



STATE TRANSMISSION
AUTHORITY WORKSHOP
WHITE PAPER

An Introduction to Interior West Infrastructure Authorities
MAY 2026



TABLE OF CONTENTS

- TABLE OF CONTENTS..... 2**
- INTRODUCTION..... 3**
- COLORADO: At-A-Glance - CETA..... 4**
 - Mission and Purpose.....4
 - Governance..... 4
 - Policy Tools..... 5
 - Current Priorities..... 5
 - CETA Accomplishments..... 6
- NEW MEXICO: At-A-Glance - RETA..... 7**
 - Mission and Purpose..... 7
 - Governance.....8
 - Policy Tools.....8
 - Current Priorities..... 9
 - RETA Accomplishments..... 10
- WYOMING: At-A-Glance - WEA..... 11**
 - Mission and Purpose..... 11
 - Governance..... 11
 - Policy Tools..... 12
 - Current Priorities..... 12
 - WEA Accomplishments.....13
- ADDITIONAL STATE TRANSMISSION AUTHORITIES.....14**
- CONCLUSION..... 16**

INTRODUCTION

The need for new transmission lines and expanded transmission capacity across the U.S. is at a critical juncture. Unprecedented challenges including, generation interconnection, exponential load growth, and extreme weather events necessitate substantial investment in transmission infrastructure. In Western states, insufficient transmission capacity is impacting economic development, reliability, and consumer costs.

Several Western states have created infrastructure authorities to facilitate transmission and energy infrastructure development. State transmission authorities are special-purpose public entities that can leverage public financing, planning, and other tools to address transmission infrastructure bottlenecks. These novel entities are relative newcomers to the industry, and their impact on accelerating transmission development warrants closer examination.

This white paper explores the roles and functions of Western state infrastructure authorities in advancing transmission planning, coordination, financing, and development. It examines the purpose, structure, policy tools, priorities and accomplishments of authorities in Colorado, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Together, these profiles offer context on emerging state transmission authority models and the role such entities can play in accelerating transmission development.

PROJECT TEAM

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COLORADO

At-A-Glance

Colorado Electric Transmission Authority (CETA)

Year established: 2021

Staff: 1

Budget: \$500,000 annually

Funding source: Fixed utility fund

Enabling statute: [CO Rev Stat § 40-42-103](#)

In 2021, the Colorado legislature [passed SB21-72](#) establishing the [Colorado Electric Transmission Authority](#) (CETA) to address transmission constraints in the state. Colorado's grid is on the eastern edge of the Western Interconnection with limited transmission connection to neighboring states. Colorado created CETA to facilitate intrastate and interstate transmission development, expand access to market hubs, and support the state's clean energy goals.

Mission and Purpose

CETA's mission is *to expand electric transmission facilities in Colorado to increase grid reliability, aid in economic development, and enable Colorado to meet its clean energy goals* ([CETA website](#)). CETA's primary purpose is to partner with public or private entities on select transmission projects that have stalled due to financing, coordination, or other barriers. The legislature also granted CETA a transmission planning role to identify and prioritize in-state transmission corridors, new transmission lines, and needed upgrades to existing lines. Importantly, CETA does not supplant the role of utilities, developers or regional planners. Instead, it is required to coordinate with public and private entities and stakeholders.

Governance

CETA is an independent public authority that is authorized to plan, construct, develop, own and operate transmission facilities in the state. CETA is governed by a 10-member board that includes:

- Two members appointed by the Governor
- Director of the Colorado Energy Office
- Three members appointed by the Speaker of House of Representatives
- Three members appointed by the President of the Colorado Senate
- Director of the Public Utilities Commission (non-voting, ex officio member)

The CETA Board has the authority to enter into partnerships with public and private entities to develop transmission projects, issue revenue bonds, accept grants, loans

and other financing, and approve actions to acquire land easements, lease or sell property, transfer property and exercise eminent domain, if necessary.

Policy Tools

CETA is granted specific authorities and tools to address the financing, planning, and property acquisition barriers. These tools include the authority to:

- Issue and secure state tax-exempt revenue bonds
- Lend proceeds from revenue bond sales to fund projects
- Set and collect fees, and charges for use of its facilities
- Obtain transmission facilities by lease, construction, or purchase
- Use eminent domain to acquire property rights-of-way

CETA also has statutory requirements ([CO Rev Stat § 40-42-104](#)) to notify and receive input from the public on proposed projects. It must publish notice of a proposed project and allow for public comment, and must hold a public hearing if a member of the public challenges the project. The statute also allows utilities or developers to signal their intent to pursue a proposed project, in which case CETA must step aside. CETA is currently [developing its approach](#) to implementing these requirements.

