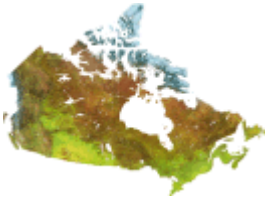




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BACKGROUND

INTER-PROVINCIAL GRID CONNECTIONS

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Most provinces are part of an interconnected electricity “grid,” a network of power plants, substations and transmission lines that cross borders.

This grid serves two purposes. First, it has traditionally enhanced the reliability of the system. For example, if one utility experiences power demands it cannot supply immediately, other utilities can help meet these demands until the first system can get its reserve generation on line. And second, it allows utilities to sell power to each other, thereby reducing generation costs.

The majority of northeastern provinces and states — including Ontario, New York and Michigan — are part of the grid known as the Eastern Interconnection. British Columbia and Alberta, along with the western United States, belong to the Western Interconnection. Newfoundland and the Territories are not part of the grid, although Labrador, through Quebec, is. Quebec’s link to the Eastern Interconnection is unique in that it is primarily through direct current lines rather than alternating current lines.

Sharing electricity supplies north-south has historically been more prevalent and economical than east-west transmission. At times, many provinces have surplus electricity which they export to the United States. This is particularly the case for Quebec, Manitoba and British Columbia.

The reliability of the interconnected grid is managed by the North American Electric Reliability Council (NERC). Established in 1968 following the major blackout in the northeastern United States and Canada in 1965, this body promotes the reliability of the electricity supply for North America. It sets standards for the operation of the grid, trains operators, investigates power disturbances and makes recommendations to improve reliability. All major Canadian utilities interconnected to the North American grid participate in NERC. As part of the lessons learned from the 1965 blackout, protective devices were put in place to isolate sections of the grid from one another in the event of disturbances.

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