

**SEVEN-YEAR OUTLOOK:
AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ADEQUACY OF
GENERATION AND TRANSMISSION FACILITIES
ON THE NORTHERN MAINE
TRANSMISSION SYSTEM**

May 2024

INTRODUCTION

The Northern Maine Independent System Administrator (“NMISA”) was created in 1999 in response to the mandate of the legislature of the State of Maine that effective retail electric competition be available to all of Maine’s electricity consumers by March 1, 2000.¹ The NMISA’s size, scope, purpose and electricity market were designed to facilitate the development and implementation of retail electric competition and foster regional reliability efforts in the electrically isolated area of the state in portions of Aroostook, Washington and Penobscot Counties. Northern Maine is characterized by low population density and a very low electric demand in comparison with other electricity markets.

The dominant characteristics of the Northern Maine Market are its electrical isolation, large geographic size, small electric demand, and modest population. The electric system in Northern Maine is not directly interconnected electrically with the rest of New England, including any Maine or other domestic United States electric system. NMISA participants, therefore, are not participants in the New England Power Pool and are not subject to the control of ISO New England (“ISO-NE”). The region’s only access to the electric system that serves the remainder of Maine and the rest of New England is through the transmission facilities of New Brunswick Power Corporation (“NB Power”).² In October 2013, the New Brunswick System Operator (“NBSO”) functions were merged into and amalgamated with functions of NB Power. The New Brunswick Transmission and System Operator (“NBT&SO”) is the Balancing Authority and Reliability Coordinator (“RC”) for the Balancing Authority Area that includes the Northern Maine and Maritimes regions.

The NMISA region is made up of the north, central, and south regions. The north region, or Versant Power Maine Public District (“MPD”) region, central region, or Houlton Water Company (“HWC”) region, and south region, or Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative (“EMEC”) region, are interconnected solely through the transmission facilities of NB Power. The maximum peak demand for the NMISA region in 2023 was 164.7 MW for the combined regions, a 6.88% increase of the peak demand for 2022. The 2023 energy consumed was 836,972 MWh, a 1.71% decrease from 2022. There are approximately 90,000 residents and approximately 42,000 electricity consumers in Northern Maine.

The NMISA is a Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”) approved independent system administrator and regional transmission group that encompasses the transmission systems of all FERC-jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional utilities in Northern Maine. The NMISA operates as an independent, objective and non-discriminatory administrator of transmission access, transmission information access, and related functions, and monitors and operates the electricity markets in Northern Maine for energy, ancillary services, and other services. The NMISA is governed by a seven member stakeholder Board of Directors comprising representatives of MPD and EMEC, municipal utilities HWC and Van Buren Light & Power District (“VBL&P”), large customers, generators, Competitive Electricity Providers (“CEPs”),³ and the Maine Public Advocate as representative of all other retail electric consumers.

¹ P.L. 1997 ch. 316, 35-A M.R.S.A. §§ 3201, *et seq.*

² The NB Power transmission system connects to two 345 kV transmission lines, one of which is owned and operated by Maine Electric Power Company (“MEPCO”). MEPCO is jointly owned by Central Maine Power Company and Versant Power.

³ A CEP is any marketer, broker, aggregator or other entity that is legally entitled in the State of Maine to sell, and that is selling or that will sell, electric energy, capacity or Ancillary Services to the public at retail in the Northern Maine Market. A CEP includes only competitive electricity providers as they are defined under 35-A M.R.S.A. § 3201.5.

A tariff and the Northern Maine Market Rules (“NMMRs”) govern the NMISA. NMMR 9, System Planning, sets forth provisions relating to the responsibilities of the NMISA, Transmission Owners (“TOs”), Demand-Side Management (“DSM”) program operators/providers, and Generators in relation to the adequacy and reliability of the Northern Maine Transmission System (“NMTS”). NMMR 9.2 -- Long-Term System Planning-- states that the NMISA will prepare a Base Case for the planned development of the NMTS for the following seven years, beginning April 1 of each year. The Base Case comprises four sections: Load Forecast, Generation Resources, Resource Adequacy, and Transmission Planning.

