

# **REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE**

**Environmental Assessments  
Prepared between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022  
by the**

**PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF WISCONSIN**

**As provided for by Wis. Stat. § 1.11(2)(j)**

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## **Background**

Wisconsin Stat. § 1.11(2)(j) requires agencies to submit annual reports to the Legislature regarding environmental assessments (EA) and environmental impact statements (EIS). The statute requires that all agencies of the state shall:

**Annually, no later than September 15, submit a report to the chief clerk of each house of the legislature for distribution under s. 13.172(2), including the number of proposed actions for which the agency conducted an assessment of whether an impact statement was required under par. (c) and the number of impact statements prepared under par. (c).**

This report covers activities by the Public Service Commission of Wisconsin (Commission) between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022.

## **Environmental Assessments**

Commission staff prepared an EA for nine proposed actions to determine whether an EIS was necessary under the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act (WEPA), Wis. Stat. § 1.11, one of which was a supplemental EA to a previously prepared one. These environmental documents were prepared cooperatively with staff of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Office of Energy, as required under Wis. Stat. § 196.025(2m)(b). For these actions, it was determined that preparation of an EIS was not warranted.

The Village of Somers applied for a project to construct a water transfer station and phase 1 water mains, to transfer water west of the subcontinental divide. The purpose of the project was to provide safe, clean water to customer properties west of the subcontinental divide and support future development along the pipeline in the Village of Somers.

One merchant plant developer applied for and was granted approval to construct a new 300 megawatt (MW) solar electric generating facility, coupled with a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS). The project is called the Koshkonong Solar Energy Center and would be located just west of the Village of Cambridge in Dane County.

A project approved in 2021 by the Commission, Paris Solar, a 200 MW facility to be located in Kenosha County, applied to re-open the docket in a limited fashion, for the increase in size of the proposed battery energy storage system (BESS) at that location. This required the preparation of a supplemental EA to the original EA, to address additional impacts from the project related to the increased size of the BESS.

Wisconsin Power & Light Company (WP&L) filed and received approval for the acquisition, construction, installation, and operation of six solar electric generation facilities. This was a similar application, but with different sites, to what WP&L filed for in 2020-2021. Five of the generation facilities were under 100 MW: a development in Rock County of 65 MW, a development in Green County of 50 MW, a development of 50 MW in Grant County, a development of 99 MW in Waushara County, and a development of 50 MW in Dodge County. The one other project WP&L was approved to acquire and construct is called Springfield Solar, a 100 MW project in Dodge County that the Commission approved in 2020-2021 as a merchant development.

American Transmission Company (ATC) applied for and was granted approval for two construction projects that required preparation of an EA. Both were new transmission line construction project applications. One was a project to construct a new 138kV transmission line from the Hooterville substation to the Mount Horeb substation to interconnect a new WP&L substation near the Village of Barneveld to a new Mount Horeb utility substation near the Village of Mount Horeb, located in Iowa and Dane Counties. The other ATC transmission line project was an application to construct a new 138 kV transmission line from the Howards Grove substation to the Erdman substation, located in Sheboygan County.

Wisconsin Electric Power Company and Wisconsin Public Service Corporation jointly filed for approval to construct a reciprocating internal combustion engine (RICE) electric generation project in the Villages of Rothschild and Kronenwetter in Marathon County. The project would

have a proposed generation capacity of 128 net MW. It would consist of seven individual RICE units at the existing Weston generating station. The stated need is to aid in the co-applicants' generation reshaping plan, by adding capacity, baseload, and peaking generation as several older, less efficient units are retired in the coming years.

Northern States Power Company-Wisconsin (NSPW) filed for a project to relocate, replace, and rebuild several existing transmission lines, for the purpose of relocating outside of tribal lands in Ashland and Iron Counties, and other reliability factors. The voltages range from 69 kV to 161 kV. The primary new routes would run mostly along existing corridors, such as highways and existing transmission lines.

