



Proposed Work Plan and Guiding Principles for the WGA Transmission Siting Task Force (Draft as of April 12, 2013)

Note: This document was developed by Kearns & West and revised by the Task Force Planning Committee. The document will be considered for approval by the full Task Force at the April 30/May 1, Salt Lake City meeting. For those not attending the meeting, please send comments in advance to Kristi Celico at kcelico@gmail.com.

Proposed Work Plan

Problem Statement

During the last 25 years, high voltage transmission permitting and construction in the west has proceeded at a modest pace, with a significant slowdown most recently due to the economic recession. Nevertheless, the continuing migration of population to the west necessitates development of additional electrical facilities, including generation, transmission and distribution. Despite mitigation of the need for new transmission by energy conservation and efficiency, most experts agree that a multitude of new lines will need to be sited in the Western US in the next 25 years. One of the key factors influencing this view is the massive development of renewable generation resources such as solar and wind, usually located in remote areas, which presently link to no transmission facilities.

There is broad agreement that the current processes for siting new lines are time-consuming, expensive, and frustrating for most all involved. The existing approaches tend to:

1. Require major activities from local, state, tribal, and federal agencies that often have core missions totally unrelated to transmission siting;
2. Push transmission development towards high-cost local and sub-regional solutions, in lieu of more appropriately-planned and more effective regional projects;
3. Create excess business uncertainty due to unanticipated permitting delays (among other factors);
4. Engage landowners too late to be an effective part of decision-making; and
5. Limit the nation's ability to move clean and diversified energy from where it is produced to where it is needed.

Although many factors cause these challenges, two leading ones include:

1. Multiple, sometimes duplicative and/or conflicting, permitting processes, which lead to inconsistent findings amongst the federal, state, tribal, and local decision-makers; and



2. Insufficient early coordination and planning with local governments and publics, resulting in frustration and local opposition to projects.

Mission Statement

The Task Force will work to improve the efficiency and quality of transmission siting and permitting by:

1. Establishing an **information exchange process** to promote best practices by holding forums on hot topics and establishing an online clearinghouse of sample documents.
2. Developing and implementing **collaborative policy tools**, such as creating a template MOU for use between agencies when starting a project and developing state and regional roadmaps of permitting requirements.
3. **Engaging the leadership** of the Governors and other senior stakeholders to implement consensus findings, best practices, and recommendations for addressing siting challenges.
4. **Building productive relationships** amongst the stakeholders to help solve line-specific challenges more quickly.

Guiding Procedures

Scope of Task Force

The Task Force will address issues that require collaboration with other stakeholders, are priority issues for WGA members, and are solvable, timely, and not being addressed in other policy forums. The group will focus on complex, high-voltage lines that are frequently interstate.

To focus our discussions, Task Force Members will assume the following as givens:

- The number of transmission lines sited in the West must be significantly increased over the next 25 years to address increased energy demand, safety and reliability needs, upgrading of infrastructure, improving market efficiencies, and movement of new energy sources.
- Though energy efficiency, new technologies, and undergrounding lines will play some role in mitigating the need for new lines, the number of new lines needed will still be substantial.
- The current process for siting lines is excessively complicated due to overlapping and sometimes conflicting local, state, tribal, and federal rules.
- The process of siting and constructing new lines, and the lines themselves, sometimes have disruptive downside characteristics for landowners, communities, the environment, and government entities that have other primary missions.

Membership



Task Force members will be comprised of a diverse set of stakeholders with the knowledge to contribute to discussions about the Task Force's purpose and mission (see above). Members will come from the following sectors:

- Government representatives from 11 WGA states;
- Federal and local government representatives;
- Public and private utilities and other line proponents;
- NGO organizations; and
- Others as needed.

Meetings

The Task Force will meet approximately two to three times per year in person, relying heavily on webinars and email communication to save time and resources. Both in-person meetings and webinars/conference calls will be open to the public and have public comment periods as needed. Ad-hoc workshops may be held at the direction of the Task Force.

Review Groups

To most effectively use Task Force members' time, Review Groups will be created to provide feedback on draft technical products before they are presented to the full Task Force. Review groups will be comprised of Task Force members and any outside experts deemed appropriate by Task Force members. Review groups will not make final decisions about work products.

Planning Committee

The Task Force will have a Planning Committee comprised of fewer than six diverse members of the Task Force. Planning Committee tasks will include reviewing agendas; making preliminary decisions about draft work products; and providing guidance to WGA in between scheduled Task Force meetings. Planning Committee members are nominated by WGA and confirmed by the Task Force.

Task Force Member Roles and Responsibilities

Task Force members can choose to participate on the Task Force as formal members of their organization or as individuals. Federal government members will serve in an ex-officio capacity. They members will play an active role in the discussions, but will not be a formal part of any consensus recommendations.

Members may select an alternate to participate in meetings when Task Force members are unable to do so. The alternate will be responsible for keeping Task Force members updated. In cases in which WGA provides travel support, only one person (the primary or alternate member) will be supported.

