

# US Electric Utilities & IPPs

## PJM Attacks the Polar Vortex

### Equities

Americas  
Electric Utilities

#### PJM Staff proposal would ramp up reliability requirements and capacity prices

In response to the high levels of forced outages experienced this past winter during the Polar Vortex, PJM released a white paper on 8/20 to propose the creation of a new capacity product called Capacity Performance (CP) that would encompass a new range of reliability requirements. All plants seeking CP qualification would be expected to upgrade systems to operate in extreme weather with short start-up times (specific to type). Stiffer penalties that could wipe out a year's worth of capacity revenue in days ensure compliance. All remaining non-qualifying capacity would be categorized in three buckets: Base Annual Capacity (including Annual Demand Response), Extended Summer DR, and Limited DR. Preliminary loss of load expectation studies show that the PJM should limit the amount of non-CP capacity to only 10%-15% of total, or ~20-30 GW (precise figures are forthcoming in a corresponding reliability study to be released shortly); the lower the figure, the better for capacity prices. Should the proposal be implemented, we expect a significant bifurcation of capacity pricing to occur, with much higher pricing for CP, with the new 'base' capacity receiving a discounted price, potentially just ~half of the CP level, akin to the prices paid to Limited DR in recent auctions.

#### Yes, quite positive- but too early in the process to get too excited

While we agree with the Street's initial reaction it could prove positive for some generators (namely EXC, NRG, PEG, and even in some cases FE), we expect the stakeholder process to only now kick-off, with significant further revisions both before it gets filed at FERC in the ~November timeframe, as well as potentially through that process as well. Despite scrutiny of gas generators, we suspect CPN is a net beneficiary as well. Among the most exposed to potential penalties under the new structure is PPL's Talen portfolio given operational issues at its largest assets, along with smaller portfolios given the concentrated (and exacerbated) outage risk. DYN is also likely a beneficiary given its existing portfolio of CCGTs. We appreciate the proposal is a step towards higher pricing, but don't expect a structural re-rating higher of the group until clarity early next year (once through the FERC process) around final new rules. Ultimately, we caution that higher capacity prices will continue to incentivize meaningful new gas generation (particularly in the MAAC region), as it prices continue to appear sufficient to incentivize new generation. Net-net, this would be a positive for pricing for generators to the tune of at least ~\$10/MW-day (assuming the bulk of DR shifts away from annual products), with a greater uplift to potentially constrained zones.

#### What's the upside case? We see three key decisively positive aspects.

We see the ability for generators to choose to bifurcate their capacity between the new CP bucket, and the residual 'base' capacity as a key benefit for generators with a large footprint, namely EXC. We suspect those with meaningful size could yet opt to clear their capacity with high EFOR rates in the base capacity bucket, pushing up prices for CP. This appears to be the most significant potential upside, with potential units like EXC's Calvert Cliffs (following this year's costly forced outage), a clear candidate to remain 'base'. Second, the rules around Demand Response (DR) would tighten significantly, requiring annual products to not just deliver consistently over a three-day period, but also setting the requirement to clear in the day-ahead auction. We suspect this could meaningfully reduce annual DR products, but is also likely to prove a contentious issue before FERC too (unclear if it will remain a requirement in our view). Lastly, while the Street continues to focus on the impacts on gas availability, we think the real target here is ineffective coal capacity (the bulk of the winter outages were coal units this winter, not gas.) We suspect this could yet knock marginal coal 'over the edge'. Gas appears largely insulated, with abundant options to add oil storage if truly pressed.

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**Julien Dumoulin-Smith**

Analyst

[julien.dumoulin-smith@ubs.com](mailto:julien.dumoulin-smith@ubs.com)

+1-212-713 9848

**Michael Weinstein**

Associate Analyst

[michael.weinstein@ubs.com](mailto:michael.weinstein@ubs.com)

+1-212-713 3182

**Paul Zimbardo**

Associate Analyst

[paul.zimbardo@ubs.com](mailto:paul.zimbardo@ubs.com)

+1-212-713 1033

## **It's not a panacea either, as penalties could impose real costs**

We caution also the penalty structure is likely to drive real pain to generators unable to meet peak load conditions. The proposed penalty structure would be equal to the LMP price during undeliverable periods \* undeliverable MWs. While this penalty appears less than what has been adopted in New England, we suspect this could yet evolve. We believe the penalty is not too punitive, suggesting the generators are likely to view this level as palatable (rather, we could see an argument the penalties are not sufficiently punitive). Overall, the added risk of penalties adds risk to plant incapable of delivering on commitments consistently. Among the most exposed portfolios in our view is PPL's Talen portfolio given consistent operational issues at its Susquehanna nuclear plant, coupled with a meaningful coal and legacy peaker portfolio in PJM (although we suspect some of these assets may not have fully cleared the auction regardless).

