

Department of Energy Seeks Public Input on Implementation of \$760 Million Transmission Siting Grant Program

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January 23, 2023 | 2 minute read

On January 13, 2023, the Department of Energy (“DOE”) launched its Transmission Siting and Economic Development (“TSED”) Grants program, which will provide \$760 million in investment authorized by the Inflation Reduction Act (“IRA”) to support states and local communities in the siting and permitting of interstate and offshore electricity transmission lines. Comments are due by the end of February and as described below, the DOE will be hosting a webinar with further information on January 25, 2023. This new funding is in addition to previous transmission-related funding authorized by the 2021 Infrastructure Act, and it underscores the DOE’s recent efforts, driven by new legislation, to facilitate the development of new transmission across the United States.

Pursuant to the IRA, DOE is authorized to make grants to state and local siting authorities to carry out certain eligible activities intended to facilitate the siting and permitting of interstate onshore and offshore electricity transmission facilities. More specifically, a covered transmission project includes high-voltage interstate or offshore electricity transmission lines that will operate at a minimum of 275 kV (onshore) or 200 kV (offshore), and for which an entity has applied to or informed a siting authority of an intent to apply for regulatory approval.¹ Additionally, DOE is authorized to make grants to siting authorities or other state, local, or Tribal governmental entities, for economic development activities in communities that may be affected by the construction and operation of these covered transmission projects.²

On January 13, 2023, the DOE issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking input from the public on the types of eligible siting activities and economic development activities that could be supported by grants under the IRA. The RFI identifies several eligible siting activities including but not limited to: studies and analysis of the impacts of the covered transmission project; examination of alternative siting corridors; and participation by the siting authority in regulatory

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proceedings. DOE is also seeking information regarding economic development activities for affected communities and equity, energy, and environmental justice considerations.

DOE is particularly interested in understanding how the TSED Grants program can:

1. Identify, develop, and deploy resources and tools that improve the efficiency of siting and permitting proceedings, helping to reduce the time it takes to reach decisions on proposed electric transmission projects.
2. Increase community and stakeholder engagement in siting and permitting processes, create quality jobs and ensure workforce continuity, address local community needs and impacts, and reduce conflicts that can stall the development of needed electric transmission infrastructure.
3. Identify and prioritize economic development projects in communities that may be affected by the construction and operation of covered transmission projects, including disadvantaged, underserved, and frontline communities.
4. Identify opportunities, strategies, and approaches to advance environmental justice and equity in disadvantaged communities impacted by siting of transmission projects and to increase the resilience of power delivery.

Information provided through this process may be used by DOE for planning purposes and could impact future funding opportunity announcements, other solicitations, or technical assistance related to this grant program. As noted above, responses to the RFI must be submitted on or before February 28, 2023.³ The DOE is also hosting a Public Webinar at 1:00 p.m. EST on January 25, 2023, to provide additional information. Registration for the webinar is required: <https://www.energy.gov/gdo/events/transmission-siting-and-economic-development-grants-program-webinar>.

1. Inflation Reduction Act, Section 50152(e)(1).
2. Inflation Reduction Act, Section 50152.
3. Responses to this Request for Information should be sent to GDOIRASection50152@hq.doe.gov no later than 5pm EST on February 28, 2023, and include “RFI for Transmission Siting Grants” in the subject line of the email.