

Comments of the Northwest and Inter-Mountain Power Producers Coalition in response to materials presented at the NITS Access to Transmission Capacity Initial Alternatives Meeting on March 7, 2025.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments.

BPA has announced that it is unable to process the vast majority of long-term transmission service requests from customers. This inability applies to both Point to Point Transmission service requests and Network Transmission service requests. BPA has indicated it intends to work with its customers to develop a long-term solution that may substantially reform its existing transmission planning processes. NIPPC has previously provided separate comments to BPA recognizing the needs for long term reforms but also encouraging BPA to develop an interim process that will allow it to continue processing transmission service requests. BPA, however, seems to be limiting the exploration of interim solutions to customers who take Network service from BPA. Many of NIPPC's members have raised significant concerns with the interim solutions that BPA has proposed for its Network Transmission service customers. NIPPC also suggests that as BPA explores interim options for its Network Transmission Customers, it must do the same for its Point to Point customers.

BPA's Network service customers are not the only customers with concerns about the impact of BPA's decision to suspend processing of transmission service requests. BPA's Point to Point customers also have current needs that will be in limbo pending the outcome of the Transmission Planning Reform project. NIPPC is concerned that the proposed interim solutions will negatively impact both existing contracts for Point to Point transmission service as well as Point to Point requests that are in BPA's queue but have been suspended pending BPA's transmission planning reform process.

NIPPC's primary concern is to ensure that any interim solution developed for BPA's Network customers is consistent with FERC's open access principles – most importantly that all customers regardless of the type of service they take have non-discriminatory access to transmission service on BPA's system and that BPA continues to process all customer requests in queue order. Accordingly, we are concerned that a stakeholder process that focuses only on interim solutions for BPA's Network customers may discriminate against Point to Point customers, especially if the interim solution negatively impacts Point to Point service requests that entered the queue prior to a Network transmission service request that benefits from the interim process. NIPPC's overarching position is that BPA must adhere to the terms of its Open Access Transmission Tariff that ensures customers have non-discriminatory access to the BPA grid regardless of whether the customer is a power customer of BPA. Any interim solution for Network service customers must not discriminate against Point to Point customers.

NIPPC is particularly concerned with BPA's proposal to limit rollover rights on new Point to Point service requests. NIPPC notes that BPA is currently not processing transmission service requests pending development of its transmission service planning reform process. While transmission providers have long had the ability to reserve transmission capacity to meet forecasted load growth for their Network Transmission service customers, NIPPC is concerned that the proposal represents a change from BPA's current practice. NIPPC is concerned that any change from BPA's existing practices in limiting rollover rights will negatively impact customer's pending requests for service especially for transmission service requests associated with projects that have suffered years-long delays in BPA's interconnection or transmission service queues. Moreover, as BPA explained at the workshop, this option is expected to provide little to no near-term transmission capacity to alleviate the Network Transmission service constraints. As this proposed alternative appears to offer little value to BPA's Network Transmission service customers and faces significant opposition from Point to Point customers, NIPPC encourages BPA to abandon further consideration of this option and to prioritize alternatives that are reasonable and consistent with BPA's current OATT and transmission reservation processes.

NIPPC is also concerned with the proposal to offer long-term Network Transmission service to its power customers without requiring a commercial study. NIPPC recognizes that BPA, as a transmission provider, has an obligation to expand its system to meet the forecasted load growth needs of its power customers. NIPPC, however, is concerned that the proposal would allow BPA to process new requests for Network Transmission service while BPA's processing of Point to Point transmission service requests remains suspended. This creates a risk that customer requests for new Network Transmission service (including Network service for load growth that was not included in planning forecasts) would be processed out of queue order and negatively impact earlier queued Point to Point service requests. Accordingly, NIPPC also encourages BPA to abandon further consideration of this option.

Finally, NIPPC is concerned with the proposal to add additional criteria to the Conditional Firm Reassessment product offerings that BPA has already sold to customers. NIPPC recognizes that in offering this product BPA retained the ability to periodically reevaluate the conditions to which the service is subject. Nevertheless, the OATT already gives BPA the ability to limit rollover rights when it needs transmission capacity for future load growth of Network Transmission service customers. In making offers of Conditional Firm Reassessment service, BPA could have – but did not – limit rollover rights for those contracts. BPA cannot now, after the execution of a transmission service agreement, limit the rollover rights associated with those Point to Point Transmission service contracts in order to serve future load growth of Network Transmission service customers. Instead, BPA's ability to further restrict an award of conditional firm service is limited to reassessing periodically the system conditions that allow BPA to curtail the service. BPA should not further limit the service contracts it has already executed for Conditional Firm service.

We encourage BPA staff to expand the scope of this process to explore interim transmission service options for all customers – not just Network customers. By considering the impacts and needs of all customers, BPA is less likely to develop a set of interim alternatives that inadvertently violate the non-discrimination principle of open access service. As BPA and its customers (including Point to Point customers) consider potential interim solutions to BPA's inability to process transmission requests, NIPPC will continue to monitor this process to ensure that BPA continues to respect queue priority and the non-discrimination principle of open access transmission service.