity and throughput based on real-time conditions. Deploying these tools means that renewables and other clean sources of power can be integrated sooner and more cost-effectively than waiting for new transmission construction, which will address load growth challenges more rapidly, create good-paying jobs, and lower Americans' utility bills.

Alongside this announcement, the U.S. Climate Alliance announced the availability of policy, technical, and analytical assistance to help participating members advance state-level efforts to carry out these commitments. In conjunction the Department of Energy is elevating the host of technical assistance programs that can support varying levels of analysis for utilities, policy makers, regulators, state energy offices, and other stakeholders.

In particular, the 21 states signing on as inaugural members will focus on:

- Meeting the shared challenges and opportunities of increased load growth, a rapidly changing energy landscape, aging infrastructure, and new grid-enhancing technologies – while delivering reliable, clean, and affordable energy to consumers.
- Deploying innovative grid technologies to bolster the capacity of our electric grid and more effectively meet current and future demand, maximize benefits of new and existing transmission infrastructure, increase grid resilience to the growing impacts of climate change, and better protect consumers from variability in energy prices.

Last month, the Biden-Harris Administration announced a public-private mobilization to upgrade 100,000 miles of existing lines with these types of high-impact solutions over the next five years as part of a suite of announcements in the power sector. The Administration is advancing this goal by:

**Catalyzing Nationwide Collaboration on Modern Grid Technologies:**

Governors, regulators, utilities, labor unions, and industry all play vital roles in determining how energy infrastructure gets built. For that reason, the Biden-Harris Administration is convening these stakeholders at the White House today to explore innovative policy solutions to unlock the deployment of modern grid technologies and share best practices. The Federal government stands ready to provide technical and financial assistance and can help provide additional forums to ensure that the best ideas from states, industry, and community stakeholders can be more readily shared.

**Accelerating Permitting through New Categorical Exclusions for Reconductoring:**

Previously, projects to upgrade a transmission line above 20 miles in length could trigger a detailed environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Department of Energy last month expanded a categorical exclusion for upgrading and rebuilding transmission lines, replacing the previous length limits. DOE also made changes to categorical exclusions for certain energy storage and solar projects on previously developed lands. With these changes, most reconductoring projects now qualify for the simplest form of environmental review, which can take years off of project development time and allow the benefits of the transmission expansion to be realized even sooner.

**Funding the Deployment of Advanced Grid Technologies:** President Biden's Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) have provided the largest investment in history to strengthen the nation's power grid, including programs that can support transmission line upgrades. For example, DOE's Grid Deployment Office is administering \$10.5 billion in competitive grant funding through the Grid Resilience and Innovation Partnerships (GRIP) Program. The first round of GRIP awards included 10 projects that will help deploy Grid Enhancing Technologies and calls for applications for the second round placed even greater emphases on

these solutions. The DOE Loan Programs Office has \$250 billion of loan guarantee authority to provide low-interest financing to projects that upgrade existing energy infrastructure, with program guidance that highlights reconductoring as a qualifying project example. The Department of Agriculture's Empowering Rural America (New ERA) program provides \$9.7 billion in low interest loans or grants and represents the largest investment in rural electrification since 1936, with eligibility for transmission system upgrades.

Each of these programs advances President Biden's Justice40 Initiative which sets a goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain Federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution.

**Reinforcing Administration Accomplishments on New Transmission Lines:** The Biden-Harris Administration's new goal to expand capacity of existing transmission lines will work alongside a historic set of actions to accelerate buildout of new projects. Since 2021, ten major transmission projects have begun construction, expected to connect nearly 20 gigawatts (GW) of new generation to the grid and reflecting over \$22 billion in investment, including several projects on public lands that received approvals from the Department of the Interior. The Department of Energy issued a final rule to launch the Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorization and Permits Program (CITAP), which streamlines the federal permitting process for qualifying electric transmission projects and helps set a standard two-year schedule for authorizations and permits, cutting the average timeframe in half. The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) issued a final rule on Regional Transmission Planning and Cost Allocation, Order 1920, that adopts specific requirements addressing how transmission providers must conduct long-term planning for regional transmission facilities, consider the use of advanced conductors and Grid Enhancing Technologies, and determine how to pay for them, so needed transmission is built.

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