

# Innovative reports to help utility regulators, policymakers and electric industry

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The electric industry in the U.S. is undergoing significant changes for a number of reasons, including new and improved technologies, changing customer desires, low load growth in many regions, and changes in federal and state policies and regulations.

A new series of reports commissioned by the U.S. Department of Energy's Office of Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability through Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory's (Berkeley Lab) Electricity Markets and Policy Group will advance the discussion by examining issues related to electric industry regulation and utility business models. The unique point-counterpoint approach sharpens the debate on tradeoffs in achieving multiple objectives for the electric system, including reliability, affordability, cleaner resources and more flexibility.

The reports in the [Future Electric Utility Regulation](#) series will each be written by different thought-leaders in the electric industry, while Berkeley Lab—which serves as technical editor and contributes to the report writing—manages the series.

## **The first two reports were recently released.**

The first report, 'Electric Industry Structure and Regulatory Responses in a High Distributed Energy Resources Future,' discusses likely changes in electric industry structure and regulation in the year 2030. The authors, Steve Corneli of NRG and Steve Kihm of Seventhwave, develop new

tools to examine the relationship between natural monopoly, competitive alternatives and regulatory responses considering both potential profitability and the social benefits of coordination. They extend the analysis to a world where distributed resources such as rooftop solar and storage are competitive with grid power in price and performance and describe two alternative (but not mutually exclusive) views of the future.

The second report, 'Distribution Systems in a High Distributed Energy Resources Future: Planning, Market Design, Operation and Oversight,' covers distribution system planning and markets in such a future. The report offers a practical three-stage framework to guide the evolution of utility distribution systems with growth in distributed resources, lays out three possible models for future operation of distribution systems, and considers pros and cons of an independent distribution system operator versus the utility serving in that role. Authors are Paul De Martini of ICF Consulting and Lorenzo Kristov with the California ISO.

### **Additional reports underway in the series, and expected publication dates, include:**

- Performance-Based Regulation in a High Distributed Energy Resources Future—December 2015
- Distribution System Pricing for Distributed Energy Resources—January 2016
- Future of Resource Planning—March 2016
- Recovery of Utility Fixed Costs: Utility, Consumer, Environmental and Economist Perspectives—March 2016

Provided by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

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