estimating the cost of building peakers at various times in the past. But many existing plants could not be built today as they currently exist — a new coal plant may require scrubbers, nitrogen oxide reduction, closed-system cooling and other features that the existing coal plant does not have.[102] Other plant types, such as oil- and gas-fired boiler units, no longer make economic sense and would not be built today. Determining the cost of building a new 1970s-style coal plant or a gas-fired steam plant may be much more difficult than determining the cost of peakers in the 1970s. And for some technologies, the costs of new construction do not meaningfully reflect the costs of the plants currently embedded in rates. For example, as expensive as the nuclear units of the 1980s were, the nuclear units currently under construction are much more expensive. Conversely, the costs of wind turbines have fallen dramatically since the 1980s. Comparing today's costs for those resources to the costs of new peakers would probably overstate the energy-related portion of the costs of an old nuclear unit and understate the energy-related portion of the costs of an old wind farm.

Whether the comparison uses gross plant in service, net plant in service or hypothetical new construction, the data sources should be as consistent as possible. It would not be appropriate to compare the current book value of an actual plant with the cost of a hypothetical plant in today's dollars (Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, 1995, p. 18).

Table 14 shows the equivalent peaker method analysis that Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota (a subsidiary of Xcel Energy) used in its 2013 rate case filing (Peppin, 2013, Schedule 2, p. 4).[103] The capacity portion for each plant type is the ratio of the peaking cost ($770 per kW) to the plant type cost. For example, the peaking cost is 20.9% of the cost of the nuclear plant, so 20.9% of the nuclear investment is treated as capacity-related. The company uses its estimates of the replacement costs of each type of generation and applies the results to each capital cost component (gross plant, accumulated depreciation, deferred taxes, etc.).

Table 14. Equivalent peaker method analysis using replacement cost estimates

Resource type	Cost per kW	Capacity-related share of cost	Energy-related share of cost
Peaking	$770	100%	0%
Nuclear	$3,689	20.9%	79.1%
Fossil*	$1,976	39.0%	61.0%
Combined cycle	$1,020	75.4%	24.6%
Hydro	$4,519	17.0%	83.0%

*The "fossil" resource type appears to be coal- or gas-fired steam.

Source: Peppin, M. (2013, November 4). Direct testimony on behalf of Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota. Minnesota Public Utilities Commission Docket No. E002/GR-13-868

This is not a very realistic comparison, for reasons discussed above. Many of the plants could not be built today, and some have complicated histories of retrofits and repowering. The nuclear replacement cost appears to be particularly optimistic compared with the cost of nuclear power plants under construction today.

Table 15 on the next page shows an alternative analysis based on the Xcel Energy Minnesota subsidiary's actual investments in each plant type at the end of 2017, from Page 402 of its FERC Form 1 report (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, n.d.).

The results of the two analyses are generally consistent, except for the classification of the combined cycle resources. These plants are of more recent vintage than the others; a fairer comparison, using peaker costs contemporaneous with the in-service dates of each of the other resources, probably would result in a lower energy classification of the combined cycle resources and higher energy classification for the coal and nuclear units.

The equivalent peaker method does have limitations. Perhaps most importantly, it requires cost comparisons of individual generation units with peakers of the same vintage. Utilities installed combustion turbines as far back as the early 1950s, but the technology was widely installed only in the late 1960s. The oldest remaining combustion turbine owned

102 Many hydroelectric projects could not be licensed if they were proposed today.

103 The company calls this a plant stratification analysis.

Table 15. Equivalent peaker method analysis using 2017 gross plant in service

		Plant in service		Excess over combustion turbine		
Resource type	**Capacity (MWs)**	**Cost**	**Cost per kW**	**Cost**	**Cost per kW**	**Energy-related share of cost**
Combustion turbine	1,114	$291,000,000	$261	N/A	N/A	0%
Nuclear	1,657	$3,448,000,000	$2,081	$3,016,000,000	$1,820	87%
Coal	2,390	$2,156,000,000	$902	$1,532,000,000	$641	71%
Combined cycle	1,266	$939,000,000	$742	$609,000,000	$481	65%
All resources	6,427	$6,834,000,000	$1,063	$5,157,000,000	$802	75%

Data source: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Form 1 database records for Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota

by a utility filing cost data (Madison Gas and Electric's Nine Springs) entered service in 1964. The paucity of earlier data complicates the use of the equivalent peaker method for classifying the costs of older plants. This problem is gradually fading away, as all pre-1970 nuclear is gone and much of the pre-1970 fossil-fueled steam capacity has been retired or is nearing retirement, but the issue remains for classifying hydro plant costs and the few remaining old fossil fuel plants (U.S. Energy Information Administration, 1992).

One solution to the problem of classifying the investment in very old, little-used steam plants is to treat that cost as entirely demand-related. Since these units often represent a very small portion of generation rate base, this solution may be reasonable.

A full equivalent peaker analysis would compare the product of the actual depreciation charges for the nonpeaking plants with the product of the peaker depreciation rate and the peaker-equivalent gross investment for the same reliability contribution. Since the classification of rate base usually ignores the higher accumulated depreciation of peakers compared with the accumulated depreciation for other generation resources of the same vintage (which tends to overstate the demand-related portion of generation rate base), it is also generally symmetrical to classify generation depreciation expense as proportional to the demand-related portion of gross plant (which will tend to understate the demand-related portion). If classification of one of these cost components is refined to reflect the difference in depreciation rates, the other cost component should be similarly adjusted.

As is true for plant in service, the nonfuel O&M costs of steam plants are generally much higher than the nonfuel O&M costs of combustion turbines. Typical O&M costs per kW-year are $1 to $10 for combustion turbines, $10 to $15 for combined cycle plants, $10 to $20 for oil- and gas-fired steam plants, $40 to $80 for coal plants and more than $100 for nuclear plants. Table 16 shows how the capacity-related O&M for conventional generation might be classified between energy and demand, using the utility's actual nonfuel O&M

Table 16. Equivalent peaker method classification of nonfuel operations and maintenance costs

		Nonfuel operations and maintenance		Excess over combustion turbine		
Resource type	**Capacity (MWs)**	**Cost**	**Cost per kW-year**	**Cost**	**Cost per kW-year**	**Energy-related share of cost**
Combustion turbine	1,114	$4,170,000	$3.74	N/A	N/A	0%
Nuclear	1,657	$215,880,000	$130.28	$209,680,000	$126.54	97%
Coal	2,390	$33,490,000	$14.01	$24,550,000	$10.27	73%
Combined cycle	1,266	$16,380,000	$12.94	$11,650,000	$9.20	71%

Data source: Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Form 1 database records for Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota costs; the data are 2017 numbers from FERC Form 1, Page 402, for Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, n.d.).

