PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPAL ELECTRIC ASSOCIATION
PA PUBLIC POWER

THE LIVE WIRE

April 2026

Save these Dates!

PMEA Reception – June 1, 2026
5:00 – 7:00 pm @ PSAB Conference, Cocoa Boardroom, Hershey Lodge

PMEA 2026 Annual Conference – September 9 – 11, 2026
Omni Bedford Springs, Bedford

PMEA Business Workshop
– September 9, 2026 @ Omni Bedford Springs, Bedford

2026 Training for Line Crews
Registration opens prior to each class

Advanced Transformer
June 4 & 5 – Grove City
June 8 & 9 – Chambersburg
June 10 & 11 – Lansdale

Underground Troubleshooting & Grounding
September 14 & 15 – Grove City
September 21 & 22 – Chambersburg
September 23 & 24 - Lansdale

Safety for Lineworkers
October 22 & 23 – Grove City
October 26 & 27 – Chambersburg
October 28 & 29 – Lansdale

PMEA Members Receive APPA Safety Award of Excellence

Two PMEA members were among the two hundred forty utilities to earn the American Public Power Association's (APPA) Safety Award of Excellence for safe operating practices in 2025.

Chambersburg and Perkasie stood out in their respective categories among the more than 200 utilities from across the country which entered the annual Safety Awards. Entrants were placed in categories according to their number of worker-hours and ranked based on the incident-free records and overall state of their safety programs and culture during 2025. A utility's incidence rate is based on its number of work-related reportable injuries or illnesses and the number of worker-hours during 2025, as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

APPA has conducted the Safety Awards annually for more than sixty-eight years. A complete list of winners is available at **www.PublicPower.org**.

Congratulations to Chambersburg and Perkasie!

Legislators Advance Bill to Give State Additional Oversight of Data Center Water Use

State lawmakers advanced a bill in March that would require data center developers to submit reports on expected water use to the Commonwealth before beginning operation.

It is one of several efforts to create more oversight of the rapidly growing sector, powering the nation's artificial intelligence boom.

The reports would include information like how much water the data centers plan to use, where that water will come from, and what temperature the water will be when it is taken into the facility and returned to its source. Developers would also need to provide evidence the operation will not have a foreseeable adverse impact on water quality and quantity.

Data centers can use large amounts of water primarily for cooling servers and other equipment. Some can use millions of gallons of water per year, though it depends on the cooling method.

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Data Center Water Use *(continued)*

The state Department of Environmental Protection would be allowed to reject projects they believe will have a negative impact on state waterways and other users of that water.

“I think personally data centers are going to be an important part of our economy, and I also believe that some guardrails are required to make sure we’re doing it for the best purposes of Pennsylvania and the residents of Pennsylvania who are already here,” the bill’s sponsor, Rep. Joe Webster (D-Montgomery) told the House Environmental & Natural Resource Protection Committee.

Committee co-chair Jack Rader (R-Monroe) opposed the measure.

“I think data centers are an issue in the state today. I personally am for local control of these issues,” he said. “I think if local governments do their job, these issues should be taken care of … I don’t like to see layer and layer of government.”

Rep. Dallas Kephart (R-Clearfield) also voiced concern about a provision in the bill that would allow the Environmental Quality Board, primarily made up of appointees, to set a fee for data center developers. He argued that should be done by lawmakers.

“Most of them are unelected officials,” he said. “Their discretion to set a fee is bad legislative practice.”

An Amazon Web Services data center is shown situated near single-family homes. Some local and state officials across the country want to halt development of the facilities. (Photo by Nathan Howard/Getty Images)

The proposal notes the fee should be determined based on the cost of implementing the program, which could include monitoring of water sources around data centers. The proceeds would go to the state’s Clean Water Fund

Rep. Nikki Rivera (D-Lancaster) said in the case of two data centers being developed in her district, reports would likely show they are expected to use less water than the warehouses that used to occupy the space where they are being built.

“One of the major concerns with my constituency was how much water will be used to cool the machinery,” Rivera said. “A report that would show exactly how much water they’re using would actually favor the data centers and make it really transparent for our residents.”

Two Republicans, Rep. Tom Mehaffie of Dauphin County and Brenda Pugh of Luzerne County, joined every Democrat on the committee in voting for the bill.

