

BRIEF

IREC includes storage for the first time in its updated interconnection procedures

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Dive Brief:

- The Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) on Thursday released its updated best practices for connecting distributed resources to the grid, including for the first time an initial framework to review energy storage systems.
- IREC last updated its Model Interconnection Procedures in 2013. Since they were created in 2005, dozens of utility commissions have adopted statewide interconnection rules with many turning to IREC's model as a starting point.
- The updated procedures also include a dispute resolution process that calls for creation of an "interconnection ombudsperson role" and new data publishing requirements to ensure stakeholders have access to information on the interconnection process.

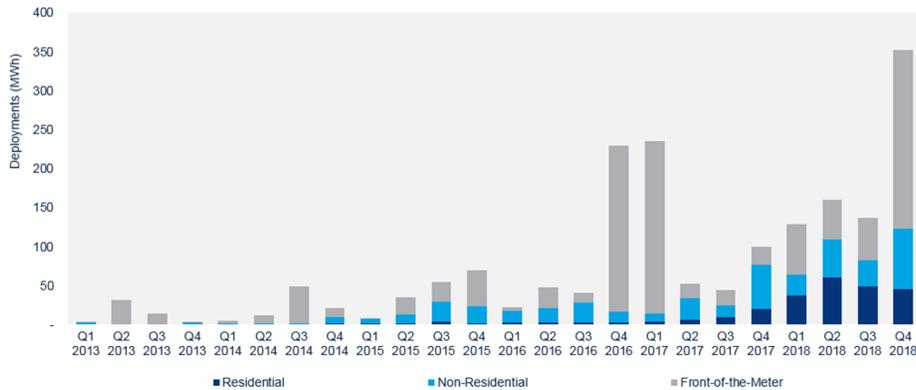
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It's been six years since IREC updated its model procedures, and in that time energy storage has become a major grid force. The council said its first set of guidelines for interconnecting batteries are an "initial framework" intended address the "uniquely flexible and controllable nature of energy storage."

Since the previous update, "the market for energy storage has evolved significantly, which introduces new considerations into the interconnection process," IREC notes in its new model. Energy storage is controllable in a way most distributed generation is not, the council said. And systems can be designed with the capability to limit or prevent export onto the grid.

"As a result of these unique characteristics, best practices for how best to analyze the grid impacts of energy storage are still emerging," IREC wrote. The model procedures "recognize these concepts and create an initial framework for reviewing energy storage and verifying energy storage system capabilities."

Growth in energy storage has been rapid in the last six years. The U.S. energy storage market set a growth record in Q1 of this year, deploying 148.8 MW, according to the Wood Mackenzie U.S. Energy Storage Monitor.



Credit: *Wood Mackenzie U.S. Energy Storage Monitor*

IREC's procedures are a starting point, and the group said it does not "resolve the question of how projects that inadvertently export should be evaluated in the screening process."

Interconnection processes of energy storage "will rapidly evolve in the coming years," IREC said.

IREC also updated its dispute resolution process, aiming to avoid the need to bring more complaints about slow interconnection processes, before state utility commissions.

"As technologies and markets for distributed energy resources continue to rapidly evolve, it is important to ensure that interconnection procedures adapt accordingly," Sara Baldwin, vice president of IREC's regulatory program, said in a statement.

Baldwin told Utility Dive that since the model rules were originally created in 2005, 39 states have adopted statewide interconnection rules — with most using either IREC's model rules, or the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's Small Generator Interconnection Procedures.

Maine is the only state that has directly adopted IREC's Model Procedures, Baldwin said. More commonly, state's look to IREC's model as a guide to develop their own procedures. States that have relied on IREC's model include Utah, Illinois, New York, Ohio and others.

Recommended Reading:

 [INTERSTATE RENEWABLE ENERGY COUNCIL
IREC Model Interconnection Procedures 2019](#) 