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Docket Nos. RM12-4-000

FERC Approves Vegetation Management Rules to Improve Electric Reliability

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission took steps to ensure continued reliable operation of the nation's bulk power system today by approving new rules for managing vegetation along power line rights of way.

In approving rules proposed by the North American Electric Reliability Corporation (NERC), the Commission noted that vegetation management does not necessarily mean removal of trees, and that transmission owners should work with landowners to determine an appropriate approach that assures reliability and respects private land owner concerns.

"This approach requires clear communications between transmission owners and private landowners; and meaningful outreach should indicate how a transmission owner plans to execute vegetation management along the right-of-way," FERC said, adding that a transmission owner's decision to remove vegetation should not be ascribed to the Commission.

The NERC proposal expands the applicability of existing vegetation management rules to include certain transmission lines that operate at below 200 kilovolts that have been identified as having system limitations, such as voltage or transfer limits, that if violated could lead to system instability or cascading outages, sets a new minimum annual inspection requirement and incorporates new minimum clearance distances into the text of the standard.

The final rule takes effect 60 days after publication in the *Federal Register*.

R-13-15

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