

La Crosse to Madison Transmission

Three Critical Questions

Does this line help coal power?

No. The LaCrosse to Madison connection is crucial for unlocking the Midwest's wind power potential and meeting its clean energy goals. This transmission line is specifically designed to bring more wind power on the grid and will directly result in more wind power development. New coal plants are simply not economically competitive because of requirements that coal plants reduce their pollution and the declining costs of wind and other cleaner sources. No new coal being built means no new coal on this line. In fact, this line can help make it easier to retire existing coal plants in the future.

“Quite honestly, the barriers created by the EPA in terms of carbon regulation have put a halt to new coal generation anyplace.”

Julie Fedorchak, North Dakota Public Service Commissioner

Can't we just use distributed generation, like solar, instead?

Distributed renewables, energy efficiency, and large-scale renewables, particularly wind power, are all critical parts of a cost-effective clean energy future. In order to reduce carbon pollution to the levels necessary and replace retiring fossil fuel plants, all three of these clean energy solutions must be used. In addition to wind, transmission also helps us maximize distributed generation because a robust, flexible transmission system is necessary in order to fully realize distributed clean energy's potential. In a clean energy future, distributed solar electricity from La Crosse and wind electricity from Minnesota can power Madison on a cloudy day.

How much will Wisconsin electricity users pay for the line?

Wisconsin customers will pay for approximately 15 percent of the project – that's between \$81 and \$87 million of the project's \$540-580 million estimated cost, depending on the final route. That amounts to less than one-percent on an electric bill but with overall savings because the line gives Wisconsin access to less expensive electricity. Customers outside of Wisconsin will invest more than \$425 million in the project. The line's cost is shared equally by all Midwest electricity customers because it is one of a package of regional lines the Midwest grid operator designed to lower costs and promote clean energy region-wide. This is a sound investment considering that over the 40-year life of the line Wisconsin customers will receive a projected overall economic benefit of \$100 to \$700 million.