LOAD FORECAST

The load forecast for the region includes the combined loads of MPD, HWC, EMEC, and VBL&P. The average annual load growth for energy (MWh) from 2001 to 2023 was 0.28%. The peak demand (MW) annual load growth for same period was 1.16%. Both exclude the Perth Andover load in New Brunswick that is fed from the NMTS. Perth Andover was part of the NMISA system until January 1, 2005, when the NBSO assumed responsibility for that load.

The forecast used in the Base Case includes an annual load growth of 0.5%, resulting in 2024 projected energy load of 841,546 MWh. The remainder of the period was simply escalated by 0.5% per year. The peak load for each year was calculated using the same growth factor for energy.

Table 1 reflects the seven-year load forecast.

Table 1 NMISA 7-Year Load Forecast		
Year	MWh	Peak
2024	841,546	165.5
2025	845,754	166.4
2026	849,983	167.2
2027	854,232	168.0
2028	858,504	168.9
2029	862,796	169.7
2030	867,110	170.6

GENERATION RESOURCES

A. CURRENT RESOURCES

Table 2 (below) lists the generation resources located on the NMTS. In the MPD region the generation consists of wind, solar, and hydropower facilities.

In the EMEC region there is 20 MW of Black Liquor/Biomass/NG capacity available from Woodland Pulp, a local paper mill.

Table 2 NMISA Generation Resources			
Plant	Capacity (MW)	Type	Status
Tinker Station			
Hydro #1	4.0	Hydro	Existing
Hydro #2	1.8	Hydro	Existing
Hydro #3	1.8	Hydro	Mothballed
Hydro #4	4.0	Hydro	Existing
Hydro #5	23.0	Hydro	Existing
Caribou Station			
Hydro #1	0.5	Hydro	Mothballed
Hydro #2	0.5	Hydro	Mothballed
Sco Pan Hydro	1.4	Hydro	Existing
Other Resources			
Evergreen Wind	42.0	Wind	Existing
Woodland Pulp	20.0	BLQ, Biomass, NG	Existing
Distributed Generation*	46.4	Solar, Hydro	Existing

* See Exhibit 1

B. RETIREMENTS

In September of 2017 ReEnergy notified the NMISA that it intended to mothball the two biomass plants. In November of 2018 the Fort Fairfield facility ceased operation and was retired. The Ashland facility ceased operation in March of 2019 and the facility was retired in October of 2019, both facilities have been dismantled and all equipment has been removed from the site. Both units have been removed from all NMISA planning criteria.

In July of 2019 Merlin One notified the NMISA that it intended to retire the Caribou Steam Station and Caribou Diesel Station effective August 1, 2019. Both units have been removed from all NMISA planning criteria.

C. PROPOSED RESOURCE ADDITIONS

There are no projects under study through MPD’s Large Generator Interconnection Procedure. For more information see the following link: <https://www.versantpower.com/oasis/> .

As a result of recent changes in Maine state law related to solar energy projects and Distributed Energy Resources (“DER”), there are several projects requesting interconnection to the MPD distribution system. At the time of this report, there are approximately 125 MW in the MPD queue, 104 MW with fully executed Interconnection Agreements. NMISA is working with developers, the Maine Public Utilities Commission (“MPUC”), MPD, and NB Power to ensure NMISA Reliability Standards are maintained as new projects are added, and to ensure all project developers (or their designee) operate in accordance with the NMMRs. Follow the links below for more information:

MPUC Chapter 311, Chapter 312, and Chapter 313

<https://www.maine.gov/mpuc/legislative/laws-rules>

Versant Power Distribution Interconnection Queue

https://www.versantpower.com/media/75817/Interconnection_request_queue-MPD.pdf

In the summer of 2021 Versant Power, in coordination with the NMISA, commissioned a System Impact Study (“Study”) under the Versant Power Open Access Transmission Tariff for Maine Public District Attachment S – Standard Small Generator Interconnection Procedures. The Study tested the steady state, dynamic, and short circuit system performance of a 113 MW DER generation cluster. This cluster represented 37 DER facilities that interconnect into Versant’s distribution and sub-transmission systems in the MPD service territory. The objective of the study was to demonstrate that these projects will not have a significant adverse effect upon the reliability or operating characteristics to the bulk power transmission facilities of the Versant Power transmission system.

