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**TO:** Federal Energy Regulatory Commission  
**FROM:** Joseph Bowring, Independent Market Monitor for PJM  
**SUBJECT:** Transmission Line Ratings Technical Conference

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Transmission line ratings, and more broadly transmission facility ratings, are the metric for the ability of transmission lines to transmit power from one point to another. Transmission line ratings have significant and frequently underappreciated impacts on competitive wholesale power markets like PJM. These include direct impacts on energy and capacity prices, the frequency and level of congestion in the Day-Ahead and Real-Time Energy Market, day-ahead nodal price differences and the associated value of FTRs, locational price differences in the capacity market, the need to invest in additional transmission capacity, the need to invest in additional generation capacity, the location of new power plants, and the interconnection costs for new power plants. The impact of transmission facility ratings on markets is a function both of the line ratings directly and the use of those ratings by the RTO/ISO. While this technical conference focuses on the line ratings directly, the actual use of those ratings by the market operator and the impacts of those uses should also be examined.

Congestion payments by load result when lower cost generation is not available to meet all the load in an area as a result of limits on the transmission system. When higher cost local generation is needed to meet part of the local load because of transmission limits, 100 percent of the local load pays the higher price while only the local generation receives the higher price. The difference between what the load pays and generators receive is congestion. Since 2008, congestion costs in PJM have ranged from \$0.5 billion to \$2.05 billion per year. Congestion costs were significantly higher during extreme winter weather conditions such as January 2014, when the congestion costs in PJM were \$825.1 million for one month.<sup>1</sup>

LMP may, at times, be set by transmission penalty factors. When a transmission constraint is binding and there are no generation alternatives to resolve the constraint, system operators may allow the transmission limit to be violated. When this occurs, the shadow price of the constraint is set by transmission penalty factors. The shadow price directly affects the LMP. Transmission penalty factors are administratively determined and can be thought of as a form of locational scarcity pricing. Transmission penalty factors were fully implemented in PJM pricing effective February 1, 2019.

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<sup>1</sup> See the *2018 State of the Market Report for PJM*, Volume 2, Section 11: Congestion and Marginal Losses.

Transmission line ratings can result in short term, significant increases in prices as a result of the application of transmission penalty factors. For example, violation of a transmission constraint, meaning that the flow exceeds the line limit, could result in a \$2,000 per MWh price. As the power flows approach their rated limits, PJM dispatchers may reduce the limits.<sup>2</sup> Violation of these reduced line ratings results in penalty factors setting prices. In 2018, there were 163,319 transmission constraints in the real time market with a non-zero shadow price. For nearly 11 percent of these transmission constraints, the line limit was violated, meaning the flow exceeded the line limit and prices were set by transmission penalty factors. In 2018, the average shadow price of transmission constraints when the line limit was violated was nearly six times higher than when transmission constraint was binding at its limit.<sup>3</sup>

Capacity market prices separate locally when transmission capability into Locational Deliverable Areas (LDA) is not adequate to meet the LDA capacity requirement with the lowest cost capacity. The available transmission capability into LDAs is defined as the Capacity Emergency Transfer Limit (CETL). Higher cost LDAs are the equivalent in the capacity market of congestion in the energy market. Load in the higher cost LDAs pay more for capacity than those in lower cost LDAs. For example, the clearing price for the BGE LDA in the 2021/2022 Base Residual Auction was \$200.30 per MW-day. The clearing price for the EMAAC LDA was \$165.73 per MW-day.<sup>4</sup>

Transmission line ratings for a given transmission facility vary by the duration of the power flow, by ambient temperatures, by wind speed and by other conditions. Transmission lines can operate with higher loads for shorter periods of time. This is significant when a contingency is expected to last for only a short period. The transmission line rating can mean the difference between substantial congestion costs and no congestion costs. The transmission line rating can mean the difference between a transmission penalty factor and no penalty factor.