The measure would need to be passed by the full state House and the Republican-controlled Senate. If that happens, Gov. Josh Shapiro would have to sign it into law.

House Democrats are also pushing a separate proposal that would require data center developers and operators to submit annual reports on energy and water consumption to the state Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

That bill received a partisan vote in the House Energy Committee earlier this month, with all 14 Democrats supporting it and all 12 Republicans opposing.

Source: Ian Karbal, PA Capitol Star, March 23, 2026

PUC Raises Concerns Over 222-Mile Transmission Project Proposed Across Ten PA Counties

The Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission (PUC) has filed formal comments with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) raising significant concerns about a proposed high-voltage transmission **project** that would extend approximately 222 miles from Kammer, West Virginia, through ten Pennsylvania counties to Perry County.

The Commission’s filing addresses a request by **Kammer Juniata Transmission, LLC,** a joint project of NextEra Energy Transmission and Exelon Corporation, for federal approval of a formula rate structure and multiple financial incentives tied to the development of the project.

“The combined package of incentives requested is not tailored to address risks or challenges faced by the applicant and, if granted, will likely result in unjust and unreasonable rates for consumers,” the PUC Commissioners noted in their comments. “Pennsylvanians would be ill-served by a final selection occurring until all possible alternatives have been thoroughly evaluated in a more transparent manner.”

In its comments to federal regulators, the PUC emphasizes the potential impact on consumers and questions whether the requested incentives are appropriate at this stage of the project.

The proposed project would involve construction of new transmission infrastructure through largely undeveloped corridors, raising both cost and siting considerations. The PUC notes that the project has not yet undergone required state-level review processes in Pennsylvania or West Virginia, including applications for Certificates of Public Convenience required to provide public utility service.

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PUC Concerns Over Transmission *(continued)*

"Absent an evaluation at the state level regarding need, siting, and public interest, the Commission (FERC) should withhold incentives to a transmission project," the PUC comments stressed. "Allowing these incentives could substantially increase the risk of customers ultimately paying for transmission facilities that are never built and from which they derive no benefit."

The PUC's comments also raise concerns about how the project was selected through the regional transmission planning process, including whether sufficient alternatives were considered and whether the timeline allowed for meaningful competition.

In addition, the Commission cautions that several of the requested financial incentives—such as recovery of construction costs before the project is completed or reimbursement for abandoned projects—could shift financial risk from developers to ratepayers.

The PUC also highlights the importance of aligning federal decisions with state regulatory processes, noting that state commissions are responsible for evaluating whether projects are necessary, appropriately designed, and in the public interest.

Overall, the Commission urges FERC to deny the requested incentives unless and until the project has received necessary state approvals and a more complete evaluation of its costs, benefits, and alternatives has been conducted.

The full PUC comments filed with FERC are available on the PUC's website.

Source: PA Public Utility Commission Press Release, April 8, 2026.

DEP Seeks Potential Fast-Track Storage, Generation Projects

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection on March 28, 2026, issued a "request for information" for generation and storage projects that could be eligible for a fast-track grid connection process proposed by the PJM Interconnection. Getty Images

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has issued a "request for information" for generation and storage projects that could be eligible for state backing in a fast-track grid connection process proposed by the PJM Interconnection, the DEP said Friday.

"The Department is interested in collaborating with a wide range of entities capable of developing one or more eligible large-scale energy generation or storage projects within this Commonwealth," the DEP said in a notice.

The DEP also wants to know about large-scale projects that do not meet the PJM's proposed eligibility requirements to "better understand why and what other opportunities might be available for future projects."

The request is in response to the PJM's proposal to open an Expedited Interconnection Track by August — a plan that is under review by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Under the proposal, PJM would consider up to ten interconnection requests a year on a fast-track basis for new or uprated capacity resources of at least 250 MW that have state support. If approved, the program would sunset at the end of 2027.

To be eligible for the process, project developers must have complete site control for their project and interconnection facilities when they file an EIT request. Also, the project must be able to come online within three years of filing the request. PJM expects it would take about 10 months to review an EIT application and sign an interconnection agreement.

PJM's proposal faces opposition at FERC from Vistra, which said it is "unworkable" and discriminates against independent power producers. The Sierra Club and other groups said PJM's plan is biased towards large generating resources.