## **Proposal likely aimed at forcing older coal plants to retire or upgrade**

With coal units responsible for 34% of the forced outages occurring on Jan 7 (the peak of the vortex), the result of the proposed rules would be to force out older (unreliable) units to make a decision to either upgrade (mostly with equipment to ensure their continued operations during extreme cold events) or retire and make room for newer more reliable plants. We suspect that the requirements will require investors to increasingly discern which are legacy plants, with real reliability issues. We suspect this will force a re-evaluation upwards in the maintenance capex for legacy portfolios, such as FE's (although the quantity of which is unclear).

## **What about regional reliability needs? Could exacerbate constraints.**

Little discussed in the proposal will be how this requirement for Capacity Performance will be allocated by region. This is likely to prove especially contentious as requirements by locality potentially exacerbate capacity deficiencies in specific zones, like ATSI and PSEG. We read the proposal as generally favourable to both companies, pending a more full appreciation of their respective breakdown of capacity between the two buckets.

## **What about gas plants? It's really about dual fuel and short-term deals**

Additionally, the most likely result among gas generators will be the creation of oil-tank backup at most sites. We continue to believe that firm gas transportation across the deregulated power market is simply unfeasible in any reasonable timeframe; rather we suspect more manageable oil-storage tanks will be expanded (pending emission permits) or short-term asset management arrangements pursue (this would include effectively 'hedging' away the gas deliverability risk to an independent marketer, effectively securing gas during peak conditions only, a costly but effective option). We believe NJ is the most acutely impacted by gas deliverability issues. While gas supply issues have plagued New England – and proven the driving factor in pushing for such performance penalties – the example in PJM is quite the opposite.

## **Nuclear should come out ahead, but adds to operational risk profile**

Given nuclear unit's typically baseload dispatch profile, it would appear this asset class is largely a winner under the new rules, however, we view the risk on operating troubled assets as particularly acute. In particular, we perceive long-duration outages as placing some nuclear generators in a position to payback to PJM a net penalty (rather than receive capacity revenues) if down for any protracted period during summer months. We flag that Exelon overwhelmingly endorsed the construct on its latest 2Q call. We believe its enthusiasm for the

**Nuclear risk profile increased, but potential net beneficiary**

program is partially rooted in its larger market position within PJM, enabling it to choose whether to commit its portfolio (between CP and Base auctions). We believe an element of marketing monitoring will be a crucial and corresponding element to program implementation.

### **This is about winter reliability, not so much summer, right?**

Notably investors should focus on winter operational attributes of plants, rather than Summer, given the outages that occurred during the polar vortex last winter. Technically the highest penalties – and greatest risk period due to higher pricing remains the summer.

**Focus remains on winter availability of units, following polar vortex**

### **Understanding the parties' positions? Look to the New England docket.**

For a greater understanding of a breakdown of issues, we suggest investors turn to the FERC Docket approving New England's performance enhancements (which were *more* punitive in penalty, but substantially *less* so in placing greater capacity requirements, namely on Demand Response). This docket is ER14-1050. What we believe investors should bear in mind is the ambivalent attitude of generators towards these reforms, as many were quite cautious on significant operational and deliverability risk (specifically arising from transmission outages, which could prevent generators from meeting requirements).

### **New requirement to bid Day-Ahead for Demand Response is major burden**

Annual DR may qualify for the new CP product but in order to do so, it must meet all the same requirements as physical generation, including 24\*365 availability and the mandate to bid energy into the day-ahead markets every day they have committed to be available. We believe the bidding requirement is going to prove particularly onerous for most DR providers, potentially knocking out capacity from the CP auction and driving prices higher. Conversely, much of this DR will head into the non-CP market as Base, Extended Summer, or Limited DR, which is going to be subject to 10%-15% caps, driving prices for these products lower.

### **Seeking to tighten the requirements on delivery, but it's up to generators**

Among the most important: on-site fuel or dual-fuel backup for 3 days, with gas-fired plants ensuring fuel availability through some combination of firm transportation, firm commodity purchases, storage, balancing agreements, park & loan, either directly or through a third party asset management agreement. We read these requirements as more suggestive, with gas plants opting whether or not to take the associated deliverability risk of meeting added performance penalties.