Generally, Task Force members agree to:



- Actively participate in Task Force discussions and decisions and speak up if opposed to Task Force proposals.
- Provide an explanation for all objections and propose an alternative solution.
- Avoid destructive language and personal attacks.
- Assume responsibility for coming up to speed on the issues, particularly if a new member is participating or an existing member attends sporadically.
- Proactively work to keep constituents, colleagues, and managers informed about the work of the Task Force. Task Force members have a responsibility to work proactively within their respective communities and organizations to support the work and recommendations of the Task Force.
- Avoid surprises. To the extent possible, avoid surprising other Task Force members with news regarding major policy decisions, lawsuits, media releases, or other related items. Task Force members recognize that it is sometimes impossible to anticipate and/or control the actions of one's bosses and/or governors, but all will do their best to comply.
- During discussions, share the floor, be concise, and keep cell phones on silent.

WGA Roles and Responsibilities

The Western Governors' Association (WGA) is responsible for convening the Task Force. WGA will serve as both a convener and a participant in Task Force discussions. WGA will coordinate all meetings and webinars in consultation with the Task Force. WGA will act as the facilitator between the Task Force and Western governors and their respective staff. All Task Force policy recommendations and external communications will be approved the WGA Staff Council Advisors.

Staff Advisory Council Roles and Responsibilities

The Staff Advisory Council (SAC) is a standing WGA committee that serves as a liaison between WGA staff and WGA governors. SAC are state policy advisors that review policy suggestions in the interest of their respective governor. The SAC is responsible for communicating and coordinating with state governors. Task Force documents, products and statements intended to be released to the public will need to be approved by the SAC to help ensure governors' support. WGA, in conjunction with State Task Force members, will be responsible for determining which documents need SAC approval and for working to develop approval or refinement in a timely fashion.

Task Force Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The facilitation and technical teams will be identified by a subcommittee of the Task Force but hired by WGA under a DOE contractor. The Task Force will identify key tasks for staff, but the specifics will be managed by WGA. Only WGA has formal hiring and firing authority, but to the extent the work of either entity becomes a major topic of concern to the Task Force, WGA should consider making changes.



Staff have the following roles and responsibilities:

1. Prepare and distribute draft agendas, planning documents, and technical documents for Planning Committee and/or Task Force review.
2. Distribute meeting information and materials In advance of meetings.
3. Facilitate, provide technical support, and prepare meeting summaries for Task Force meetings.
4. Conduct research as identified by the Task Force and approved by WGA.
5. Remain impartial as to the substance of the Task Force discussions and decisions.
6. Ensure a smooth process by keeping the group on track, on time, and in accordance with these procedures.
7. Retain confidential information as confidential to individual members.

The facilitation team will prepare brief meeting summaries of each Task Force meeting. Meeting summaries will include discussion highlights, action items, decisions, and bin lists of topics for future conversation, if appropriate. Draft meeting summaries will be available in two weeks for Task Force member review, then finalized and placed on the project website.

Decision Making

In the spirit of encouraging open exchange and collaboration, the Task Force will use a consensus decision-making approach. For the purposes of Task Force decision-making, all of the following definitions will be considered “consensus”:

- There is unanimous agreement among all participants present.
- All Task Force members are willing to “live with” the proposal.
- One or more members present may register dissent, but do not wish to block the Task Force’s action or agreement that would otherwise be possible but for their dissent.

Who: All Task Force members are welcome to participate in Task Force decision-making except for in the instances noted below.

- Federal government representatives will participate in an ex-officio capacity. They will not formally participate in consensus decision-making, but will play an active role in the discussions.
- In some rare cases, the state government members on the Task Force may choose to develop recommendations solely from the perspective of western governors’ offices. Generally, however, the Task Force recognizes that the power of the group and its recommendations lay in its diversity.

Decision-making process steps include:



1. At critical decision points, the facilitators will ask if all members of the Task Force “can live with” a certain decision, or proposed approach or recommendation.
 2. If there is dissent, the facilitators will work with the Task Force to accommodate all interests and concerns.
 3. Those not able to live with a proposed decision must explain reasons why and offer solutions of what could work for them.
- Decisions will be reflected in the meeting summaries. If full consensus cannot be reached, the meeting summary will reflect the range of outstanding concerns.

Additional notes on decision-making:

1. The creation of the Task Force does not reduce or alter the legal decision-making authority of any agencies or organizations participating in this effort.
2. Participants that are not able to attend a meeting may provide input to the facilitator or the Planning Committee in advance of the meeting. The Task Force will do its best to accommodate these concerns at the meeting, but may or may not choose to delay final consensus until all concerned participants can attend.

Media or External Contact

Members of the Task Force will respect the open, frank discussions that occur within the Task Force. Task Force members can speak on their own behalf, but unless formally appointed to do so, should not attempt to summarize the views of the full Task Force or individual Task Force members. Any press releases regarding Task Force activities or recommendations will be drafted and agreed upon by the Task Force as a group and must be approved by SAC.