Table 16 does not include the company's wind resources, which average about $30 per kW-year in O&M, since MISO credits wind with unforced capacity value at only about 15% of rated capacity, or about 17% of the value of an installed MW of typical conventional generation. The demand-related portion of the wind capacity is thus less than $1 per kW-year, and the wind O&M is almost all energy-related.[104]

Operational Characteristics Methods

The operational characteristics methods classify generation resources (units, resource types, purchases) based on their capacity factors or operating factors. Newfoundland Hydro classifies as energy-related a portion of the cost of each oil-fueled steam plant equal to the plant's capacity factor (Parmesano, Rankin, Nieto and Irastorza, 2004, p. 22). At first blush, this approach appears to roughly follow the use of the resource, with plants that are used rarely being treated as primarily demand-related and those used in most hours classified as predominantly energy-related. Unfortunately, the use of capacity factor effectively classifies more of the cost to demand as the reliability of the resource declines.

A better approach would be to use the resource's operating factor, which is the ratio of its output to its equivalent availability (that is, its potential output, if it were used whenever available). This approach would classify any resource that is dispatched whenever it is available (e.g., nuclear, wind and solar) as essentially 100% energy-related. That may be seen as an overstatement, since those resources generally provide some demand-related benefits and are sometimes built to increase generation reliability, as well as to produce energy with little or no fuel cost.

9.1.3 Joint Classification and Allocation Methods

Although most cost of service studies classify capital investments and capacity-related O&M as either demand-related or energy-related, classify power and short-term variable costs as energy-related, and then allocate energy-related and demand-related costs in separate steps, two approaches accomplish both at once. These are the probability-of-dispatch (POD) and **decomposition** approaches.

Probability of Dispatch

The POD approach is the better of the two.[105] Methods using this approach are generically referred to as probability of dispatch, even for versions that do not explicitly incorporate probability computations.[106] A simplified illustrative example of power plant dispatch is shown in Figure 33 on the next page, under the utility load duration curve. The example uses only four types of generation: nuclear, coal, gas combined cycle and a peaking resource consisting of a mix of demand response, storage and combustion turbines. An actual POD analysis might break the generation data down to the plant or even unit level and may need to include load management and demand response as resources. This simplified example also does not illustrate maintenance, forced outages or ramping constraints.

Off-system sales and purchases can be added or subtracted from the load duration curve when they occur, or they can be subtracted or added to the generation available in each hour or period. Similar adjustments may be needed to reflect the charging of storage and operation of behind-the-meter generation.

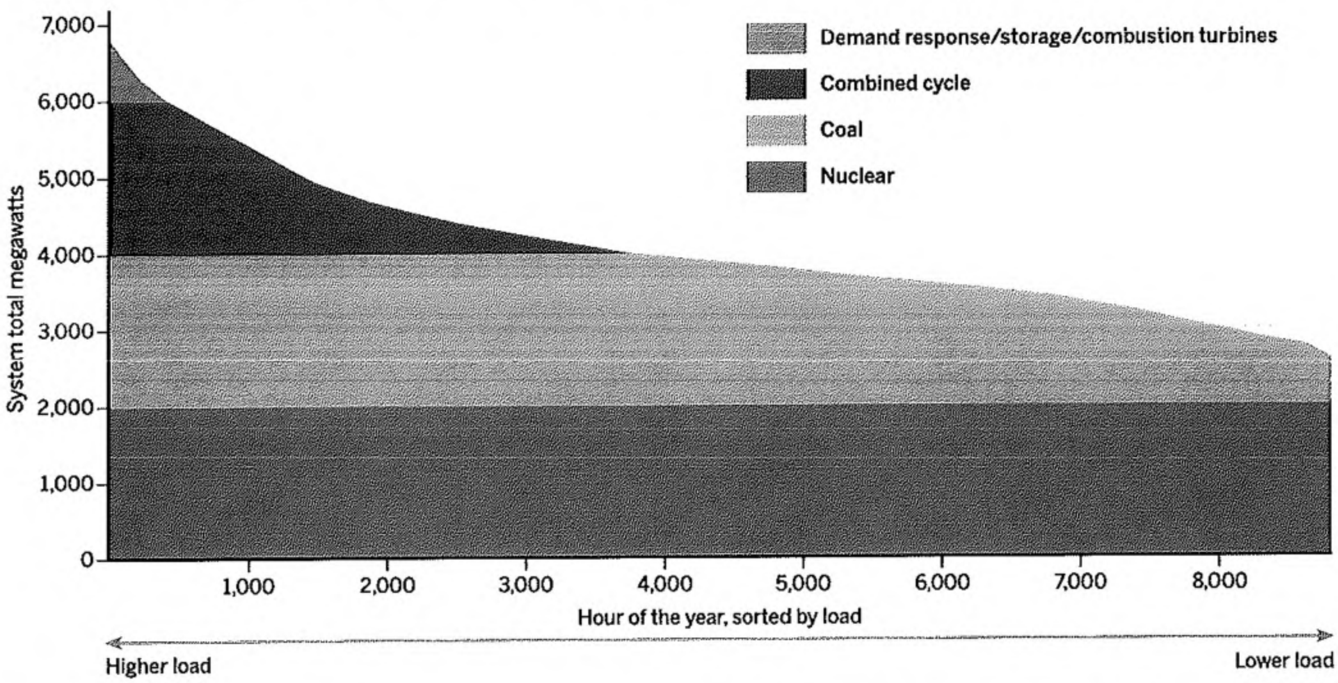
Figure 34 shows the composition of demand in each hour for the same illustrative system, divided among three customer classes. In this example, the residential class peak load occurs when load is high but not near the system peak.

104 The nonfuel O&M costs per kW for Northern States Power's two small waste-burning plants and its small run-of-river hydro plant are even higher than the nuclear O&M and hence are effectively entirely energy-related, even if the hydro plant provides firm capacity.

