



NEPPA Newsline update April 2021

CMEEC Member's Preferred Solution Adopted by ISO-NE for ECT Needs Assessment

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On April 20, 2020 CMEEC learned that the ISO-NE's Planning Advisory Committee(PAC) would recommend the preferred "Solution 2" proposed by CMEEC's Member, Groton Utilities (GU) to solve deficiencies identified in the 2019 ECT NEEDS Assessment, over Solution 1 which excluded local upgrades to GU. Solution 2 includes upgrading the 400-line serving GU from 69 kV to 115kV.

Subsequent PAC ratification implements a proposal first launched in 1973 and advocated by GU through the decade-delayed first ECT study process. ISO explained the selection: *"Since Solution Alternative 2 performed better in terms of system performance, future expandability, and service to load in the CMEEC territory, Solution Alternative 2 is selected as the preliminary preferred solution."* This consideration was possible because of the equivalence of the two proposals in cost (about \$235,000,000) and grid level reliability metrics; the added, but in ISO's view otherwise irrelevant, benefits to GU would not have been weighed without that equivalence.

One of the benefits of a project being recognized as meeting a grid level need is that all costs incurred by GU/CMEEC in implementation are capitalized and recovered through the ISO NE RNS provisions of OATT which include a rate of return and depreciation expense and O&M recovery mechanism. CMEEC/GU will pay its load ratio share of these costs which are in the order of one percent of the total and receive compensation for the remainder from RNS payments.

In the intervening year Eversource (ES) and GU/CMEEC entered an MOU to fulfill implementation of Solution 2. Engineering and permitting is well along and portions of the work are underway.

ES/GU collaboration includes related Asset Condition replacement of structures, insulators and introduction of communication wire (OPGW) on the 1410 and 1280 lines which also serve GU, also eligible for RNS participation. Once complete total costs of these projects for GU are expected to be over 10 Million dollars. GU feels that absent a major load growth intervention

the projects will secure adequate service for GU loads over the NEED analysis forecast period which ends in 2019. Work on all phases of Solution 2 is expected to be complete in 2023.