

Media Release

Weather, Forecast, Fuel Issues Overlay Winter Outlook

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ATLANTA — Anticipated resources for the upcoming winter season meet or exceed recommended levels in all assessment areas of North America, NERC finds in its [2019–2020 Winter Reliability Assessment](#). However, potential reliability risks involving extreme and prolonged cold weather, generation and demand forecasting, and fuel assurance in the Northeast and Midwest continue to be important issues facing bulk-power system reliability.

NERC undertakes the winter assessment each year in coordination with Regional Entities. The assessment provides an evaluation of generation resource and transmission system adequacy for meeting projected winter peak demands, and to monitor and report on potential reliability issues of interest across North America.

This year's assessment highlights findings and recommendations related to:

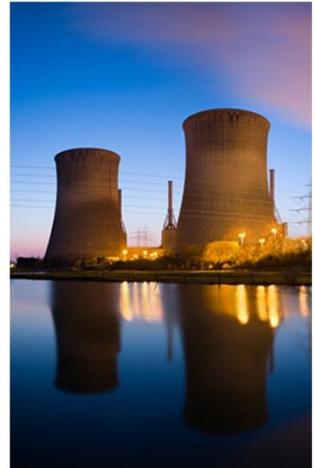
- Adequate supply of resources for meeting winter peak demand.
- Extreme weather poses greatest risk to generation availability during the winter season.
- Changing resource mix requires improved forecasting tools.
- Fuel and energy assurance remains a reliability concern in the Northeast and Midwest.
- Higher natural gas storage inventories help reduce fuel supply risks for the upcoming winter season.

The most significant winter reliability risk, the assessment finds, is the stress on bulk power system resources that can accompany extreme winter weather in many areas. Potential natural gas delivery constraints, wind generation forecasting error, and higher-than-expected generator outages in frigid temperatures can challenge grid operators to meet peak electrical demand.

NERC's assessment includes analysis of operational risk during extreme conditions

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to gain insights into the effects that energy-limited resources, generator outages, and high electricity demand can have on area reliability in those conditions. Area-specific steps for mitigation include market mechanisms to secure higher levels of fuel assurance through the procurement of alternative fuel supplies, contracting for firm pipeline transportation, and operator coordinating with generators to improve forecast models.

While limits on the availability of natural gas can occur, higher natural gas injections recently took place at key storage sites in North America. The injections at Aliso Canyon in southern California and other storage facilities resulted in pre-season natural gas inventories that are at or near five-year highs.

Recent improvements in extreme weather planning for winter among reliability coordinators include clarified communications, operating expectations and training. In addition, NERC and industry have initiated an extreme cold weather Reliability Standards development project.

NERC's independent assessments focus on improving bulk power system performance through the identification of reliability risks and advice to system planners, operators and policymakers.

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Electricity is a key component of the fabric of modern society and the Electric Reliability Organization Enterprise serves to strengthen that fabric. The vision for the ERO Enterprise, which is comprised of NERC and the six Regional Entities, is a highly reliable and secure North American bulk power system. Our mission is to assure the effective and efficient reduction of risks to the reliability and security of the grid.