While CETA does not streamline or approve permits or land-use applications, it acts as a central coordinator to assist with complex local, state, and federal permitting processes. CETA's [Community Engagement Principles](#) are one example of its coordinating role to enable beneficial transmission development. Adopted by CETA's Board in 2024, the principles help ensure a transparent and equitable process to improve outcomes for both host communities and transmission development.

Current Priorities

As a relatively new authority, CETA is in the early stages of developing organizational policies and a pipeline of projects. The Board is developing a project notification policy and other internal rules and procedures to guide project outreach, partnerships and development. Additionally, CETA is focused on increasing awareness of its purpose and goals within the state.

CETA Accomplishments

- [2024 CETA Transmission Capacity Expansion Study](#)
 - Identifies transmission upgrades, gaps in transmission infrastructure, and solutions to improve power flows in Colorado
- [Principles of Community Engagement](#)
 - Establishes expectations for how CETA and its partners engage with host communities, including information sharing, communication, community benefits, and accountability
- [Shortlist of Transmission Projects](#)
 - Identifies six high-priority projects based on prioritization criteria to pursue for partnerships
- [Revenue Bonding White Paper](#)
 - Examines CETA's bonding authority and suggests best-fit use cases

NEW MEXICO

At-A-Glance

New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority (RETA)

Year established: 2007

Staff: 7

FY27 Budget: \$3 million

Funding source: Revenue from lease payments and development fees

Transmission Projects completed: 4 complete; 5 in development

Enabling statute: [NM Stat § 62-16A-4](#)

In 2007, the New Mexico legislature established the [New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority](#) (RETA) to promote wind and solar resource development in the state. New Mexico's transmission grid was unchanged since the 1980s, and former Governor Bill Richardson and lawmakers recognized the need to build new transmission to develop valuable renewable resources and support economic development. RETA was established to help the state achieve this goal by moving energy from resource-rich areas across the state to population centers in Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Additionally, New Mexico is situated at the seam between the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) and the Western Interconnection and lawmakers intended that RETA facilitate transmission to connect New Mexico's extensive renewable resources to regional markets.

Mission and Purpose

The New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Authority's mission is to *boost New Mexico's economy by facilitating the planning, financing, development, and acquisition of high-voltage transmission lines and utility-scale energy storage projects to promote the expansion and use of carbon-free renewable energy in both local and regional markets and to enhance economic development in New Mexico* ([RETA website](#)).

To achieve this mission, legislation ([HB188](#)) charged RETA with identifying and establishing interstate transmission corridors, entering into agreements and partnerships to implement transmission projects, and financing eligible transmission and storage facilities. New Mexico statute ([NM Stat § 62-16A-2](#)) defines eligible facilities as those where at least 30 percent of the electricity transmitted or stored originates from renewable resources.

Governance

RETA was established as a public body, separate and apart from the state, to perform essential public functions. RETA's Board structure includes:

- Six voting members
 - Three members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate
 - One member appointed by the House of Representatives
 - One member appointed by the President Pro-Tem of the Senate
 - State Treasurer or designee
- Secretary of Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources serves as non-voting, ex-officio member

RETA's Board has decision-making authority to carry out the purposes of the New Mexico Renewable Energy Transmission Act ([NMSA 62-16A-1 et seq.](#)). The Board must approve projects that are owned, financed or operated by the Authority. Additionally, the Board must approve any project agreements beyond Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs). This includes Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs), Letters of Support, and project acquisition contracts.

Policy Tools

The New Mexico legislature specified important financing, planning, evaluation, and regulatory tools and incentives for RETA-partnered transmission and storage projects.

Financial tools include the authority to:

- Issue tax-exempt revenue bonds
- Enter into contracts to acquire and lease facilities
- Receive gifts, grants and other financial support from public and private entities
- Enable state tax incentives:
 - Deduction from New Mexico's gross receipts tax as long as RETA holds title ([NM Stat § 7-9-101 to 103](#)). This is particularly cost-effective since the state's gross receipts tax applies not only to goods, but also to labor and services.
 - Property tax exemption ([NM Stat § 7-36-4\(B\)\(1\)](#))

Regulatory tools include the authority to:

- Exempt certain projects from New Mexico Public Regulation Commission (PRC) jurisdiction ([NM Stat § 62-16A-4\(E\)](#))
 - Certain proposed transmission projects may require a location approval or right-of way width approval at the state commission to analyze route impacts; this is an adjudicated proceeding typically 6-9 months in length. ([NM Stat §62-9-3](#) & [3.2](#))

