

The Flexible Grid Infrastructure Act of 2017

Summary

States are looking to build a more flexible grid - one that can respond to abrupt changes in energy supply and demand. But states need more information to determine how and where to implement the many new energy innovations—like energy storage or electric vehicles—that could be used to make the grid more flexible.

In order to update the electricity grid, this bill directs the DOE to examine ways to improve the flexibility of the grid, enhance grid security and train workers for transitions to high-skill clean energy jobs. It would also provide states and utilities with resources to upgrade the flexibility—and the reliability—of the grid.

The Flexible Grid Infrastructure Act will:

- Authorize \$50 million for the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to provide energy companies, utilities, and homeowners powerful new information to implement small-scale, distributed energy resources, like rooftop solar panels, that lower energy costs.
 - Specifically, this legislation requires the DOE to create and make available online a national, voluntary action plan to provide technical assistance for states to deploy new distributed energy resources that increase grid efficiency, reliability and flexibility. It would also require the DOE and FERC to look at ways to make power transmission more efficient.
- Authorize \$100 million for the DOE to research, develop and demonstrate ways to balance power on the grid using both newer, more innovative technologies like electric vehicles, as well as technologies that can be found anywhere, like household water heaters.
- Protect the privacy of individuals and businesses and their respective sensitive data by prohibiting any federal entity from requesting personally identifiable data collected as a result of this legislation.
- Create and expand pathways for high-skill energy jobs to help workers displaced by technological advancements by allowing workers to keep pace with changing requirements for work in the energy sector.
- Authorizes \$150 million for a nationwide innovation prize that encourages states to coordinate with public and private entities to lower energy prices and better integrate emerging energy technologies.