

**DRAFT**  
**Summary of July 10, 2008 WIRAB Meeting**

The following members participated in the July 10, 2008 Western Interconnection Regional Advisory Body (WIRAB) meeting and constituted a quorum:

Alberta	Bevan Laing
California	Bill Chamberlain
Colorado	Jeff Hein
Montana	Art Compton
Nebraska	Tim Texel
Nevada	Rebecca Wagner
New Mexico	Joanna Prukop
Oregon	John Savage
South Dakota	Brian Rounds
Texas	Jason Haas
Utah	Dianne Nielson
Washington	Tony Usibelli
Wyoming	Steve Ellenbecker

Also present were Tom Schneider / Bob Kiser / Steve Rueckert (WECC), Pat Van Mitte (SDG&E), and Doug Larson (WIRAB).

WIRAB Chairman John Savage (OR) asked for amendments to the proposed agenda. [[staff slides](#)]

Approval of the [May 30 Meeting Summary](#)

Joanna Prukop (NM) moved and Rebecca Wagner (NV) seconded a motion to approve the summary of May 30 WIRAB meeting. The motion was approved.

WECC Report

Bob Kiser, WECC Manager of Compliance Audits and Investigations, presented an update on WIRAB compliance and enforcement activities. The discussion highlighted the following:

- The greatest areas of concern to WECC are Critical Infrastructure Protection/Cyber Security standards implementation, vegetation-caused outages and vegetation standards violations, and relay maintenance and testing.
- Compliance investigations are increasing.
- The first batch of notices of violations are generating numerous settlement discussions. It is not known how many of these violations may move to hearings

and how many will be settled. Bill Chamberlain asked for early warning for WIRAB on how many of the violations will be moving to hearings so that WIRAB members can help provide hearing panel participants. It is not clear when the first batch of violations from WECC will reach FERC.

- The overall trend in the number of alleged violations found in on-site and off-site audits since June 2007 is down due to better entity awareness and improved audit procedures. The audits thus far have focused on the larger transmission organizations. A schedule for 2009 audits is expected in two weeks.
- Processing violations and mitigation plans has become a huge work load at WECC. WECC will provide WIRAB with updated information on violations and mitigation plans on the next conference call.
- Regarding vegetation violations, there have been two Category 1 violation outages (vegetation growing within the right-of-way) and multiple Category 2 and 3 outages (vegetation growing into or being blown into the right-of-way). Category 2 and 3 violations may be precursors of more Category 1 violations.
- Regarding violation of relay protection standards, WECC is finding significant problems associated with a lack of documentation.
- In response to a question, Kiser said that WECC is making efforts to inform registered entities of the issues associated with violation of vegetation standards and relay maintenance standards. WECC made presentations on vegetation standards to the Compliance Users Group and is setting up a workshop on relay protection violations on August 12 in Portland.
- Regarding WECC's proposed Tier 1 replacement standards:
  - The WECC Board approved the standards in April. NERC posted the standards for comment. NERC's 45-day comment period expired on May 20. On May 27, WECC received the last package of NERC comments. WECC responded to the comments on June 10-11. NERC has 45 days to act (July 26). However, NERC procedures require 30 days notice of information going to the NERC Board and thus the NERC Board will not act on the WECC Tier 1 replacement standards at its late July meeting.
  - WECC has met its obligations to FERC to deliver replacement standards within one year of FERC approval of the original standards.
  - However, it is unclear when NERC will send the proposed standards to FERC.
  - The delay has created some confusion among regulated entities on whether they are to comply with the original Tier 1 standards or the replacement standards. The law is clear that they must comply with the original Tier 1 standards until FERC approves the replacement standards.

- WECC's new compliance web portal will become operational on August 1. This will enable electronic filing of compliance information by registered entities.

Tom Schneider reported that the major focus of the June joint WECC committee meetings in Spokane was integration of renewables into the grid. WECC's plan is to conduct a study of transmission needs assuming 15 percent renewables is on track. WECC also plans to honor WIRAB's January request to study transmission needs assuming carbon emission 15 percent lower than 2005 levels. WECC's implementation of the new Reliability Centers is on track. They will be operational by the end of 2009. Schneider also reported on a recent FERC decision in which the Commission provided guidance to NERC and Regional Entities that would minimize the number of occasions when the Commission would review Notices of Penalty on its own motion.

Based on a suggestion from Tony Usibelli (WA), WIRAB staff was directed to refine the existing links from the WIRAB web page to the NERC and WECC pages to target specific elements of the NERC and WECC web sites of interest to WIRAB.

#### NERC Developments

Doug Larson (WIRAB) reviewed recent developments at NERC, including NERC's recent inquiries on the impact of greenhouse gas emission limitations on reliability and a July 7 letter from the NERC CEO letter on a new approach to cyber security. In response to a question, Tom Schneider (WECC) said that WECC is reviewing the impact of NERC's new approach to cyber security.

#### FERC Developments

Doug Larson reviewed a recent FERC order on Violation Severity Levels and the Commission's reaffirmation of Order 890. He also highlighted one conclusion from a FERC staff briefing that electricity prices will increase. The briefing was made by the Commission's market monitoring staff. This same conclusion was conveyed by western utility CEOs at the Western Governors' Association's annual meeting on June 29-July 1.

#### WIRAB Developments

Doug Larson reported that on June 3 WIRAB sent advice to NERC supporting WECC's approach to evaluating the impact of 15% renewable generation in the Western Interconnection as part of the NERC Long Term Reliability Assessment. He also noted a resolution adopted by Western Governors on June 29 directing WIRAB to:

- To continue to report on grid issues that require the Governors' direct involvement; and
- Provide advice to FERC, NERC and WECC on grid changes needed to accommodate the deployment of large amounts of renewable generation.

Larson reported that the WIRAB-approved 2009 budget will be sent to NERC next week. He suggested that WIRAB conduct a webinar on the compliance and

enforcement experience once a minimum number of alleged violations have worked their way to FERC and become public.

Next WIRAB Meeting

The next WIRAB conference call meeting will be held on August 25<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. PDT/Arizona time / 11:00 a.m. MDT / noon CDT.