- With RETA's partnership, proposed projects are relieved of these requirements. Instead, before RETA can exercise eminent domain, the PRC must make a determination that the proposed project does not have a detrimental impact on the New Mexico grid. ([NM Stat § 62-16A-4\(B\)\(8\)](#)).
- Exercise eminent domain as a last resort ([NM Stat § 62-16A-4\(B\)\(8\)](#))
- Notify the public, state commission and utilities of a proposed project and hold a public hearing if a project is challenged

Current Priorities

RETA's priorities include:

- Supporting ongoing development projects
- Leading the effort on passing legislation to increase energy storage for consideration at the 2027 New Mexico Legislature
- Completing a New Mexico Transmission and Storage Study
 - The study will estimate the expected load growth in the next ten years and analyze the least expensive energy, transmission, and storage options to meet this growth
- Refining procedures to inform the public, utilities, and other stakeholders about potential projects

RETA Accomplishments

- [Western Spirit Transmission Line](#)
 - 800MW transfer capacity; 345kV AC; 155 miles
 - Co-developed with Pattern Energy
 - Sold to Public Service Company of New Mexico (PNM) through build-transfer agreement
 - Commercial operation in 2021
- [Sun Zia Transmission Line](#)
 - 3,000MW transfer capacity; 525kV DC; 550 miles
 - Footprint in NM and AZ
 - Co-developing with Pattern Energy
 - Commercial operation date in May 2026
- [Rio Sol Transmission Line](#)
 - 1,500MW transfer capacity; 500kV AC line; 550 miles
 - Runs parallel to Sun Zia
 - Co-developing with SouthWestern Power Group
 - Lease agreement signed in 2022
 - Expected in-service date in late 2028
- [Crossroads-Hobbs- Roadrunner Transmission Line](#)
 - 1,792MW transfer capacity; 345kV AC; 137 miles
 - Co-developing with NextEra
 - Lease agreement executed in 2024
 - Expected operational in April 2026
- [North Path Transmission Line](#)
 - 4,000MW transfer capacity; 525kV DC; 400 miles
 - Co-developing with Invenergy
 - Lease agreement executed in 2023
 - Expected operational in 2032
- For a complete list of RETA supported projects, see [RETA Projects Overview](#)
- When all projects reach commercial operation, RETA will have supported the development of 1,839 line miles in New Mexico with a total of 15,474MW of transmission capacity

WYOMING

At-A-Glance

Wyoming Energy Authority (WEA)

Year established: 2020

Staff: 8

Budget: \$2.6 million annually

Funding Source: General Fund; Energy Matching Funds; Energy Dominance Fund

Transmission Projects completed: 1

Enabling statute: [WY Stat § 37-5-503](#)

In 2020, the [Wyoming Energy Authority](#) (WEA) formed when the legislature merged the Wyoming Pipeline Authority, the Wyoming Infrastructure Authority, and the Wyoming Energy Office. WEA is intended to be a one-stop shop for energy, strategy, and business development related to energy production, including fossil fuels, renewables, nuclear, hydrogen, geothermal, and rare earth elements. WEA has a broad portfolio covering all aspects of energy development including research, resource extraction, energy generation, storage, pipelines, and transmission.

Mission and Purpose

The mission of the Wyoming Energy Authority is to *advocate for and facilitate Wyoming's energy economy* ([WEA website](#)). In part, WEA's purpose is to bolster Wyoming's energy economy through improvements in the state's electric and energy transmission infrastructure. Additionally, WEA was created to facilitate stakeholder engagement on market opportunities, energy infrastructure projects, and technology development that will increase the value of Wyoming's energy. WEA also focuses on maintaining Wyoming's role as a major net energy producer for in-state consumption and for out-of-state exports.

Governance

WEA is a quasi-governmental agency overseen by a board with seven voting members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The Board also includes five non-voting ex-officio members that help ensure coordination across Wyoming's energy and business development organizations. The Board has oversight authority that includes:

- Appoint the Executive Director of the Wyoming Energy Authority
- Manage [Energy Matching Funds](#), which are legislatively appropriated funds to the Wyoming Governor's Office to match private or federal funding for

research, demonstration, pilot projects, and any other projects related to Wyoming's energy needs

- Manage [Energy Dominance Fund](#) which are legislatively appropriated funds for projects that strengthen Wyoming's position as a national leader in energy production, infrastructure and innovation. The program will provide loans and grants for qualifying projects tied to Wyoming's energy industries and emerging energy opportunities.

