COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
COMMONWEALTH KEYSTONE BUILDING
400 NORTH STREET
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120

September 1, 2026

<u>Via email to needsstudy.comments@hq.doe.gov</u>
Catherine Jereza
Assistant Secretary
Office of Electricity
U.S. Department of Energy

Re: Comments to Draft of the National Transmission Needs Study

Dear Assistant Secretary Jereza:

Thank you for your July 9, 2026 Letter and Draft of the National Transmission Needs Study for feedback from the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PA PUC). Please acknowledge this submission by return email and direct any questions regarding these comments to our principal point of contact: Elizabeth Barnes, Deputy Chief Counsel at ebarnes@pa.gov.

The PA PUC is very interested in the process of designating National Interest Electric Transmission Corridors (NIETC), as the PA PUC is an independent state agency with siting authority over all high voltage electric transmission lines of 100 kV or above within the territorial borders of Pennsylvania. The PA PUC is tasked with, among other things, rate and service quality regulation of investor-owned utilities, participation in Regional Transmission Organizations (RTOs), and siting of energy infrastructure. Determinations as to utility status as defined in Section 102 of the Pennsylvania Public Utility Code (Code), 66 Pa. C.S. § 102, and whether a transmission operator needs a certificate of public convenience under Section 1102(a) of the Code, 66 Pa. C.S. § 1102(a), to own and operate equipment and facilities in Pennsylvania to furnish electric transmission service are under the purview of the PA PUC. Additionally, transmission permitting in Pennsylvania is subject to the jurisdiction of the PA PUC through an efficient, effective, and robust process.[1]

[1] 66 Pa. C.S. § 1103(a). Chapter 57, Subsection G of Title 52 of the Pennsylvania Code, "Commission Review of Siting and Construction of Electric Transmission Lines". Specifically, Sections 57.71- 57.77 apply to the procedures governing the siting of high-voltage transmission lines.

Pennsylvania has a track record of determining need for additional transmission operators within Pennsylvania, conferring utility status and certificates of public convenience, considering siting applications, and permitting high-voltage electric transmission projects that are in the public interest.[2] The PA PUC's process is fair and efficient and has worked well for decades.

Respectfully, the nearly 95-page DRAFT National Transmission Needs Study (Needs Study) offers little support for corridors in Pennsylvania. The PA PUC is currently consulting with analysts, industry experts, other States, and PJM to tackle the resource adequacy issue in the highly diverse Mid-Atlantic region. We are keenly aware of anticipated load growth within Pennsylvania as well as other Mid-Atlantic States. We have hired an independent consultant to analyze resource adequacy in PJM and Pennsylvania so that we may best prepare for the future. Although Pennsylvania currently produces sufficient electricity to satisfy demand within the State and is a net-exporter of electricity, this may not be the case in the future if electricity demand continues at its current pace. We are also concerned that the ability of other States within PJM to export electricity outside their State may also be reduced due to increased electric demand within their State. Accordingly, the PA PUC questions whether the buildout of inter- and intra-regional transmission can cure the problem of scarcity of resources at a reasonable cost if every region is experiencing similar electric demand growth.

Reliability rather than parity of costs should be the focus of planning. Interregional support through interregional high voltage superhighways, i.e. 765 kV lines, do not necessarily support a more reliable grid as additional transmission lines merely spread existing generation resources thinner throughout the nation and does not necessarily encourage new generation or discourage the retirement of existing generation closer to the load pockets.

The Needs Study shows a 74% overlap in peak net load hours between NYISO and PJM East and a 72% overlap in peak net load hours between ISO NE and NYISO. While the PJM East hits peak net load 74% of the days NYISO hits its peak net load, this fact alone should not result in the establishment of a NIETC designation for a corridor between New York and Pennsylvania.[3] Of note, New York chose to place a one-year moratorium on data centers rather than accept certain forms of electric generation within its borders.[4] Pennsylvania, on the other hand, has been encouraging the permitting and siting of

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[2] *See American Transmission Systems, Inc. (ATSI),* PA PUC Docket No. A-2016-2566356, Order entered December 8, 2016*; Mid-Atlantic Transmission, LLC (MAIT)*, PA PUC Docket No. A-2015-2488903, Order entered August 24, 2016*; and Trans-Allegheny Interstate Line Company (TrailCo)* A-110172, Order entered December 12, 2008.
[3] Needs Study at pp. 54-55.
[4] State of New York Executive Order Establishing a Temporary Moratoreum on Data Centers, No. 62, issued July 14, 2026. https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2026-07/EO_62.pdf

generation. [5] There should be some recognition of the diversity of public policies between the States, some who need and seek abundant, lower priced energy for all their constituents, including industrial manufacturing and data centers, and States that seek to avoid or delay development of energy resources within their state.

Therefore, for these aforementioned reasons, no NIETC designation that impacts Pennsylvania is necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: September 1, 2026

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[5] On November 12, 2025, Pennsylvania's Governor Josh Shapiro signed into law a budget for fiscal year 2025-2026 (SB 160) and accompanying amendments to the Fiscal Code (HB 416) (collectively, the Budget Bill). The Budget Bill abrogates Pennsylvania's participation in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) and contains important permitting reforms intended to increase efficiency and transparency by building on the Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) Program.