Steady State

Steady State Voltage and Thermal Analysis

Steady State N-0 and N-1 contingency analysis was performed at the light, minimum, and winter peak load levels. No violations of thermal or voltage reliability criteria were observed in this analysis. Therefore, the steady state voltage and thermal analyses showed no adverse impact with the addition of the Project.

Stability

Design Contingencies

Stability studies were conducted to assess the Project’s impact on stability performance of design contingencies in the vicinity of the Project and to identify violations stability performance criteria. Normal contingencies (NCs) were tested for this assessment. All faults simulated demonstrated that the Project does not introduce adverse impact.

Short Circuit

Fault Duty

The results of the circuit breaker duty study did not identify any circuit breakers with interrupting or momentary ratings in excess of 90% of their ratings.

Conclusion

The Project does not result in significant adverse impact on the reliability, stability or operating characteristics of the Transmission Owner’s transmission facilities or the transmission facilities of another Transmission Owner.

Versant Power, in coordination with the NMISA, commissioned a second System Impact Study (“Study”) under the Versant Power Open Access Transmission Tariff for Maine Public District Attachment S – Standard Small Generator Interconnection Procedures. The Study tested the steady state, dynamic, and short circuit system performance of a 32.67 MW DER generation cluster. This cluster represented 24 DER facilities that interconnect into Versant’s distribution and sub-transmission systems in the MPD service territory. The objective of the study was to demonstrate that these projects will not have a significant adverse effect upon the reliability or operating characteristics to the bulk power transmission facilities of the Versant Power or the New Brunswick transmission system.

Steady State

Steady State Voltage and Thermal Analysis

Steady State N-0 and N-1 contingency analysis was performed at the light and summer peak load levels. No violations of thermal or voltage reliability criteria were observed in this analysis. Therefore, the steady state voltage and thermal analyses showed no adverse impact with the addition of the Project. Although there was no significant adverse impact observed in this study, the total amount of DER has resulted in the main portion of the MPD system to approach a thermal export constraint.

Stability

Design Contingencies

Stability studies were conducted to assess the Project’s impact on stability performance of design contingencies in the vicinity of the Project and to identify violations stability performance criteria. Normal contingencies (NCs) were tested for this assessment. All faults simulated demonstrated that the Project does not introduce adverse impact.

Short Circuit

Fault Duty

The results of the short circuit studies that were conducted to assess the impact of the Project on fault current levels and breaker duties in the area demonstrated that there were no circuit breakers with interrupting or momentary duties in excess of 90% of their ratings.

Conclusion

The Project does not result in significant adverse impact on the reliability, stability or operating characteristics of the Transmission Owner’s transmission facilities or the transmission facilities of another Transmission Owner.

RESOURCE ADEQUACY

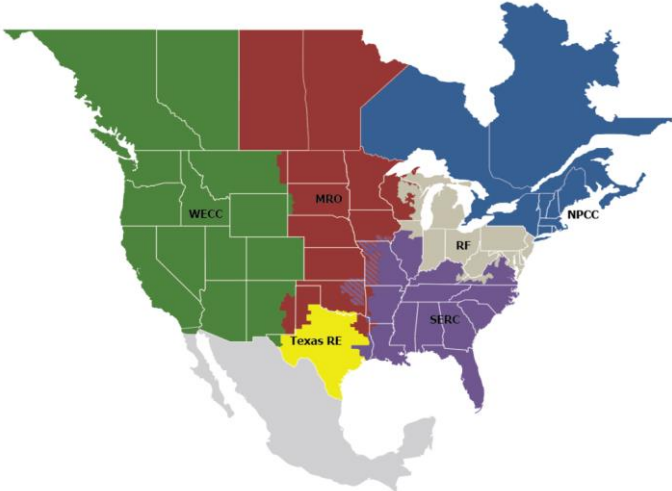
The purpose of the Base Case is to provide information to Market Participants and potential Market Participants of any forecasted long-term deficiency. The calculation by which the NMISA ensures resource adequacy is based upon the Northeast Power Coordinating Council’s (“NPCC’s”) Document C-13, “18-month Load and Capacity Assessment.” The C-13 process determines Gross Margin and Net Margins weekly for the 18-month period. The analysis is conducted twice a year, in the spring and fall, for the coming capability periods. Essentially, the analysis compares the load forecast to net resources plus operating reserve. Net resources are the installed capacity adjusted for firm sales, demand response, forced and unplanned outages, and unit deratings. Weekly, the information from the C-13 for the coming week is updated with current information and provided to the NBT&SO, which is the RC for the Balancing Authority Area, in preparation for the NPCC-wide conference call. The C-13 is published in the Documents section of the NMISA web site. The load forecast in this document may differ from the C-13 due to timing differences and the different planning horizons.

