Challenge
There is growing demand to build new transmission lines in the West. The demand is being driven by aging lines, an increasing need for energy, and the desire to tap emerging energy sources located in remote areas of the region.

Siting and permitting a new transmission line is difficult and requires review and approval of overlapping and sometimes conflicting state, federal, local and tribal regulations. This complexity can create confusion, project delays, and added expenses for project developers, regulators, and ultimately the public.

The Western Governors’ Association (WGA) convened a Transmission Siting Task Force to identify ways to help developers and the public better understand and navigate the complex siting and permitting process.

Solution
Based on the Transmission Siting Task Force’s recommendations, WGA has developed an online toolkit to assist the full diversity of stakeholders during the transmission siting and permitting processes. The Regulatory and Permitting Information Desktop Toolkit -- or RAPID -- will integrate important information related to potential transmission routes and key permitting and siting requirements of federal and state agencies into one convenient website.

The RAPID Toolkit will help facilitate communication between developers and agencies, and allow the sharing of best practices among all stakeholders. The goal of this effort is to streamline the regulatory processes and reduce the time needed for permitting new projects.

This WGA effort will build upon a website that the National Renewable Energy Laboratory has developed for the Department of Energy regarding siting and permitting for geothermal and solar power. The bulk transmission section is modeled after The Geothermal Regulatory Roadmap, which was beta tested in 2012 and 2013 with overwhelmingly positive response from industry and agencies.

Audience for RAPID Toolkit
The following stakeholders may find RAPID beneficial:
• Transmission line developers and their consulting teams;
• Local, state, tribal and federal government staff, particularly those new to transmission siting and permitting;
• Senior state and federal regulators looking for ways to simplify and improve the process;
• NGOs and community leaders who want to understand the siting process and their potential roles;
• Diverse teams working on the development of a specific line and needing a common understanding of the regulatory process.

Visit the RAPID website at: http://en.openei.org/wiki/RAPID
What Will the RAPID Toolkit Include?

- **Regulatory Flowchart Library:** Regulatory flowcharts for the transmission permitting processes required by western states, U.S. Department of the Interior and U.S. Forest Service provide a graphic, easy-to-follow depiction of the work required to site and permit transmission lines within these jurisdictions.

- **Resource Library:** This collection of links to regulations, permit guides, agency guidance, permits, and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) will help transmission siting stakeholders. The library will also contain a GIS mapping tool and links to public tools housed on other websites.

- **NEPA Database:** A document database of National Environmental Policy Act filings is searchable by state, agencies involved, and mitigation strategies employed or required by agencies.

- **Best Practices:** A collection of successful project permitting practices, such as MOUs, NEPA documents or NEPA processes, statements of need for transmission lines, and public involvement processes.

Updating RAPID

The RAPID website is on a wiki-based platform, similar to Wikipedia, which enables logged-in users to edit and add information. With an active community of users, the wiki site would be kept up-to-date with new information and best practices. Active users can also monitor external changes and accept or reject any proposed changes made to their regulatory process information.

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