

San Juan Basin

Energy Connect

Strengthening the Regional Grid

Increasing electric load growth in the San Juan Basin in commercial, residential and industrial sectors has put a strain on the existing electrical system. The purpose of the San Juan Basin Energy Connect Project (SJBEC Project) is to relieve that strain by improving the existing transmission system.

There are no new sources of electricity generation required for the SJBEC Project. Instead, the Project will strengthen the regional grid by creating links between three substations - the Shiprock Substation, proposed Kiffen Canyon Substation, and the new Iron Horse Substation. These new connections will strengthen the grid's reliability for consumers in the region, help to relieve transmission constraints, serve new loads, and offer economic development opportunities by providing an additional pathway for potential renewable energy projects.

Transmission Lines as Electric Highways

The regional electric grid is similar to a roadway system, comprised of interstate highways and local roads. High-voltage transmission lines serve as electric highways, moving bulk electricity over long distances. High-voltage electricity is converted to lower-voltage electricity at substations. Distribution lines are comparable to local roadways, moving lower-voltage electricity from substations to residential and business consumers.

Electricity moves freely on the regional transmission grid, similar to cars on a roadway system. Because the regional electric grid is comprised of hundreds of these connections through which electricity flows almost instantaneously, there is no way to tell if the electricity consumed at a home or business was produced by renewable or non-renewable resources. The power consumed is a mixture of all generation resources feeding the grid.

Some, but not all, high-voltage transmission lines connect to a generation source. The San Juan Basin Energy Connect Project does not connect to new generation, nor does the load served by the project require the construction of new generation facilities. The SJBEC Project will connect to substations that are interconnected with other transmission lines or existing generation sources.

