



## Monthly Energy Update

August 2021

**FERC Approves New Reliability Standards Aimed at Averting Winter Grid Outages**

*Page 5*

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### IN THIS ISSUE:

**PacifiCorp Plans to Shutter Coal Plants, Invest in Renewables**

*Page 1*

**CAISO and EIM Board Agree to Share Market Control**

*Page 2*

**RMP Seeks Alternate Rate Recovery for Wind Projects**

*Page 3*

**WECC Report Sees Reliability Risk as Western Interconnect Changes, Faces Challenges**

*Page 3*

**FERC Approves New Reliability Standards Aimed at Averting Winter Grid Outages**

*Page 5*

**Industry Lobbies For 'Realistic' Timeline on Clean Electricity**

*Page 6*

**U.S. Clean Power Sees Record Growth**

*Page 7*

**Biden and Democrats Shift Focus to Methane; Battle Lies Ahead**

*Page 8*

**Power Market Prices**

*Page 10*

## PacifiCorp Plans to Shutter Coal Plants, Invest in Renewables

**P**acifiCorp announced Friday that its biennial Integrated resource plan (IRP) is expected to include substantial investments in renewables—and no new investment in coal or natural gas. The 2021 plan will be finalized next week. PacifiCorp intends to retire 14 of its 22 active coal units by 2030 and another five by 2040, with the remaining three shuttered shortly afterward.

It would retain two coal units at Wyoming's Jim Bridger power plant, converting them to natural gas peaking units in 2024.

All of PacifiCorp's Wyoming coal plants would be offline by 2039, according to this year's plan.

By the end of 2040, the company's total coal-fueled generation capacity would be reduced by more than 4,000 megawatts and its gas capacity reduced by 1,500 megawatts.

"This IRP definitely reflects the fact that PacifiCorp recognizes it needs to move away from fossil fuel assets," said Rob Godby, an associate professor of economics at the University of Wyoming. "So there is a real move here, a really significant move."

Over the next two decades, the utility anticipates building more than 3,600 megawatts of new wind and more than 5,600 megawatts of new solar, along with close to 6,700 megawatts of storage capacity. It would add hundreds of miles of transmission to accommodate these additional resources.

And in a first for PacifiCorp, the 500-megawatt advanced nuclear reactor proposed for one of four retiring Wyoming coal plants is counted as part of 2,700 megawatts of "advanced nuclear and non-emitting peaking resources" that the company plans to bring online by 2040.

Compared with a 2005 baseline, system CO2 emissions would be down 53% in 2025, 74% in 2030 and 92% in 2040, according to the company's calculations.

The coal plant retirement schedule is largely unchanged from the timeline set by PacifiCorp in its 2019 IRP, after a 2018 company report found that **13 of its 22 coal units were uneconomical**. In the 2021 announcement, it cited "ongoing cost pressures on existing coal-fired facilities and dropping costs for new resource alternatives."

(Continued on Page 2)