In PJM, transmission owners use a range of ratings by duration.<sup>5</sup> PJM requires transmission owners to provide thermal ratings under normal operating conditions, long term emergency operating conditions, short term emergency operating conditions and the extreme load dump conditions. But there is no requirement that the ratings differ for these operating conditions. PJM typically uses normal line ratings for precontingency (base case) constraints and long

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<sup>2</sup> See “Transmission Constraint Control Logic and Penalty Factors”, presented at May 10, 2018 meeting of the Markets Implementation Committee Special Session Transmission Constraint Penalty Factors at p14. <<https://www.pjm.com/-/media/committees-groups/committees/mic/20180510-special/20180510-item-03-transmission-constraint-penalty-factor-education.ashx>>.

<sup>3</sup> See the *2018 State of the Market Report for PJM*, Volume 2, Section 3: Energy Market at p186.

<sup>4</sup> See “Analysis of the 2021/2022 RPM Base Residual Auction,” <[https://www.monitoringanalytics.com/reports/Reports/2018/IMM\\_Analysis\\_of\\_the\\_20212022\\_RPM\\_BRA\\_Revised\\_20180824.pdf](https://www.monitoringanalytics.com/reports/Reports/2018/IMM_Analysis_of_the_20212022_RPM_BRA_Revised_20180824.pdf)> (August 24 2018).

<sup>5</sup> See “PJM Manual 3: Transmission Operations,” Rev. 55 (May. 31, 2019) § 2.1.1, at p 28.

term emergency line ratings (four hours) for contingency constraints. PJM requires transmission owners to provide temperature based line ratings separately for night and day times. The temperature ranges from 32 degree Fahrenheit or below to 95 degree Fahrenheit or above in nine degree increments. But there is no requirement that the ratings differ for these operating condition temperatures. In PJM, transmission owners are responsible for developing their own methods to compute line ratings subject to a range of NERC guidelines and requirements. PJM does not review or verify the accuracy of transmission owners' methods to compute line ratings. In PJM, transmission owners have substantial discretion in the approach to line ratings.<sup>6</sup>

Given the significant impact of transmission line ratings on all aspects of wholesale power markets, ensuring and improving the accuracy and transparency of line ratings is essential. Line ratings should incorporate ambient temperature conditions, wind speed and other relevant operating conditions. PJM real time prices are calculated every five minutes for thousands of nodes. PJM prices are extremely sensitive to transmission line ratings. For consistency with the dynamic nature of wholesale power markets, line ratings should be updated in real time to reflect real time conditions and to help ensure that real time prices are based on actual current line ratings. The ongoing analysis of dynamic line ratings is a promising area that should be pursued.

The IMM recommends that all PJM transmission owners use the same methods to define line ratings, subject to NERC standards and guidelines, subject to review by NERC and approval by FERC. The same facilities should have the same basic ratings under the same operating conditions regardless of the transmission owner. Transmission owner discretion should be minimized or eliminated. The line rating methods should be based on the basic engineering facts of the transmission system components and reflect the impact of actual operating conditions on the ratings of transmission facilities, including ambient temperatures and wind speed when relevant.<sup>7</sup> The line rating methods should be public and fully transparent.

The IMM recommends that PJM routinely review all transmission facility ratings and any changes to those ratings to ensure that the normal, emergency and load dump ratings used in modeling the transmission system are accurate and reflect standard ratings practice.<sup>8</sup> All line rating changes and the detailed reasons for those changes should be public and fully transparent.

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<sup>6</sup> PJM presentation to the Planning Committee (PC) (May 3, 2018) "Transmission Owner Ratings Development and Reporting in PJM" ("There are no requirements for PJM to approve or verify a TO's ratings or do any kind of consistency check.") at 24.

<sup>7</sup> See "Transmission Owner Ratings Development and Reporting in PJM," presented at May 3, 2018 meeting of the Planning Committee. <<https://www.pjm.com/-/media/committees-groups/committees/pc/20180503/20180503-item-13-to-ratings-process-and-reporting.ashx>>.

<sup>8</sup> See the 2018 *State of the Market Report for PJM*, Volume 2, Section 2: Recommendations.