

# Why Interregional Transmission Matters – And What’s Blocking It

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## Relevant For:

Federal, state, and local policymakers; congressional staff; state utilities; and regional grid operators

## Policy Question

Why is expanding interregional transmission important, and what’s blocking it?

## Key Evidence

MIT’s [BIG WIRES research](#) and [FERC’s February 2026 report](#) confirm that stronger interregional transmission improves reliability, lowers costs, and supports decarbonization—simultaneously. [MIT research](#) finds that better interregional connections to the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) could have significantly prevented blackouts Texans experienced during Winter Storm Uri. Expanded transmission also unlocks access to the cheapest available generation and delivers it to where demand actually is, lowering costs for consumers.

## Policy Implications:

Permitting reform (like [the SPEED act](#)), which would accelerate transmission projects, is necessary, but must be complemented by more efficient planning and community engagement to avoid stalled projects like the [Grain Belt Express](#).

## Policy Actions:

1. **Embed early stakeholder management into permitting reform** to avoid project opposition from involved communities and resulting delays.
2. **Pursue interregional transmission mandates** involving region-specific increase requirements while having a baseline minimum increase across regions.
3. **Plan proactively for cost allocation among affected generators** who are no longer competitive at lower electricity prices.

## What to Watch

Senate action on the SPEED Act, FERC action on interregional planning, rising grid stress from data center demand and extreme weather.