Peter Welch
U.S. SENATOR FOR VERMONT

Enhancing Electric Grid Resilience Act of 2026

Led in the Senate by: Senator Peter Welch (D-Vt.)

Introduced in the House by: Representative Kathy Castor (D-FL-14)

Background: America's electric grid is under immense strain. Forecasts suggest that U.S. electricity demand could increase by as much as 5.7% through 2030, a level of growth not seen since the 1960s. The Department of Energy's (DOE) National Transmission Planning Study estimates the U.S. will need to build nearly 5,000 miles of new high-capacity transmission lines per year to meet growing demand. Yet, in 2024, only 322 miles of new high-voltage transmission lines were completed. Meeting this demand—and expanding access to cleaner, cheaper energy—will require historic investments in the electric grid.

In 2025, renewable resources like solar and wind added 814 GW of wind and solar capacity to the grid globally, with more than 90% supplying power at a lower cost than fossil fuels. At the same time, global conflicts are driving the cost of volatile fossil fuels even higher, making the transition to renewables more urgent than ever. However, in the U.S., more than 2,000 GW of energy capacity (largely renewable resources) remain stuck in the interconnection queue waiting to plug into the grid, in part because of uncertainty surrounding how the cost of necessary transmission upgrades will be distributed. Historically, new generation projects would be required to pay for such upgrades, creating a perverse incentive for projects to remain offline until another developer assumed the cost.

Establishing a cost-allocation system to distribute the expenses of new transmission infrastructure or upgrades more evenly among project developers and other beneficiaries is key to spurring the construction of these facilities, creating good-paying green jobs, and strengthening America's energy independence.

Legislation: The *Enhancing Electric Grid Resilience Act* builds on progress made by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) in Order 2023 by requiring the Commission to ensure that interstate and offshore transmission infrastructure projects allocate costs to beneficiaries more fairly. The bill reinforces a "beneficiary pays" cost allocation system to ensure costs incurred from the buildout of transmission infrastructure cover a fair share of both direct and overhead expenses related to reliability, resiliency, and environmental outcomes. The legislation would ultimately help lower energy costs for consumers by accelerating the construction of the transmission infrastructure that delivers vital clean energy to communities across the country.