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ISO New England's Summer Outlook: Sufficient Supplies Available

Region's Power Grid Ready for the Season

Holyoke, MA—April 26, 2010—New England should have sufficient electricity supplies this summer to meet consumer demand, according to ISO New England Inc., the operator of the region's bulk power system and wholesale electricity markets.

ISO New England forecasts that demand for electricity could peak at 27,190 megawatts (MW) this summer under normal summer weather conditions of about 90 degrees Fahrenheit. If New England were to experience extreme summer weather, such as an extended heat wave of about 95 degrees, peak consumption could rise to 29,310 MW. Last summer, electricity usage peaked on August 18 at 25,100 MW, which was lower than expected due primarily to the economic downturn and mild summer weather.

"The region's power grid is ready for the hot weather that typically drives up demand for electricity," said Vamsi Chadalavada, Chief Operating Officer of ISO New England. "New England power plants have the capacity to generate electricity to meet peak demand, which is driven primarily by air-conditioning use across the region. We also have demand-side resources ready to manage electricity consumption if supplies get tight for any reason."

New England has capacity resources totaling 32,670 MW available to supply electricity or reduce consumption, including 30,380 MW from generators, 1,330 MW from demand response, and 390 MW in electricity imports from neighboring regions. Energy efficiency measures will provide an additional 570 MW reduction in demand. These commitments were procured through the Forward Capacity Market, which goes into effect June 1, 2010. The Forward Capacity Market was developed by ISO New England, the New England states, and industry stakeholders to attract new investment and maintain needed existing power system resources.

If there is an unusual combination of unexpected transmission line and power plant outages at the same time that demand for electricity peaks during a heat wave, ISO New England can support the reliability of the region's bulk power system with a variety of options including demand-response resources, emergency imports from neighboring areas, and voluntary conservation by consumers. New England is a "summer peaking" system, which means that consumers use the most electricity during this time period. The region's all-time peak demand record was set at 28,130 MW during a heat wave on August 2, 2006. One megawatt serves about 1,000 homes.