NEWS RELEASE

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PJM Winter Outlook: Power Supplies Available to Serve Expected Cold Weather Conditions

Generation Resource Performance Critical to Maintaining Reliability

(Valley Forge, PA – Nov. 5, 2026) – PJM expects to have sufficient resources to reliably meet electricity demand this winter under expected conditions, though reserve margins continue to tighten as demand outpaces new power supplies.

PJM, the grid operator for 13 states and the District of Columbia, expects to have 182,426 MW of operational capacity to serve a forecasted peak electricity demand of approximately 147,500 MW, plus a forecast average of approximately 3,200 MW of electricity exports to neighboring systems. That peak, driven by demand growth in the region, would set a new winter record if reached.

Strong Generator Performance Is Critical

Reliable winter operations will depend on continued preparation and strong generator performance, particularly during periods of extreme cold. This is especially important in areas where transmission constraints limit the ability to deliver electricity from other parts of the system, especially the BGE, Pepco and Dominion zones in Maryland, Virginia and the District of Columbia.

“Our goal is to coordinate operations with the generation and transmission owners and proactively manage the system to perform at high levels when consumers need energy the most,” said Michael Bryson, PJM Sr. Vice President – Operations.

Recent cold winters have set a pattern for extreme weather in addition to impacts of general demand growth. PJM reached its all-time winter peak of 143,700 MW on Jan. 22, 2025. In early 2026, PJM maintained reliability through the most prolonged period of extreme cold experienced since the 1990s, recording hourly winter peak loads above 130,000 MW for eight days straight from Jan. 26 to Feb. 2.

Operating Through Stressed Conditions

PJM has also analyzed less likely, higher-stress cold-weather scenarios featuring lower amounts of available power generation, due either to generator outages or poor renewable performance related to the weather. PJM’s analyses include customer demand of up to 152,200 MW; those studies show that PJM can maintain reliability by implementing both Pre-Emergency and Emergency Demand Response programs.

Last winter and throughout 2026, PJM has relied on Demand Response customers to help reduce load during times of peak electricity demand and will continue to utilize this valuable resource as necessary. Demand Response, which pays customers in advance to reduce their power use when requested, has been activated 15 times in 2025 and 2026, versus eight times in the previous eight years.

PJM also will seek emergency orders from the Department of Energy as appropriate. These orders allow designated generators to run beyond their permitted emission levels in times of system emergencies. PJM has also requested and received emergency authority from DOE to direct data centers and other Large Load customers to use their backup generators as a last resort to reduce demand and avoid power outages for residential customers. PJM has never had to use this backup generation authority.

Milder Winter Expected, Margins Continue to Shrink

To develop its winter scenario forecasts, PJM analyzes the expected electricity demand, long-term weather predictions and other factors. The National Weather Service predicts a slightly warmer winter for much of the country, including all of the PJM footprint. PJM analyzes these factors to develop its forecast for winter operations.

PJM remains concerned that increasing demand, ongoing generator retirements and the slow pace of new generator projects coming online are eroding PJM's reserve margins, while the number of flexible generation resources that can respond quickly to PJM's directions is decreasing. Significantly higher levels of generator outages, such as those that occurred during Winter Storm Elliott (~46,000 MW), could leave the system vulnerable to power outages.

PJM forecasts adequate generator reserve margins under the most probable scenario, after taking into account expected generation outages, electricity exports and other factors.

At the same time, new load growth, especially data centers and other Large Load customers, is driving steady overall increases in annual demand. Forecasted winter peak demand has risen by approximately 7,500 MW or 5% since 2022.

Maintaining and Improving Generator Performance

PJM has taken a number of measures, in collaboration with generation owners, to improve performance of generation units. This includes the fourth year of a program to visit generator sites with ReliabilityFirst, which oversees reliability and compliance for much of the PJM footprint on behalf of the North American Electric Reliability Corporation. Working with PJM, ReliabilityFirst has increased the number of site visits from under 10 prior to 2023 to an expected 30–35 this year. Generators that have hosted site visits have seen reduced outage rates compared with generators that have not.

This year, PJM is launching a similar program with ReliabilityFirst's counterpart, SERC, in the remaining areas of the footprint.

"Generator performance is more critical than ever as we operate with less room for error," said David Souder, Executive Director, System Operations. "Reliability of the system will depend on that performance."

Other actions are outlined in PJM's Cold Weather Preparation Guideline and Checklist, contained in Manual 14D, Attachment N. These mandatory protocols incorporate lessons learned from past severe events, including Winter Storm Fern in January 2026, and include everything from increasing staffing for weather emergencies to performing required maintenance activities to prepare equipment for winter conditions.

Beginning last winter, NERC now requires generators to provide extreme cold weather temperature data per NERC standards. PJM continues to collect minimum operating temperatures for its generation fleet to better understand the limitations of certain generators in extreme cold. PJM will also perform tests of generators that have not run for several weeks leading into the winter. These tests are performed ahead of extreme weather or high system demand to determine that these resources are fully functional and ready to operate when needed.

During the fall, PJM meets with regulators and neighboring system operators to review winter preparations. PJM also conducts weekly operational review meetings during the winter with major natural gas pipelines to coordinate operations serving the natural gas fleet.

PJM Interconnection, founded in 1927, ensures the reliability of the high-voltage electric power system serving 67 million people in all or parts of Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. PJM coordinates and directs the operation of the region's transmission grid, which includes 88,417 miles of transmission lines; administers a competitive wholesale electricity market; and plans regional transmission expansion improvements to maintain grid reliability and relieve congestion. PJM's regional grid and market operations produce annual savings of $5 billion. For the latest news about PJM, visit PJM Inside Lines at insidelines.pjm.com.

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