**We read rules as largely a suggestion- and likely to evolve. Generators will decide whether to take risk on CP commitments**

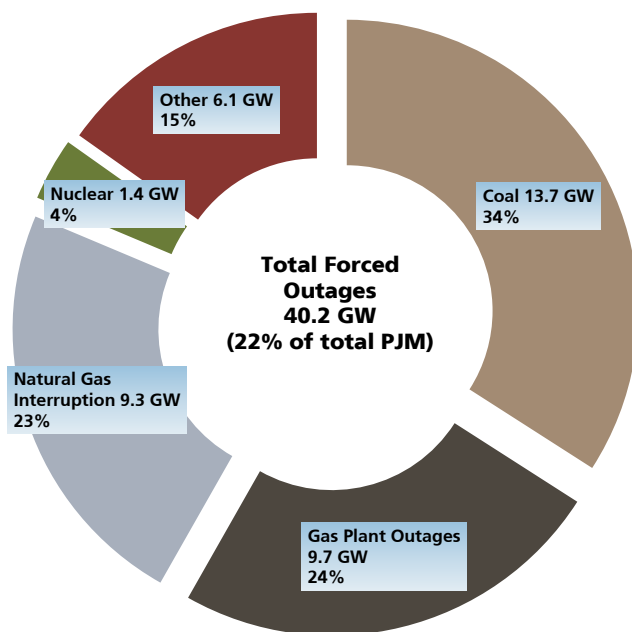
## Point by point:

### *Who didn't perform last January during the Vortex?*

During the Polar Vortex this winter, PJM has often noted that on the all-time peak winter load day (Jan 7), approximately 22% (40 GWs) of capacity was unavailable for various reasons. Of this amount, the largest chunk was due to 13.7 GW (34%) of coal unit outages, followed by 9.7 GW (24%) of gas outages, with another 9.3 GW (23%) of gas shut down for lack of available gas transportation. While the unavailability of firm gas transportation for power generation has received much attention, it is our understanding that PJM considers the high forced outage rate of the older coal fleet to be as big (if not more) of a problem.

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**Figure 1: Jan 7 Evening Peak Forced Outage in PJM**



Source: PJM Interconnection

### **Key Impacts from Rules:**

In our opinion, there are at least **three primary drivers** of these capacity reforms:

first, to force the retrofit or retirement of the remaining coal fleet (that isn't already retiring in 2015 for MATS);

second, to increase capacity payments to nuclear generators that have been rendered uneconomic under the current construct;

and third, to encourage gas-fired units to acquire oil-tank backup systems wherever possible.

## **New capacity product is akin to bifurcation already in DR products**

So this proposal adds a new capacity product – Capacity Performance (CP) – to boost reliability during the current "rapid transition" of fleet composition currently underway as a result of EPA-driven coal fleet retirements toward increased reliance on natural gas. Since fewer resources will meet the requirements for CP, the clearing price for it is likely to be materially higher than the other capacity products: Base Capacity, Limited DR and Extended Summer DR. Furthermore, PJM is proposing to extend the limitations on max quantity for Base Capacity, thus capping the amount of non-CP resources allowed to clear the RPM auctions (without decrements).

**Most capacity will be deemed/sell into Capacity Performance bucket**

**Only unreliable assets will commit to 'base' capacity bucket**

**How much of the new 20-30GW limit will be filled by Limited and Extended Summer DR? Not too much.** With total DR clearing in the last auction of ~12GW, we suspect the bulk of the capacity that will be applied towards the lower-reliability threshold will be conventional capacity. Of the cleared capacity, 1.4 GW from last year was designated as 'Annual' – and therefore would *not* be included towards the 20-30GW cap. We suspect a meaningful shift towards more limited products for Demand Response in the subsequent auction given the more onerous conditions attached (although this appears to us the most tenuous part of the DR proposal as part of its FERC application).

The real question [driving the upside on capacity prices] remains how much of the existing conventional capacity will opt to commit only to the base product? This remains particularly opaque at this point in time.

## **Timeline from here is still several months out – lots could change.**

Consistent with past years of PJM reform, the proposal will now go through the stakeholder process in order to arrive at a formal 205 FERC filing to adjust PJM's tariffs in the November timeframe. This would in turn establish a timeframe for FERC to respond to PJM by early next year (say ~January timeframe) in order to be in effect for next year's May auction for 2018/19 delivery period. While PJM had promised an expedited stakeholder process to arrive at – and implement these rules – we suspect substantial comment and consternation over the proposal could yet bog down the timeline in coming weeks. We remind investors that New England's proposed Performance Initiative (PI) provided particularly prickly through the stakeholder process, with substantial doubts as to whether PJM would even approve the reforms (we suspect these could yet evolve too).

**Preliminary studies show that the aggregate limit for all three non-CP products is likely in the 10%-15% range of total IRM required capacity.** This limitation could be expected to push resulting clearing prices for these segments down significantly should more than 18-28 GW of capacity not qualifying as CP attempt to bid for a space in the auction.

