

## CITAP Program: A Game Changer for the US Transmission

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- The US faces significant challenges, including lengthy approval processes, bureaucratic hurdles, and a growing interconnection queue that delays the implementation of crucial transmission projects.
- Addressing these limitations is not just a matter of efficiency but a critical step toward facilitating the integration of renewable energy sources into the grid.
- The CITAP Program proposes a solution to these hurdles by setting strict deadlines for federal authorizations and permits.

The United States has witnessed a remarkable surge in renewable capacity additions in recent years, reflecting a concerted effort to transition towards cleaner and more sustainable energy sources. This upswing can be attributed to the nation's ambitious targets to install renewables, with a specific goal of adding 65.2 gigawatts of utility-scale wind and solar capacity by 2030 as shown below in Figure 1. This target underscores a commitment to combat climate change and reduce dependency on conventional fossil fuels.

However, this commendable drive comes with its set of challenges, notably in the form of [grid](#) upgradation and expansion requirements. The US is facing significant challenges in its efforts to upgrade and expand its transmission infrastructure. These challenges include lengthy approval processes, bureaucratic hurdles, and a growing interconnection queue leading to a delay in the implementation of crucial transmission projects. In response to these challenges, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) has introduced the Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits (CITAP) Program. This initiative aims to revolutionize the complex approval process for onshore electric transmission facilities, offering a streamlined approach for federal authorizations and permits.

## US Utility Scale Renewables Annual Market (2022-2030)

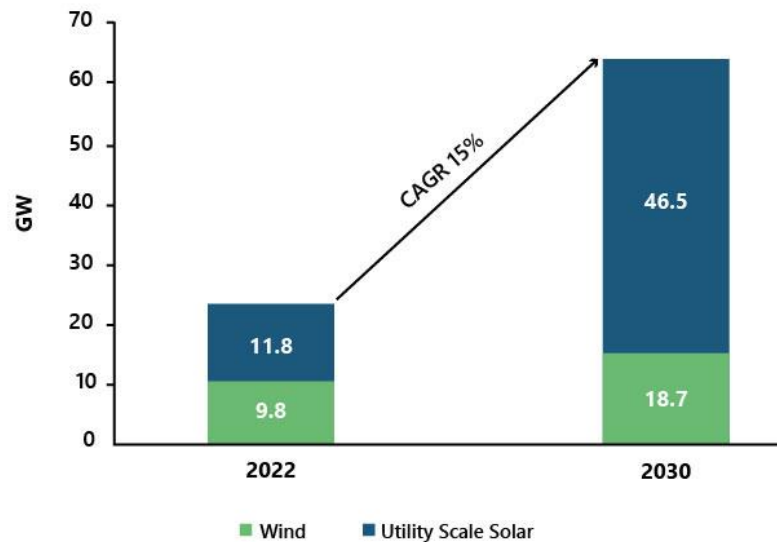


Figure 1: Utility Scale Renewables Annual Market for the US from 2022-2030.

Source: PTR Inc.

## The Current Transmission Approval Process

Transmission project approvals drag on for an average of 7 to 10 years. This protracted timeline hampers the timely development of essential infrastructure and increases costs for developers and consumers. A major factor in this delay is the extensive consultation required among various stakeholders, including affected utilities, regulators, and landowners. Agreement on the route, funding, and other important directions becomes a time-consuming and often complicated process. Such delays have a ripple effect, impacting the overall energy landscape and potentially impeding progress in achieving national energy transition goals.

## The Need for CITAP

The urgency for a solution is underscored by the expanding [interconnection queue](#), which now holds approximately 2,000 GW of projects waiting for approval as shown below in Figure 2. This queue is dominated by solar, wind, and energy storage installations, reflecting the nation's shift towards renewable energy. The lengthy wait times for project approvals exacerbate the cost of electricity for consumers. Moreover, if projects are withdrawn due to delays, it could undermine the nation's collective efforts toward a cleaner and more sustainable energy future.

## US Grid Interconnection Queue

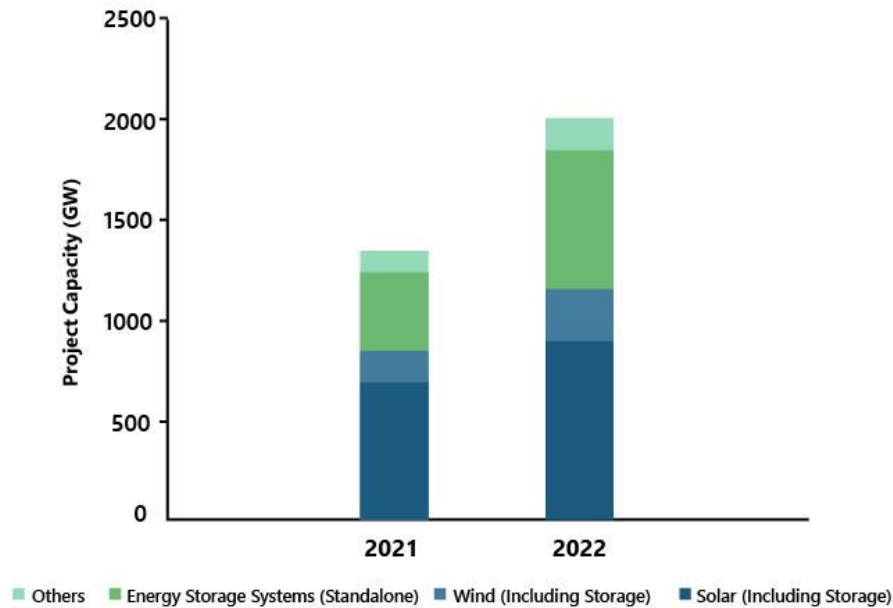


Figure 2: Growth in US Grid Interconnection Queue.

Source: FERC

## The Coordinated Interagency Transmission Authorizations and Permits (CITAP) Program

The CITAP Program proposes a paradigm shift by setting strict deadlines for federal authorizations and permits within two years. The main goals include expediting the approval process and engaging in comprehensive discussions with tribal groups, local communities, and other stakeholders. The time-bound nature of CITAP aims to break the cycle of prolonged waiting periods.

Apart from efficiency, CITAP places a strong emphasis on inclusivity. It seeks to ensure that the approval process involves thorough engagement with tribal groups, local communities, and other stakeholders, fostering a collaborative approach that accounts for diverse perspectives. This approach assists in uncovering where the delay occurs leading to a rapid authorization process.

Moreover, CITAP does not substitute for the legal mandate of the state and local governments. Instead, it aims to accelerate federal permit evaluations while respecting the authority of regional entities. Realizing the significance of state and local government mandates, collaboration started off well in advance with these authorities. The concerns, mandates, and regulatory frameworks of different government bodies were considered to ensure that the CITAP Program would complement, not supersede, existing regulations.

A core objective of CITAP is to eliminate redundancies in the permitting process. By fostering collaboration and communication among involved entities, the CITAP Program aims to enhance efficiency and minimize unnecessary

delays and bureaucratic hurdles.

## Looking Ahead

PTR anticipates that the implementation of CITAP could lead to a substantial annual expansion of [transmission](#) capacity, estimated at 2.5-3% until 2030. This projection highlights the potential transformative impact of the CITAP Program.

Developers and consumers can gain significantly from CITAP. Lower approval times mean quicker project implementation, translating to reduced energy costs for consumers and increased viability for developers. It is noteworthy that CITAP aligns with national goals for increased investment in renewable energy projects. By expediting the approval of transmission infrastructure, the CITAP Program is expected to facilitate the nation's transition to a cleaner and more sustainable energy landscape.

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