Through its request for information, the DEP said it aims to identify developers that can build eligible projects that could be submitted by the fourth quarter and would advance state priorities, such as having an "increasingly diverse and economically sustainable energy mix" that lowers costs for ratepayers.

When responding to the notice, project developers should indicate if they plan to pair their project with a data center developer committing to uphold the governor's "responsible infrastructure development" standards.

Responses are due June 5.

Pennsylvania has almost 22 GW of projects in PJM's interconnection queue, including 12.6 GW of solar and 7.9 GW of storage, according to Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's database of U.S. interconnection requests.

Source: Ethan Howland, Senior Reporter, Utility Dive, April 7, 2026.

PJM Proposes Adding 14.9 GW with Bilateral Contracts, Central Procurement

PJM's proposal is part of a series of measures PJM is taking to bring new resources to its footprint to meet rising demand forecasts, driven by data center development. Those efforts include a FERC-approved one-time Reliability Resource Initiative that is fast tracking the interconnection review of about 8 GW of generation and a proposed Expedited Interconnection Track for up to ten generating projects a year over two years.

"Current projections show a potential capacity shortfall of 50 GW to 60 GW in the next decade, primarily driven by large load growth but also forecasted conventional load growth," PJM said. "With longer construction times for some technologies, needed transmission build-out and other infrastructure needs (e.g., natural gas infrastructure), the PJM system needs to prepare for the net-new supply needed to maintain resource adequacy in the region."

The grid operator said its backstop procurement proposal aligns with the "statement of principles on PJM" from the White House and governors of PJM states that calls for getting new generation online, allocating costs to the load that is buying the capacity and establishing "a one-time procurement to allow for a broader review of investment incentives in PJM with a focus on returning to competitive markets for resource adequacy as soon as possible."

For its backstop procurement proposal, PJM plans to acquire 14.9 GW, but that amount could change after a review by utilities, according to a presentation on the plan, which is set to be discussed at a two-day Critical Issue Fast Path meeting.

If approved by its board and federal regulators, the grid operator would start the procurement process with about six months of bilateral contracting between power suppliers and load. PJM and Charles River Associates, a consulting firm, would act as confidential intermediaries to provide matchmaking services between buyers and sellers, according to the proposal, but PJM would not be a counter-party in the transactions.

"Stakeholder feedback from both generation and load sectors suggests that bilateral contracting is the superior initial option, as it facilitates more efficient risk-sharing and tailored cost structures," PJM said.

After the bilateral contracting concludes, in March, PJM would hold a bidding process to procure any remaining capacity shortfall from its overall procurement target. Utilities would pay for their share of the central procurement.

Supply bidders could offer terms of two- to 15 years. If selected, winning bidders would be required to offer their capacity into PJM's base capacity auctions at $0 and the resource would receive the auction's clearing price.

Winning bidders would be paid under a "contract for differences" approach. They would receive revenue from PJM's regular base capacity auctions and then be paid more — or be required to pay PJM back — to reach their contract amount.

Eligible resources include new projects, capacity additions to existing power plants and repowering deactivated generators. New demand response and distributed energy resources would also be eligible for the procurement process. The projects must show they can be operating by June 1, 2031, with any network upgrades also in place. Delayed power plant retirements would be ineligible for the backstop process.

PJM plans to issue a request for information on Wednesday with a May 4 response deadline to gauge interest in a backstop procurement. The RFI's results could affect the final proposal, which PJM plans to file at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in June for its review.

Source: Ethan Howland, Senior Reporter, Utility Dive, April 13, 2026.

PJM Videos Available

PMEA's annual 2025 Business Workshop included an essential session on PJM, giving attendees a comprehensive look at how PJM operates and its critical role in managing the regional power grid. Click here to view on PMEA's private YouTube channel.

PMEA's Public Power Governance 101 educational video is available exclusively to member municipalities. Designed for elected officials and staff across Pennsylvania's 35 public power communities, this comprehensive module delivers invaluable insights into the management and operation of municipal electric systems. To receive your private viewing link, contact Diane Bosak at bosak@papublicpower.org.

Share Your News….

Please share with us your exciting new projects, photos, personnel updates, and any other news! Your submissions should be sent to **bosak@papublicpower.org** at any time and they will be used in upcoming editions. We also welcome your suggestions for topics of interest for our newsletters.

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