**Figure 2: Summary of Proposed Capacity Products**

Category	Availability Expectations	Limitation	Penalties	Penalty Window
Capacity Performance	All hours of the year	None	Real-time LMP	Year-round - Hot/Cold weather alert & Max Emergency alert
Base Capacity	All hours of the year	None	Real-time LMP for generators / Current DR penalties for DR	For generators - Max Emergency Generation Loaded in summer or winter / Current rules for DR
Summer Extended DR	May through October	10 hours/day	Current DR penalties	Summer - DR activations
Limited DR	June through September	10x6	Current DR penalties	Summer - DR activations

Source: PJM Interconnection

To qualify as a Capacity Performance (CP) product, the following conditions would apply:

- All generators must have on-site fuel (or dual-fuel backup capability) for at least 16 hours of continuous operation per day for three consecutive days. Gas-fired plants must also ensure fuel availability through some combination of firm transportation, firm commodity purchases, storage, balancing agreements, park & loan, either directly or through a third party asset management agreement.
- All generators must make appropriate investments in O&M and weatherization to ensure that the unit can operate as required through extreme hot or cold weather conditions
- Steeper penalties for non-performance: CP penalties are equal to MW commitment X non-compliance hours X real-time LMP. Note that "regular" non-CP DR that qualifies as Base Capacity, Limited, or Extended Summer is still subject to the existing DR penalties. To illustrate the effectiveness of the new penalty system, they cite examples of typical ComEd and PSEG generators that would have lost nearly 30% of their annual capacity revenue for a single day of non-performance on Jan 7, 2014 (the all-time winter peak load at the height of the polar vortex). Penalties are capped at 2.5x annual capacity revenue for Capacity Performance product and 1.5x for regular Base capacity product.
- All generators must be flexible with relatively short start times as specified
- Annual DR is treated identically to other generators and must be available 24x365 and capable of reducing demand as committed for the 16 peak hours of three consecutive days.
- Energy efficiency resources must demonstrate that they are effective year-round and not just during the summer (e.g., air conditioning controls are not eligible).
- CT's and other plants that run limited hours/year under emissions constraints must be able to perform at a minimum 10% annual capacity

**Steeper penalties for non-performance are probably the toughest new burden for existing older coal units and Annual DR with reliability problems.**

factor (876 hours). This also applies to DR that may be limited by environmental limitations on backup generators.

- All resources must deliver energy when PJM declares a Hot or Cold Weather Alert or a Maximum Emergency Generation Alert.
- External resources must be exempt from capacity import limits, intertied and dispatched by PJM with firm transmission; essentially equivalent to an internal resource.
- All CP resources must bid into day-ahead markets every day they are available – **including DR**. This new requirement is likely to have a strong negative impact on DR capacity revenues.
- All Qualifying Transmission Upgrades (QTUs) will bid in to RPM as a CP product since they increase CETL and reduce the requirement for Base Capacity and more limited DR.
- Annual capacity that doesn't meet these requirements is now called "Base Capacity"

**All CP resources must bid into day-ahead markets every day they are available – including DR. This new requirement is likely to have a strong negative impact on DR capacity revenues.**

### **Demand Resource Coupling now extended to include CP**

DR currently has the right to bid into multiple product categories (Annual, Ext Summer, and Limited), with PJM clearing bids based on lowest cost to the system. This concept now extends to bidding into both Capacity Performance as well as Base Capacity as well.

### **New limitations on non-CP resources**

New maximum clearing quantities for the non-CP resource categories (Base Annual, Ext Summer DR and Limited DR) are proposed, with the maximum based on the total for all three categories such that the displacement of Capacity Performance resources results in a 10 percent increase in the Loss of Load Expectation (LOLE) to 1.1 events every 10 years (instead of the standard 1 event). These limitations would ensure maximum reliability at least cost.

**Preliminary studies show that the aggregate limit for all three non-CP products is likely in the 10%-15% range of total IRM required capacity. This limitation could be expected to push resulting clearing prices down significantly.**

*Initial proposal can be found here:*

<http://www.pjm.com/documents/reports.aspx>

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<b>Exelon Corp.</b> <sup>4, 5, 6a, 6c, 7, 16, 22</sup>	EXC.N	Neutral	N/A	US\$32.25	21 Aug 2014
<b>FirstEnergy Corp.</b> <sup>16</sup>	FE.N	Sell	N/A	US\$33.46	21 Aug 2014
<b>NRG Energy Inc.</b> <sup>16</sup>	NRG.N	Buy	N/A	US\$30.01	21 Aug 2014
<b>PPL Corporation</b> <sup>2, 3, 4, 5, 6a, 6c, 7, 16</sup>	PPL.N	Neutral	N/A	US\$34.29	21 Aug 2014
<b>Public Service Enterprise Group</b> <sup>6b, 7, 16</sup>	PEG.N	Neutral	N/A	US\$36.45	21 Aug 2014

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