The NMISA is part of NPCC’s New Brunswick Balancing Authority Area, with NBT&SO acting as the Balancing Authority as well as the RC. NMISA’s Operating Reserve requirement


is its proportionate share of the Maritimes Area Operating Reserve requirement. The NBT&SO calculates the Operating Reserve requirement for the region by maintaining adequate Operating Reserve capacity to cover 100% of the single largest contingency plus 50% of the second largest contingency. The NMISA’s responsibility is based upon its monthly coincident peak share of the total Maritimes Area load. The average annual Operating Reserve responsibility is approximately 25 MW.

For the Base Case, a 20% planning reserve criterion was used. The difference between planning reserve and Operating Reserve is that the planning reserve process projects reserve requirements over a long-term horizon while the Operating Reserve process plans for actual requirements in the near term to operate the system. The NBT&SO also determines the planning reserve. The amount is based upon NPCC generation reliability criterion that a loss of load expectation shall be, on average, no more than 0.1 days per year. NMISA also participates in the NBT&SO *Maritimes Area Comprehensive Review of Resource Adequacy*. As with prior studies, a 20% planning reserve margin was used. Table 3 reflects the Maritimes Area Load and Resource Review from 2024 to 2033.

NERC Regional Entities



**Table 3
NPCC-Maritimes Load and Resources Review**



NPCC-Maritimes
The Maritimes assessment area is a winter peaking NPCC sub-region with a single Reliability Coordinator and two BA areas (New Brunswick and Nova Scotia). It is comprised of the Canadian provinces of New Brunswick (NB), Nova Scotia (NS), and Prince Edward Island (PEI), and the northern portion of Maine (NM), which is radially connected to NB. The area covers 58,000 square miles with a total population of 2 million people. See [Elevated Risk Areas](#) for more details.

Demand, Resources, and Reserve Margins										
Quantity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033
Total Internal Demand	5,911	5,951	5,999	6,052	6,105	6,171	6,240	6,314	6,381	6,451
Demand Response	266	285	290	290	289	288	288	287	287	286
Net Internal Demand	5,644	5,665	5,709	5,763	5,816	5,883	5,953	6,027	6,095	6,165
Additions: Tier 1	34	34	52	52	52	52	52	52	52	52
Additions: Tier 2	10	36	93	276	451	960	1,083	1,103	1,253	1,253
Additions: Tier 3	0	32	105	125	495	515	535	555	575	590
Net Firm Capacity Transfers	55	23	-32	145	145	145	145	145	145	145
Existing-Certain and Net Firm Transfers	6,841	6,792	6,740	6,807	6,807	6,807	6,716	6,716	6,716	6,732
Anticipated Reserve Margin (%)	21.8%	20.5%	19.0%	19.0%	17.9%	16.6%	13.7%	12.3%	11.0%	10.0%
Prospective Reserve Margin (%)	17.6%	16.8%	16.3%	19.5%	18.9%	18.4%	17.5%	16.4%	17.6%	16.5%
Reference Margin Level (%)	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%	20.0%

Planning Reserve Margins

Existing and Tier 1 Resources

The NMISA Load and Resources Review attempts to determine if adequate resources will be available over the long run to meet the projected Total Internal Demand plus the 20% planning reserve. The Existing-Certain and Net Firm Transfers are the sum of the eligible capacity plus Net Firm Capacity Transfers. Table 4 reflects the NMISA’s Load and Resources Review from 2024 to 2030.