105 The Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities explained its preference for this method as follows: "The modified peaker POD results in a fair allocation of embedded capacity costs because this method recognizes the factors that cause the utility to incur power plant capital costs and because this method allocates to the beneficiaries of fuel savings the capitalized energy costs that produce those savings" (1989, p. 113).

106 For an example of the POD method, see La Capra (1992).

Figure 33. Simplified generation dispatch duration illustrative example



This situation might arise for a winter-peaking residential class in a summer-peaking system, or an evening-peaking residential class in a midday-peaking system.

Note that the three customer classes need not peak at the same time. On a high-load summer day, the primary industrial class might peak in the morning, the secondary commercial class at 1 p.m., and the residential class in the evening. Large commercial buildings typically experience their peak load in the summer, since large buildings require cooling in most climates. If a large percentage of home

Figure 34. Illustrative customer class load in each hour

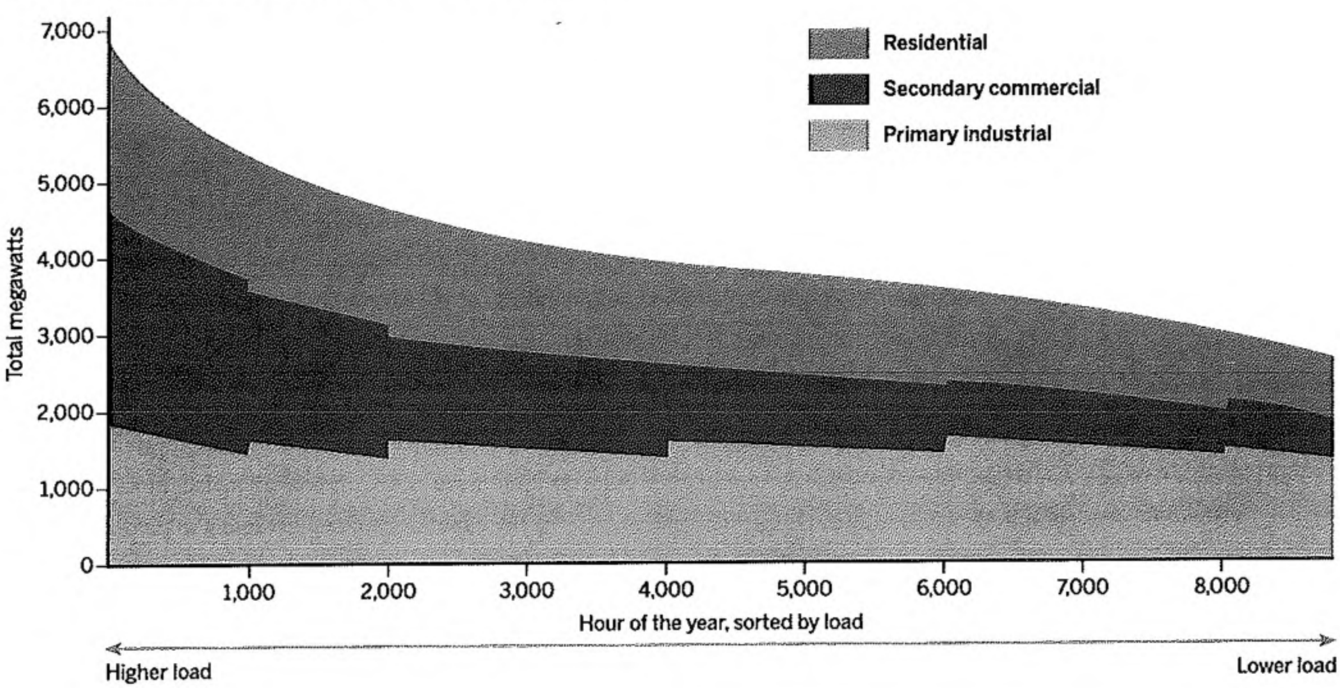


Table 17. Class share of each generation type under probability-of-dispatch allocation

	Generation source			
Customer class	Nuclear	Coal	Combined cycle	Peaking resources
Residential	34%	34%	32%	31%
Secondary commercial	28%	29%	39%	42%
Primary industrial	38%	37%	29%	27%

heating is electric, the residential class is likely to experience its highest load in the winter, even in places like Florida. The industrial class loads may peak in a variety of seasons, driven by vacation and maintenance schedules, variation in inputs (e.g., agricultural products) and demand, and other factors. The system peak may occur at a time different from all of the customer class NCP demands.

Table 17 shows how the costs of each generation resource would be allocated to the classes in the illustrative example in Figure 34. In the lowest-load hours, when nuclear is serving 80% of the energy load, the industrial class uses half the system energy and hence half the nuclear output; in the highest-load hours, when nuclear is serving about 29% of the load, the industrial class uses about 27% of the system energy. Averaged over the year, the industrial class uses 38% of the nuclear output. In the hours that the combustion turbines are running, the industrial class uses only 27% of the peaking resources' output, since the residential and commercial classes dominate loads in that period.

The commercial class is responsible for the largest share of the summer peak and hence of the combustion turbine costs but the smallest part of the low-load hours and hence the lowest share of the nuclear and coal costs. Every class pays for a share of each type of generation.[107]

The POD method has been applied with a wide range of detail. The generation "dispatch" over the year may represent historical or forecast operation, equivalent availability or capacity factor, seasonal variation (due to maintenance outages, hydro output, natural gas price, off-system purchases and sales), actual hourly output (reflecting planned and random outages and unit ramping constraints) and other variants. The POD method is thus one approach to hourly allocation. Ideally, dispatch and class loads should use the available data to match costs with usage as realistically as possible.

The POD approach has some limitations. Most importantly, it does not consider the reason that investments were incurred, only the way they are currently used. The costs of an expensive coal plant no longer needed for baseload service and converted to burn natural gas and operating at a 10% capacity factor to meet peak loads might be allocated in exactly the same way as the costs of a much less expensive combustion turbine operating at 10% capacity factor.[108] The excess costs of the converted coal plant are due to its historical role of providing large amounts of energy at then-attractive fuel costs; those costs were not incurred for the 10% of hours with highest demand. The same considerations arise for other steam plants that operate at much lower capacity factors than they were planned for and justified by. Some hydro plants have also changed operating patterns from their original use, either running for more hours to maintain downstream flow or for fewer hours due to reduced water supply. Peaking capacity is used to provide a range of ancillary services at many load levels, including upward ramping services (when load surges during the day or wind and solar output falls) and operating reserves (especially to back up large generation and transmission facilities). Reflecting these considerations may require modification of the inputs to the POD analysis, which considers only current use, not historical causation.