Great Lakes Utilities filed an application to construct a project consisting of four RICE units that would be located at the existing Custer Energy Center electric generation site in the City of Manitowoc. Each RICE unit would have had a nominal capacity of 11.3 MW for a total electric generation capacity addition of approximately 45 MW. The stated need primarily was to account for a generation shortfall the utility expected in the future, along with the added benefit of allowing for the increased penetration of intermittent renewable sources of wind and solar currently on the market. The application was ultimately withdrawn and no action was taken by the Commission.

### **Ongoing Activities**

Commission staff is currently reviewing several utility-scale solar developments proposed for various locations throughout Wisconsin. The first of these kinds of projects were processed and approved over the course of the last four years and continue to be prevalent in the Commission's application queue. Commission staff is continually learning about the impacts and potential impacts associated with these facilities, and the high level of public interest. There are currently four of these projects in process, proposed by merchant developers, as Certificates of Public Convenience and Necessity (CPCN) applications. Commission staff prepared an EA for one project and is in the process of preparing an EA for three others.

Commission staff is preparing one EA for an ATC substation expansion project before the Commission. It is ATC's Granville substation located in the City of Milwaukee. The stated project need is to replace obsolete and/or poorly performing 138 kV and 345 kV assets to ensure long-term system reliability. Reconfiguring the 345 kV bus to a ring bus design will bring the substation up to current industry standards and ATC design guidelines.

Manitowoc Public Utilities currently has an application before the Commission for authority to construct a 13.2 kV distribution express line and a 4 MW Emergency Stationary RICE standby generator resiliency project in the City of Manitowoc. Commission staff is preparing an EA for this generating unit. The stated purpose of the project is to provide emergency power and emergency black start power to ensure power in the absence of natural gas availability and assist with asset protection during the longer startup period for the existing power generation combustion turbine in Manitowoc.

A supplemental EA is being prepared for the Apple River Solar project in Polk County. The project was approved earlier this year without a BESS. Since approval, the applicants have asked the Commission for a limited re-opener to the docket for the purpose of incorporation and construction of a proposed 100 MW BESS addition to the project. A supplemental EA is being prepared in light of the proposed BESS addition.

During the report year, no impact statements were required or prepared under Wis. Stat. § 13.172(2)(c).

## Environmental Assessments Completed July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022

5-CE-153	Wisconsin Public Service Corporation and Wisconsin Electric Power Company project to construct the Weston Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine electric generation project in the Villages of Rothschild and Kronenwetter, Marathon County.	10/22/2021
137-CE-194	American Transmission Company LLC project to construct a new 138 kV Transmission Line from the Hooterville Substation to the Mount Horeb Substation to interconnect a new Wisconsin Power and Light Company Substation near the Village of Barneveld, and a new Mount Horeb Utility Substation near the Village of Mount Horeb located in Iowa and Dane Counties	9/28/2021
137-CE-195	American Transmission Company LLC project to construct a new 138 kV Transmission Line from the Howards Grove Substation to the Erdman Substation located in Sheboygan County	12/21/2021
2345-CE-100	Application of Great Lakes Utilities to construct a 45MW Reciprocating Internal Combustion Engine plant generation facility To be located at the Manitowoc Public Utilities existing Custer Energy Center in the City of Manitowoc, Manitowoc County, Wisconsin	11/15/2021
4220-CE-183	Northern States Power Company–Wisconsin project to construct the Ashland to Ironwood Transmission Line relocation project, to be located in Ashland and Iron Counties	11/19/2021
5545-CW-101	Village of Somers project to construct a water transfer station and phase I water mains west of the Subcontinental Divide in the Village of Somers, Kenosha County, Wisconsin	7/6/2021
6680-CE-183	Wisconsin Power and Light Company application for acquisition, construction, installation, and operation of its second set of six utility-scale solar electric generation facilities in Wisconsin	12/9/2021
9801-CE-100	Limited re-opening of application of Paris Solar Farm, LLC, to construct a Solar Electric Generation Facility and Battery Energy Storage System in the Town of Paris, Kenosha County, Wisconsin, For the purposes of increasing the size of the Battery Energy Storage System to 150MW – Supplemental EA	11/4/2021
9811-CE-100	Application of Koshkonong Solar Energy Center LLC to construct a solar electric generation facility and Battery Energy Storage System in the Towns of Christiana and Deerfield, Dane County, Wisconsin	11/11/2021