

Delaying large-scale transmission increases costs and reduces benefits for consumers

November 2025 | Zach Zimmerman, Rob Gramlich, and Michael Goggin

A new report from Grid Strategies quantifies how delays in developing large-scale transmission affect consumers and the broader economy. It finds that delaying needed expansion of the electric grid imposes significant costs on consumers by postponing or forfeiting key benefits, while also hindering economic growth and national security objectives – including those tied to AI.

Based on a review of eight benefit-cost studies for transmission portfolios across the country, the report finds that **for every \$1 billion investment in large-scale transmission that is delayed, it costs consumers approximately \$150 to \$370 million in lost net benefits for each year of delay.** These losses stem from reduced reliability, diminished access to lower-cost generation, and foregone efficiencies.

Transmission delivers broad societal benefits. A modernized grid is essential for managing rising electricity demand – particularly from data

centers, AI, and power-intensive manufacturing – and for supporting national security.

Transmission projects are significant infrastructure investments that support a skilled workforce and bolster domestic manufacturing and supply chain resilience. Based on Grid Strategies' review of economic impact studies, **each \$1 billion of delayed transmission investment defers an estimated 11,000 to 25,000 direct, indirect, and induced job-years.**

Given the scale of transmission needed to meet demand, the report stresses that timely, large-scale, coordinated transmission planning and development are essential to securing the full range of consumer benefits and avoiding escalating costs of inaction. It underscores that transmission delivers benefits that far exceed its cost, and that delaying projects harms consumers and weakens the economy and national security.

Benefits lost from delaying transmission one-year (per \$billion invested)