Second, the POD method spreads the cost of each resource equally to all hours or energy output, assigning the same cost of a totally baseload plant (with a 100% capacity factor) to the lowest-load off-peak hour as to the system peak hour. That approach comports with some concepts of equity and cost responsibility: The cost of each resource is allocated

107 If this example had included a street lighting class, that class might not have been allocated any combustion turbine costs if the lights would not be on in the summer peak hours. In a more realistic example, including outages of the baseload plants, the combustion turbines probably would operate in some hours with street lighting loads and the lighting class would be allocated some combustion turbine costs.

108 In the simpler forms of POD, the costs of both plants would be spread over the top 10% of hours. In more sophisticated approaches that map generation to actual operating hours, the steam plant would generate in many hours with load lower than the top 10%, while missing some of the top 10%, due to limits on load following.

proportionately to the classes that use it. On the other hand, it can be argued that the hours with higher marginal energy costs contribute more of the rationale for investing in that resource and that, in a sense, each kWh of usage at high-load times should bear more of the resource's investment-related costs than should each kWh in the off-peak hours. This concern can be addressed by weighting the energy over the hours, such as in proportion to some measure of hourly market price.

Third, it is important that the load and dispatch data be representative of the cost causation or resource usage in the years for which the cost allocation will be in place. For example, a baseload plant may have operated at only 40% capacity factor in the most recent year because of major maintenance or availability of economic energy imports. Or load and dispatch in the last 12 months of data may be atypical because of an extremely cold winter and mild summer. The POD allocation should be based on weather-normalized dispatch and load, just as the rate case costs allowed by the regulator and included in the cost of service study should reflect weather-normalized load.

Decomposition

Class obligations for generation costs have occasionally been addressed by dividing the generation resource into separate generation systems serving hypothetical loads for portions of the utility's customers, such as just the residential customers, just the commercial customers and just the industrial customers. For example, industrial customers in Nova Scotia have argued that their high-load-factor demands could be served by the capacity and energy of some set of baseload plants, where those costs are lower than the average generation cost per kWh (Drazen and Mikkelsen, 2013, pp. 11-16). The industrial advocates for this approach assume that the flat industrial load would be served exclusively by baseload plants and that all other costs should be allocated to other classes.[109] A similar approach might inappropriately be suggested to justify allocating the highest-cost resources to customers with behind-the-meter solar generation and lower-cost resources to nonsolar customers whose load does not dip in midday. The method might also be used to test whether classes are paying for enough capacity to cover their energy and reliability requirements.

In the context of resources stacked under a load duration curve, such as that shown in Figure 33 on Page 119, the decomposition approach allocates the resource mix horizontally, rather than the vertical allocation used in the POD method. Figure 35 on the next page illustrates the decomposition approach.

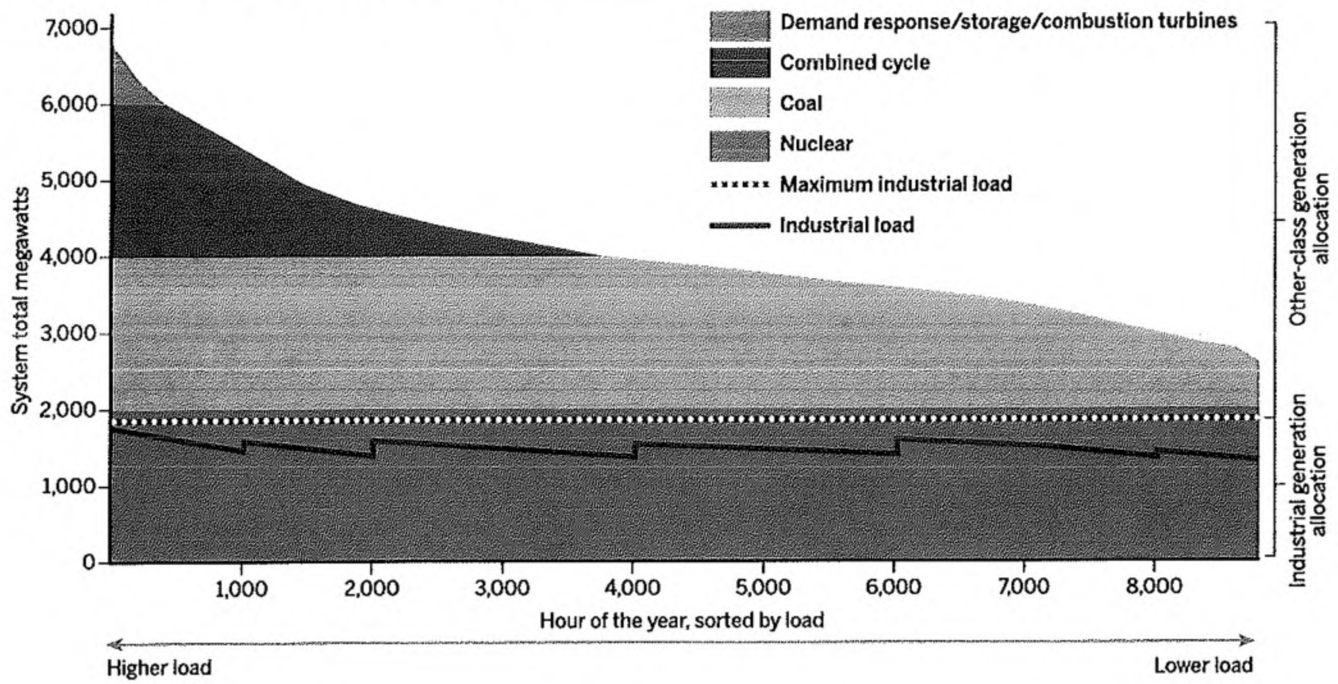
In essence, the decomposition method treats the utility as if it were multiple separate utilities. In the case of Figure 35, the utility system is decomposed into an all-nuclear system with enough capacity to meet the industrial peak load, and a utility with a little nuclear and all the other resources to serve all other load. Whether the industrial customers would support this allocation would usually depend on the cost of the nuclear resources compared with the system average.