**Table 4
NMISA Load and Resources Review**

Demand, Resources, and Reserve Margins (MW)							
Quantity	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Total Internal Demand	165.5	166.4	167.2	168.0	168.9	169.7	170.6
Demand Response	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net Internal Demand	165.5	166.4	167.2	168.0	168.9	169.7	170.6
Additions: Tier 1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Additions: Tier 2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Additions: Tier 3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Net firm Capacity Transfers*	148	148	148	148	148	148	148
Existing-Certain and Net Firm Transfers	219	219	219	219	219	219	219
Anticipated Reserve Margin (%)	32.4%	31.8%	31.1%	30.5%	29.8%	29.2%	28.5%
Reference Reserve Margin (%)	20.0%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%	20%

*Includes 24MW for HWC interconnection to NBP

Historically, the peak has occurred during the winter capability period (November through March) between hours 1700 and 1800. Firm Transfer Capacity includes the MPD, HWC, and EMEC interfaces.

DEMAND SIDE MANAGEMENT

There are no major DSM projects on the NMTS. Most DSM projects are at the local level through the Efficiency Maine program that each utility supports. For more information, the website can be found at the following link: <http://www.energymaine.com>.

TRANSMISSION PLANNING

Transmission System

The NMTS consists of two independent transmission systems, MPD in Aroostook County and EMEC in portions of Washington County and Penobscot County. The two systems are interconnected only through the NB Power transmission system.

The MPD system is interconnected with New Brunswick via three transmission lines, a 100 MVA import rated interconnection from Flo's Inn to Beechwood, a 100 MVA import rated interconnection at Tinker Station, and a 56 MVA import rated interconnection from Iroquois to Madawaska. The rated Total Transfer Capability ("TTC") of the MPD system is 134 MW for both imports from and exports to New Brunswick. The TTC calculation for the MPD-New Brunswick interface assumes a single contingency loss of the Flo's Inn to Beechwood transmission line. See Exhibit 2 for more details regarding MPD's transmission system.

The EMEC transmission system consists of an approximately 40 mile radial 69 kV transmission line that originates at the Oak Bay, NB substation and terminates at Topsfield, ME substation. There are five load substations that are connected by this line, including Woodland Pulp, which is also a generator. The majority of the line is 266.8 ACSR Partridge conductor, and there is a five-mile section of 1/0 AAAC between Woodland and Princeton. The EMEC system has a TTC of 32 MW for both imports from and exports to New Brunswick in the winter.

Transmission Upgrades

A series of capitalized maintenance projects are planned by MPD. A summary of these projects can be found in MPD's annual MPUC Chapter 330 filing. The most recent version can be found at: <https://www.versantpower.com/oasis/>. The effect of such capitalized maintenance projects is expected to be reduction in transmission Operations and Maintenance ("O&M") expenses, reduction in the probability of outages along these segments, and extension of the useful lives of these facilities. These projects are not expected to increase the TTC of the system.

In 2017 ATG upgraded the Tinker Transformer to 100 MVA and rebuilt lines 6901 and 6904. Versant Power rebuilt Line 6901 on the US side. The TTC of the MPD and EMEC interfaces are reflected in Table 5⁴:

Table 5
Summary of TTC and TRM values for the MPD and EMEC Interfaces

	TTC (MW)	TRM (MW)
NBP to MPD	134	24
MPD to NBP	134	0
NBP to EMEC	32	11
EMEC to NBP	32	0

Potential Transmission Deficiencies

As with generation resources, the purpose of the Base Case is to provide information to Market Participants, including the TOs, and potential Market Participants of any forecasted transmission deficiencies to allow such Market Participants to bring forward proposals to address potential deficiencies. Pursuant to NMMR 9.3.2, NMISA is required to analyze whether any potential investments in the transmission system are necessary to maintain reliability in accordance with NMISA Reliability Standards (see NMMR 8), which include NPCC Reliability Standards, improve the performance of the Northern Maine Market, or reduce the cost of congestion constraints. Pursuant to NMMR 9.3.5, where the Base Case identifies that action is or will be required to alleviate an existing or emerging transmission constraint, the NMISA is directed to take the actions described in NMMR 9.4.1 when, in the NMISA’s independent judgment, no adequate proposal exists to address the problem. Pursuant to NMMR 9.3.7, a transmission constraint is considered “emerging” if the NMISA identifies it to be likely to occur within one to five years, and it is considered “potential” if the NMISA identifies it to be likely to occur within six to seven years. NMISA does not identify any emerging or potential constraints for the planning period.

