

## Progress! Xcel IRP Approval Includes Renewables, Transmission, Storage

Madelyn Smerillo, Communications Associate - Siting • Feb. 10, 2022



Since 2019, Clean Grid Alliance (CGA) has collaborated with NGO partners on modeling and advocacy work to negotiate the terms of Xcel Energy's 2020-2034 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP). CGA has been very active in this docket and is excited to share that the hard work has paid off, as the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission (PUC) approved the plan on February 8, 2022. This landmark decision means substantial progress toward CGA's clean energy, transmission, and storage goals, and advances the state's carbon reduction goals for the benefit of all Minnesotans.

The IRP retires the last of Xcel's coal plants, includes no new gas plants, and invests in 4650 MW of wind, solar and battery storage by 2032. Altogether, the plan lowers carbon emissions by 86% from 2005, a substantial step toward a cleaner and healthier Minnesota. This reduction adds to the [327 million metric tons](#) of carbon dioxide emissions already avoided by the inclusion of renewables on the U.S. grid. Notably, 81% of Xcel's electricity will be generated from carbon-free resources by 2032.

Included in the IRP are requirements for energy storage analysis, which promises to assist in meeting energy, capacity, and reliability needs. "CGA believes that storage will be an important resource to assist with reliability and can provide much-needed grid services that have historically been provided by traditional power plants," said Clean Grid Alliance Executive Director Beth Soholt. Though the sun doesn't shine 24 hours a day and the wind doesn't always blow, the sun is always shining and the wind is always blowing - somewhere in the MISO footprint. Renewable energy production ebbs and flows, but a robust transmission grid coupled with investments in energy storage ensures more reliability and resilience for using low-cost renewables.

Importantly, the IRP also includes plans for two new generation tie lines, bringing added capability to interconnect and deliver new renewables. With the MISO Multi-Value transmission line projects (MVPs) and CapX2020 transmission lines at maximum capacity, the new transmission lines and other measures in the IRP will "provide immense opportunities for renewable energy development in a heavily constrained MISO West," said Peder Mewis, Regional Policy Manager - West, at CGA. He added, "for quite some time, there have been significant transmission constraints in the southwest Minnesota region, which has effectively stopped wind and solar development in the Dakotas and Minnesota."

CGA's long-sounded [clarion call](#) has finally been (partly!!) answered, but quick action on permitting, siting and routing these lines and much more transmission capacity is still needed. CGA is grateful for our co-collaborator Clean Energy Organizations (CEOs) including: the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy, Fresh Energy, and the Union of Concerned Scientists. We are thankful to be able to work with the Minnesota Department of Commerce, LIUNA, Carpenters Union, 49er Operating Engineers, Xcel Energy, Citizens Utilities Board, Sierra Club, the Office of Attorney General, large industrials and others in this docket.