The decomposition approach conflicts with reality in many ways, including:

1. The reserve requirements for the decomposed systems would be driven by their noncoincident class peaks or high loads (if they are assumed to be fully free-standing), requiring additional hypothetical capacity for utilities that are not already extensively overbuilt. If the decomposition assumes that the multiple class-specific systems would operate in a power pool, contribution to the system peaks would drive capacity requirements.
2. A system with a high load factor and relatively few large units would require a very high reserve margin (as discussed in Subsection 5.1.1) to cover fixed outages and even maintenance outages. The reserve units would operate in many hours (since the system load would always be near the allocated baseload capacity).
3. A baseload-only system would require a large amount of backup supply energy, either from hypothetical units or as purchases from the other classes.
4. The decomposition approach is usually designed to assign the lowest-cost resources to the industrial class,

109 A decomposition method that accounts for all relevant factors may not show an advantage for industrial customers. In Alberta, a related method to the decomposition method was presented to demonstrate that baseload power for industrial customers would be considerably more expensive than the demand-based cost allocation of the existing system for the industrial class (Marcus, 1987).

Figure 35. Illustration of decomposition approach to allocating resource mix



shifting all the costs of mistakes and market changes onto the other classes. That includes excess capacity (even excess baseload and capacity made excess by decline in industrial loads), the costs of fuel conversion and the high costs of plants built as baseload but currently operated as peakers.

5. It is not clear how variable renewables and other unconventional resources would be incorporated into the decomposed utility systems.

It is possible (if not certain) that the decomposition approach could be expanded and revised to create a viable classification and allocation method, but at this point no such model has been developed.

9.1.4 Other Technologies and Issues

Several types of generation costs do not fit neatly into the classification methods discussed in the previous sections. Some of those costs, such as hydro resources and purchased power, have been part of utility cost structures since before the development of formal cost of service studies. Others, such as excess capacity and uneconomic investments, became prominent in recent decades. More recently, utilities have needed to deal with allocating nonhydro renewable costs; a few utilities already have significant costs for nonhydro storage (mostly batteries) and most will need to deal with those costs in the future. As technologies change, new cost allocation challenges will arise — for new resources, repurposed existing assets and newly obsolete resources.

Fuel Switching and Pollution Control Costs

Many fuel conversion investments have been undertaken to reduce fuel costs or increase the reliability of fuel supply for high-capacity-factor power plants. This category includes:

- Conversion of oil-fired steam plants to burn coal in the 1970s and 1980s (most of which have since been retired).
- Conversion of gas-fired plants to burn oil in the 1970s, when the supply of gas was limited.
- Conversion of oil-fired plants to co-firing or dual firing with gas since the 1990s to achieve environmental compliance and reduce fuel costs.
- Conversion of coal-fired plants to partial or full operation on gas to achieve environmental compliance.
- Conversion of coal-fired plants to partial or full

operation on biomass to achieve environmental compliance and RPS credit.[110]

- Conversion of coal-fired plants to partial or full operation on petroleum coke, tire-derived fuel or other waste to reduce fuel costs.

These investments and resulting longer-term operating costs may reasonably be classified as 100% energy-related.

Most pollution control retrofit costs are incurred to comply with regulatory requirements to reduce the environmental effects of fossil-fueled plants and to allow them to continue burning low-cost fuel at high capacity factors. Peaking units that are needed only in a few high-load hours annually can afford to burn expensive clean fuels and are often allowed to have higher emissions rates since they operate so little. Hence, the need for the pollution control is driven primarily by the energy-serving function of the nonpeaking fossil plants. These environmental costs are most often related to emissions standards for air pollutants, but some substantial costs are driven by the need to protect water quality and aquatic life and to meet other health and environmental standards. As a result, the identifiable capital investment and nondispatch O&M costs of pollution controls may reasonably be classified as 100% energy-related or allocated in proportion to class usage of energy during the times that the plant is operated, to recognize the causes of the environmental retrofits.[111]

Excess Capacity and Excess Costs

Utilities sometimes add generation that is not needed to maintain adequate reliability. Some of that excess capacity may result from the lumpiness of generation additions or declining load, with no clear connection to the classification of the additional costs. Other times the excess is the result of the long lead times for certain baseload generation (especially nuclear, but also some coal and hydro facilities), which can result in a plant being completed after the need for its capacity has vanished and the value of its energy output has decreased dramatically. One or both of those outcomes befell many of the nuclear plants and some coal plants in the late 1970s and 1980s. The long lead times are generally the result of choices to build plants to produce large amounts of energy at low variable costs; in those cases, there is a reasonable presumption that the costs of the excess capacity are due to anticipated or actual energy requirements.[112]

Excess capacity can be priced at the costs of contemporaneous peaking capacity and allocated among classes in proportion to the differences between projected class contribution to peak loads (at the time commitments were undertaken) and actual current class loads. Excess capitalized energy costs (net of equivalent peaking capacity costs and any fuel savings) similarly can be allocated in proportion to the differences between class projected energy requirements and their actual energy requirements.

Table 18 on the next page provides an illustration of the allocation of excess capacity among classes to reflect responsibility for the excess. In this illustration, the actual load in the rate case test year is 600 MWs lower than the load forecast at the time the utility committed to the excess capacity. Because of other adjustments in supply planning, the utility has about 480 MWs of excess capacity, which would support about 400 MWs more load than the actual need. That 400-MW excess is allocated among the classes in proportion to their shortfalls in load.[113]

This adjusted peak load could be used in allocating peaking resources or the peaking-equivalent portion of all generation resource costs. A similar approach could be applied to allocate the additional costs of having a baseload-heavy resources mix resulting from actual energy use being lower than the forecast usage.

Another source of excess capacity is the addition of clean resources to allow the reduced use of dirty older generation, which thus allows the utility to meet environmental

110 In principle, biomass conversion might also reduce fuel costs, although that is not necessarily the case.

111 Nova Scotia Power uses this adjustment to the average-and-peak approach (Nova Scotia Power, 2013a, p. 37).

112 Accounting for a suboptimal system resource mix (and other inefficiencies) is also discussed in detail in Chapter 18.