The NMISA is not aware of any planned deactivation, disconnection or retirement of any existing transmission facilities. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of requests by distributed generators to interconnect to the MPD distribution system which require studies to be completed to determine reliability impacts of such interconnections on the distribution system as well as the transmission system. The transmission assessment will be done as a cluster study. Cluster studies involves conducting a transmission planning study, to identify the transmission infrastructure and associated system upgrades necessary to enable the interconnection of proposed resources in the interconnection queue.

⁴ From MOD-008-1 Total Transfer Capability Report MPS Interface Version 022 and Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative Interface Version 014 (Confidential Report)

Conclusion

Below is an excerpt from the NERC Long Term Reliability Assessment Report dated December 2023, NPCC-Maritimes Assessment section:

Reliability Issues

The Maritimes area has a diversified mix of capacity resources fueled by oil, coal, hydro, nuclear, natural gas, wind (de-rated), dual fuel oil/gas, tie benefits, and biomass with no one type feeding more than about 27% of the total capacity in the area. The Maritimes area does not anticipate fuel disruptions that pose significant challenges for resources during this assessment period.

The NMISA finds that there are no emerging or potential transmission constraints.

SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Load Forecast

The load forecast for Northern Maine projects an average growth rate of 0.5% per year over the seven-year planning period covered in the Base Case for both energy and demand. The anticipated peak hourly demand for Northern Maine is 170.6 MW in 2030. 2030 is the final year covered in the Base Case.

Generation Resources

NMISA projects that based upon committed generation resources, the MPD region will rely on the MPD/NB interface through the planning period to account for any deficiencies.

Transmission Planning

Routine annual capital projects that are currently projected for the planning period consist of a series of capitalized maintenance projects that should generally increase system reliability and decrease transmission O&M expenses.

EXHIBIT 1

Net Energy Billing - Distributed Generation Active Operational > 500 kW						
<u>District</u>	<u>Initial Go-Live Date</u>	<u>AC Size (kW)</u>	<u>Fuel Type</u>	<u>Credit Type</u>	<u>Total Contract Accounts</u>	<u>Location</u>
MPD	05/06/19	650	Solar	kWh	9	Caribou
MPD	11/08/21	4,875	Solar	Tariff	57	Caribou
MPD	03/30/23	4,100	Solar	Tariff	1	Limestone
MPD	06/01/23	4,000	Solar	Tariff	1	Fort Kent
MPD	07/13/23	4,999	Solar	Tariff	1	Fort Kent
MPD	08/11/23	4,100	Solar	Tariff	1	Caribou
MPD	08/25/23	4,988	Solar	Tariff	131	Fort Fairfield
MPD	02/01/24	2,500	Solar	kWh	624	Limestone
MPD	02/12/24	3,250	Solar	Tariff	98	Easton
MPD	02/28/24	2,500	Solar	kWh	283	Frenchville
MPD	04/03/24	4,980	Solar	Tariff	43	Monticello
MPD	04/22/24	1,400	Hydro	Tariff	3	Masardis
MPD		42,342				

EXHIBIT 2

Summary of MPD Transmission Lines

MPD has 376.91 circuit miles and pole miles of transmission lines. It serves an area of approximately 3,600 square miles and 36,000 retail customers through transmission and distribution level systems. A breakdown of transmission mileage is as follows:

<u>Voltage</u>	<u>Circuit Miles</u>	<u>Pole Miles</u>
34,500	7.97	7.97
44,000	46.43	46.43
69,000	310.62	310.62
138,000	11.89	11.89

The main trunk portion of Line 3470 has been classified as transmission by FERC. Most of this line mileage is for subtransmission lines, i.e. it serves the 28 MPD distribution substations. Two lines, 6904 and 3855, are true transmission lines that do not serve any distribution stations.