Policy Tools

The Wyoming Energy Authority has statutory tools that allow it to implement [Wyoming's Energy Strategy](#). These tools include:

- Deploy \$155 million in Energy Matching Funds and large infrastructure funds
 - Broad list of eligible projects (traditional energy resources, transmission, storage)
- Exercise up to \$3 Billion in revenue bonding
- Administer federal funding for energy programs
- Assist with obtaining financing and funding for energy projects (grants, loans)

Current Priorities

WEA is evaluating their revenue bonding authority and considering whether to refresh this tool to support transmission infrastructure. This includes analyzing the mechanics, potential liabilities, and possible evaluation metrics of revenue bonding.

WEA's priority for planning includes completing the scope, scenarios, and regional market evaluation for the [Wyoming Transmission Study](#). Other priorities include advocacy in regional electricity markets and convening stakeholders and the public on specific topics such as large load policies and third party generation.

WEA Accomplishments

- [Hughes Transmission Project](#)
 - 230kV transmission project; 130 miles
 - Developed by Basin Electric Cooperative supported by Wyoming Infrastructure Authority (WIA) bond
 - Supports regional grid capacity
 - 2007 in-service date
- [2026 Wyoming Transmission Study Bill](#)
 - Passed by legislature; requires WEA to conduct a transmission study to evaluate current transmission system needs
- [Terra Power Natrium Nuclear Facility](#)
 - 345MW advanced nuclear facility
 - Phase 1 commenced construction in April 2026

ADDITIONAL STATE TRANSMISSION AUTHORITIES

Energy and transmission authorities also exist in Idaho and North Dakota, as well as the more recent addition in Washington. Each of these authorities fulfill specialized roles tailored to their respective state's requirements.

Formed via [statute](#) in 2005, the Idaho Energy Resources Authority (IERA) promotes the development and financing of electric facilities for the benefit of Idaho's load-serving utilities and their wholesale generation and transmission providers and to finance Independent Power Producer (IPP)-owned projects. The authority's mission is *"to expand the state's economy through improvements in Idaho's electric generation and transmission infrastructure to allow the development or expansion of electric facilities in Idaho or the import of low-cost energy from other parts of the region."* ([IERA website](#)). In practice, IERA acts as a conduit financier for Bonneville Power Administration (BPA) and other public power entities. The authority utilizes its revenue bonding authority to enter into lease-purchase arrangements with BPA, or municipalities, to support transmission capital needs ([BPA AB EN25 Presentation](#)). Since its inception in 2005, IERA has supported \$900M of transmission investment

Established via [legislation](#) in 2005 at the request of the North Dakota Industrial Commission, the North Dakota Transmission Authority (NDTA) serves to facilitate the development of the state's transmission infrastructure. NDTA encourages investment by facilitating, financing, developing, or acquiring transmission assets to support energy production.. Unique among the state transmission authorities, NDTA can issue general obligation bonds backed by the moral obligation of the State of North Dakota. NDTA can issue up to \$800 million in revenue bonds, of which up to 30% can be financed through state-backed bond sales ([Section 17-05-05, North Dakota Century Code](#)). NDTA has financed one project with this power—the 2022 acquisition of a 410kV HVDC line connecting the Coal Creek facility in North Dakota to Minneapolis. NDTA is also unique in that all its state utilities operate in an organized wholesale market, either the Southwest Power Pool or the Midcontinent Independent System Operator. More recently, in 2025, NDTA released a [Transmission Capacity Study](#) assessing the existing system's capacity to satisfy current and future state energy demands.

[Recent legislation](#) in Washington State created the Washington Electric Transmission Authority (WETA) in March 2026. Designed to bolster the state's energy affordability, resilience, and reliability, WETA will support the expeditious and efficient expansion of electric transmission capacity. To achieve this, the authority is empowered to identify high priority corridors from a recent [west-wide transmission needs study](#), form public-private partnerships, invoke eminent domain, establish local investment commitment fees, and coordinate with the state economic

development finance authority to provide conduit financing. Further, WETA may own transmission projects directly only as a last resort when no partner is available. The enabling legislation also mandates specific tribal consultation and labor standard protocols for its projects. The Washington State Dept. of Commerce will oversee the launch of WETA in the coming months.

CONCLUSION

Taken together, these transmission authorities illustrate distinct state-led strategies for overcoming barriers to transmission development. Colorado's CETA is focused on advancing projects through prioritization, community outreach, and partnership. New Mexico's RETA demonstrates how tax incentives, streamlined processes, and partnerships can advance a pipeline of projects. Wyoming's WEA integrates transmission into a broader energy strategy, using funding and advocacy to move projects forward. Idaho, North Dakota and Washington provide additional examples of states that have established transmission and energy authorities to advance economic development goals and expand energy infrastructure development to serve state consumers. These variations highlight multiple pathways to accelerate transmission development using the state authority model. The workshop in September will explore these approaches in greater depth, drawing lessons from early mover experiences and identifying key insights for success.