113 Any load shortfall due to increased utility efficiency efforts since the commitment to build the capacity should generally be excluded from the shortfall.

Table 18. Allocation of 400 MWs excess capacity to reflect load risk

	Forecast load (MWs)	Actual load (MWs)	Load differential	Share of load shortfall	Allocated excess (MWs)	Load for allocation (MWs)
Residential	1,400	1,500	+100	0%	0	1,500
Secondary commercial	2,300	2,000	-300	43%	171	2,171
Primary industrial	2,700	2,300	-400	57%	229	2,529
Total	6,400	5,800	+600	100%	400	6,200

requirements, reduce fuel costs or meet portfolio standards.[114] Even though these new clean resources may raise the reliability of generation supply (usually above an existing adequate level), their costs were incurred as a result of energy loads; in these cases, the excess capacity should be recognized as energy-related.[115]

Aside from excess capacity, changing economic, technological and regulatory conditions can result in a facility providing a service different from its original purpose. For example, a previously baseload generation plant may run on only a few days annually or may house a distribution service center. The plant may still have unrecovered capital costs, environmental cleanup obligations or other burdens. If the full cost of the repurposed facility exceeds its value in its new use, the excess costs should be allocated based on its former use as a baseload generating plant.[116]

Finally, the amortization of a canceled generation plant is attributable to the reason the utility spent the money on the plant, long before the plant's costs and benefits were clear. Many nuclear plants were canceled after the utility spent more on the plant than the entire original expected cost, most recently the Summer plant in South Carolina. A number of coal plants were also canceled after the commitment of substantial funds.

Hydroelectric Generation

The classification of hydroelectric generation presents some issues that differ from those of thermal generation.[117] First, many large generation facilities installed prior to 1960 are still in operation, so their costs are difficult to classify using the equivalent peaker method. Most of them could not be built today, given environmental siting constraints, so comparing new construction costs with new peaker costs may not be practical. Second, each conventional hydro facility consists of turbines and dams (and other civil works), which have different and varying effects on the energy and

114 MidAmerican Energy, for example, will have added over 6,000 MWs of wind in the period 2004-2020 to reduce fuel costs to its retail customers but has kept most of its fossil generation in operation (Hammer, 2018). This could result in a MISO-recognized reserve margin of 26% in unforced capacity terms in certain areas (Hammer, 2018, Table 3). This is nearly three times the typical MISO-required unforced capacity reserve around 8% (Midcontinent Independent System Operator, 2018, p. 23).

115 Texas and Iowa established their initial renewable portfolio standards in terms of installed capacity, rather than the more common energy percentage requirement, and several jurisdictions have established targets for specific renewables (e.g., solar, offshore wind). See Texas Utilities Code § 39.904 and Iowa Code Ch. 476 §§ 41-44. The motivations for these targets, however they are formulated, have been primarily related to reducing fuel costs and emissions. Both Texas and Iowa have exceeded their requirements and continue to add renewables to reduce fuel and other energy costs.

116 Excess costs can also be associated with underutilized or repurposed facilities. For example, a retired steam power plant may be used to warehouse distribution equipment; the generator may be operated as a synchronous condenser to support the transmission system; or a portion of the plant site may remain in service to house a combustion turbine, a transmission switching station or a control center. Sometimes this is intentionally done to avoid (or evade) a rate base disallowance for a unit retired prior to being fully depreciated. Most of those costs continue to be attributable to the original purpose of the steam plant and hence to energy and demand. Similarly, the utility may face cleanup costs for a former coal gasification site or any site contaminated by hazardous materials (e.g., heavy metals, waste lubricating oil or PCB-contaminated transformer oil). Regardless of how that site is used today or was most recently used, the cleanup costs are attributable to the activity that generated the contamination, not the current use.

117 The treatment of pumped storage, where water is pumped uphill off-peak and released to produce electricity during peak periods, is addressed with other storage technologies in Subsection 9.1.4.

demand values of the facility. Adding a turbine may increase the facility's capacity at peak load times without increasing energy output, since total energy output is limited by the amount of water flowing in the river. At another hydro facility, adding an additional turbine will not increase the output in periods of peak need (usually summer and winter) because there is not enough water to run the additional turbine, but it may increase energy output in the spring flood; this energy has value, even if it does not contribute to meeting peak load. Adding additional water storage (such as in an upstream reservoir to hold water from the spring flood) may allow the plant to operate longer hours each day but may not increase the contribution in peak hours. Increasing the height of a dam may increase capacity by raising the hydraulic head and also increase energy output because of both the greater head and the increased storage volume.

Hydro is distinct in that the fuel supply (water) is limited, and although the units usually can be dispatched to cover higher-cost hours, doing so precludes using the units at lower-cost hours. Utilities have often recognized this dual function of hydro investments by classifying hydro plant costs to both energy and capacity. For example:

- BC Hydro in British Columbia classifies hydro generation as 45% energy-related (BC Hydro, 2014, p. 9).
- Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro has proposed classification of 80% energy for a new hydro project (Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, 2018, p. 6).
- Manitoba Hydro has long classified its generation as 100% energy-related, but this was modified in 2016 to an average-and-peak classification approach with a broad peak demand allocation measure (Manitoba Public Utility Board, 2016, pp. 47-53).

Other utilities, including Idaho Power, Hydro-Québec, and Newfoundland and Labrador Hydro, use the average-and-peak approach for legacy hydro.

In selecting classification and allocation methods it is important to recognize the usage of each type of hydro resource. Some are run-of-river, with each hour's output determined by the amount of water flowing through the system. Other hydro resources have limited flexibility in dispatch due to environmental constraints. Both of these categories of hydro resources should be treated as variable, similar to wind and solar.

Other categories of hydro resources have some storage capacity, allowing the operator to optimize dispatch over a day, a week or even a year.[118] These resources are generally operated under a reliability-constrained economic dispatch regime, but since the variable cost is zero or minimal, they are dispatched to maximize the value of their limited energy supply rather than in merit dispatch order. For example, a hydro resource may be able to generate 100 MWhs in the hour ending at 2 a.m. at no cost, but the dispatcher is likely to prefer to keep the water in the reservoirs to be used for operating reserves, load following and avoidance of fuel costs in higher-cost hours later in the day.

The difference between the dispatch of hydro and thermal resources requires some adaptation in classification and allocation approaches. In some applications of the BIP classification approach, for example, resources are stacked under the load duration curve starting with the resources with the lowest variable costs. In a system with a significant hydro contribution, the method must be modified to reflect the value (not cost) in time periods (ideally hours) in which hydro energy is actually provided, whether that is due to run-of-river, minimum flow or economic dispatch.

It may be appropriate to recognize that some hydro resources are justified primarily by avoiding fuel costs in high-load hours, resulting in allocation of the investment-related hydro costs in proportion to some measure of hourly market or marginal energy costs.[119]

118 Many of these resources will also operate with little or no flexibility in the spring flood, with minimum flow constraints (which may change by season) and with requirements for flow variation for streambed maintenance, recreational activities, flood control and other factors.

119 Many hydro resources bear the costs of providing services unrelated to electric generation, such as flood control, recreation, water supply and environmental protection. Other resources, especially those built in recent decades, may also bear the costs of endangered species protection, conservation easements, access to open space, aesthetic screening around a plant or payments in lieu of taxes. If the non-energy benefits are conditions of a license or permit, those are simply the costs of building or running the plant.

Renewable Energy

Renewable energy, generated from wind, solar, biomass, hydro, geothermal and other technologies, is becoming a larger part of the electric supply mix and hence the cost allocation challenge. Renewable resources may have very different cost characteristics than conventional resources, and the decision to invest in them may be driven by policy that may not consider peak demand at all.

As discussed in Subsection 7.1.2, renewable energy may be added — even though the utility does not need the capacity at peak hours — to reduce fuel costs, comply with portfolio requirements (which often require that a specified percentage of energy consumption is supplied by renewable generation) or meet environmental targets, particularly reducing the atmospheric effects of fossil energy generation. This substitution of capital investment for fuel is widely accepted as an important approach in 21st century utility planning, as shown in examples from Colorado, Iowa and Indiana.[120]

In the classification of costs between capacity and energy, renewable costs that are driven by energy consumption, either directly or indirectly, should be classified as energy-related. For renewable resources that provide some demand-related benefits, the costs can be classified between demand and energy based on the equivalent peaker, average-and-peak or other methods, as long as the demand-related portion is discounted to reflect the effective load-carrying capacity of the renewable resource. Variable renewable resources fit well in a time-based allocation (such as a detailed POD allocation) because their costs can be allocated directly to the hours in which they provide energy to the system.

Purchased Power

Many power purchase agreements with utilities or non-utility generators (especially fossil-fueled generation) have been structured with two types of charges: predetermined monthly charges the utility must pay regardless of how much energy it takes from the power producer, as long as the supplier meets contracted requirements for availability; and variable charges per MWh that the buyer pays for the energy it takes. The charges may reflect the projected cost of a single unit or plant (traditionally fossil fueled, increasingly renewable) at the time the contract was signed, or the actual cost of service for a unit or a portfolio of resources.

Another large set of power purchase agreements — including PURPA contracts, some dating back to the 1980s, and most 21st century renewable projects — pay the provider a rate per kWh delivered (perhaps with different rates by time of delivery). This cost structure fits well into an hourly allocation framework, although it is also possible to extract a demand component of the resource's value for inclusion in a traditional demand/energy framework.

Many utilities classify the monthly guaranteed portion of payments to independent power producers as demand-related, using the archaic perspective that any generation cost that is committed for the rate year should be considered fixed and therefore demand-related, thus leading to great controversy in choosing the appropriate basis for allocation of demand-related costs. In reality, the utility may have agreed to the payment structure because of the low-cost energy provided by the deal, with that financial commitment having value to the resource owner in obtaining financing.

Others classify purchased power to mimic the classification of generation plant, as if the purchase were the equivalent of plant capital, without fuel.[121] This treatment is similarly inconsistent with cost causation. Many power purchase agreements are structured to recover the costs of a baseload or intermediate resource, such as by charging a relatively high nonbypassable capacity charge and a low energy charge based on the usage of the resource. These contracts are typically not the lowest-cost way to meet peak loads. The only rational reason to enter into these contracts

120 Xcel Energy touted its renewable energy investments as "steel for fuel," in which "capital recovery costs [are] offset by lower fuel and O&M costs" and wind "displaces coal and natural gas fuel," resulting in "significant customer savings" (2018). MidAmerican Energy justified its aggressive wind generation plan on eliminating exposure to fossil fuel costs (Hammer, 2018). Northern Indiana Public Service Co. found that replacing its coal plants' fuel and operating costs with wind and solar would reduce customer costs, uncertainty and risk (2018, p. 6).

121 The contract may require the purchaser to take all of the available energy, so even a rate denominated in MWhs can be thought of as investment-related and thus similar to generation plant costs. In reality, the purchase contract replaces both the investment-related and variable costs of a comparable resource built by the purchasing utility.

would be to access lower-priced energy and higher efficiency. The classification process should look beyond the contract pricing terms to ascertain the true cost causation factors and where the benefits accrue.

Within the centrally dispatched power pools (such as the New England, New York, California and Midcontinent ISOs), utilities and other load-serving entities purchase energy on an hourly basis to meet their loads. The transactions are priced at the marginal costs of the supply bids to the system operator and cover some investment-related costs for most generators. The cost of those purchases should be classified as energy and allocated to loads on a time-differentiated basis.[122]

Costs for purchased power can be classified in most of the same ways that the costs of utility-owned generation are classified, including the probability-of-dispatch, equivalent peaker and average-and-peak methods and many others. In many cases, the purchase will be from a specific plant whose investment and nondispatch O&M costs can be allocated in the same manner as the costs of similar resources the utility owns. In other cases, such as system power, the classification and allocation of power purchase costs will need to be based on the cost characteristics of the purchase.[123] Where possible, the most straightforward classification approach would be to treat as energy-related the excess of the purchase costs over the capacity costs of a contemporaneous gas turbine peaking plant.

Energy Storage

Energy storage takes many forms, including:

- Water held in conventional hydro reservoirs.
- Pumped storage hydro facilities.
- A variety of battery technologies, which may be co-located with generation, transmission or distribution facilities or be behind the customer's meter.
- A host of other electricity storage technologies, including compressed air, flywheels and gravity (moving weights upward to store energy, using the potential energy to drive a generator as needed).
- Thermal storage as molten salt in solar thermal plants, ice or hot water at customer premises.

Batteries will be an increasingly important part of utility systems, and therefore of cost allocation studies, because of their flexibility and the rapid and continuing decline in their costs. Batteries can be installed (1) at the location of generation to stabilize or optimize output to the transmission system; (2) at substations to avoid transmission and distribution costs; or (3) throughout the system, on the utility or customer side of the meter to avoid transmission and distribution costs and to provide customer emergency power.

Batteries can provide a range of services, including contributing to bulk supply reliability, ancillary services (load following, reserves and automatic generator control), energy arbitrage, transmission load relief, distribution load relief and customer emergency supply. To the extent that the allocation study can reflect these various services, it should classify the costs of the batteries in proportion to their value. That classification may be based on the frequency with which the storage is used for each purpose, on the anticipated mix of benefits that justified the installation, or on the incremental cost incurred to achieve the additional purpose.[124] Batteries may be very valuable for providing second-contingency support to the transmission system (avoiding the installation of redundant equipment), even if they may never actually be dispatched for that purpose. Where utilities purchase some attributes of behind-the meter batteries, such as ancillary services, the services they purchase should drive the cost allocation.

Storage operates as both a load and a supply resource and thus may operate at very different times than conventional generation. As a result, storage fits well into hourly allocation

122 Some utilities in these pools own generation, which is sold into the regional market. The revenue from those sales can be credited against the costs of the generator before those costs are allocated to classes.

123 Since costs for purchased power may be recovered through both base rates and a power cost recovery mechanism, and the allocation of these costs may be reflected in both base rates and the power-cost mechanism, some care should be taken to ensure that the allocation is applied only once, just as the costs are recovered only once. For example, the costs for purchased power may be included in the cost of service study, with the anticipated purchased-power revenues from each class subtracted from the allocated costs. Alternatively, the purchase costs may be excluded from the base rate cost of service study and allocated separately on an appropriate basis in the fuel and purchased power cost recovery mechanism.

124 Renewable incentives and tax policy may encourage co-location of storage with centralized renewable generation. Moving the storage to support transmission, distribution or customer resilience would typically increase both the value and the cost of the resource; those incremental costs should be classified as due to the incremental service.

schemes. Storage usually delivers power into the grid at high-cost hours, so assigning the capital and operating costs, including the costs of charging storage, to those hours usually will result in an equitable tracking of costs to benefits.

But storage also provides some services while it is charging, including operating reserves. A 200-MW pumped storage unit can typically transition from being a 200-MW pumping load to a 200-MW supply within minutes, providing 400 MWs of net operating reserves at no incremental cost during low-cost hours, allowing avoidance of fuel costs for load-following resources. Storage may also provide other ancillary services while charging. If the cost of service study is sophisticated enough to classify and allocate ancillary services separately from demand and energy, some of the storage costs can be classified to ancillary service, reflecting the increased reserves available during charging.

In addition, some utility systems experience high ramp rates in net load at times that variable renewable generation is declining and load is rising, such as an evening-peaking utility with a large amount of solar generation in the midday period. To be able to ramp up output from other generation quickly enough to offset the drop in renewable output and meet the rising load, the system may require the construction of additional resources and the uneconomic operation of thermal generators at low-load times to ensure they are available when the ramping need arises. Storage-charging load in the period of minimum net load (which is also likely to be a period of low or even negative short-run marginal costs) raises the minimum load and reduces the ramp rate. These benefits flow to the loads during the ramping period, not just during the discharge period, so some of the costs of storage should be allocated to those loads.

System Control and Dispatch

The costs of scheduling, committing and dispatching generation units, recorded in FERC Account 556, are fixed in the short term but vary with the generation mix, load shapes and variability and other considerations. Costs of forecasting load and supply and optimizing dispatch may vary depending on the amount of weather-related load, the existence of large loads and large generators that may suddenly trip off line, the extent of integration with other utilities, the length of time required for major plants to start up and the amount of variable renewable generation. Some dispatch costs would be required, even if the utility only needed to dispatch generation on a few peak hours, while others are required for multiday planning, 24-hour operation and other energy-related factors.

These costs might most reasonably be classified as partly demand-related and partly energy-related. Reasonable approaches would include classification of dispatch costs in proportion to the classification of long-term generation costs, using the average-and-peak method or a 50/50 split between energy and demand.

9.1.5 Summary of Generation Classification Options

Table 19 on the next page summarizes some attributes of the generation classification options described above. These descriptions are highly simplified and should be read in context of the discussion prior, including the discussion of special situations in Subsection 9.1.4.

9.2 Allocating Energy-Related Generation Costs

Energy-classified generation costs are often allocated to all classes in proportion to total annual class energy consumption. Alternatively, energy-related costs can be calculated by time period and allocated to classes in proportion to their usage in each time period. Assigning costs to time periods is usually straightforward for fuel and dispatch O&M.[125] For systems with high penetration of variable renewables, such as wind and solar, then TOU or BIP allocation of energy-related costs is the most equitable.

The energy-related capital investment and nondispatch O&M costs can be allocated to classes in proportion to

125 One possible complication with time differentiation is that some steam plants must be operated in low-load hours, when they are not really needed, so that they will be available when needed in higher-load hours. The costs of fuel and reagents used in low-load hours may be required to serve high-load hours, but the plants may also be supplying energy in the low-load hours; sorting out generation and fuel use among periods within a week or day can be very complicated.

Table 19. Attributes of generation classification options

Method	Data and computational intensity	Accuracy of cost causality	Allows joint classification/ allocation	Applicability
Straight fixed/variable	Very low	Very low	No	Peaker-only systems
Competitive proxy	Low	Medium	No	In or near regional transmission organizations that perform revenue computations
Average and peak	Low	Low	No	Hydro systems
Simple base-intermediate-peak	Low to medium	Medium	No	Simple systems: limited hydro, solar, wind, storage
Complex base-intermediate-peak	High	High	Yes	Broad
Equivalent peaker (peak credit)	Low	High	No	Broad
Operational characteristics (capacity value, capacity factor, operating factor)	Generally low	Low to medium	No	Limited
Probability of dispatch	Medium to high	Highest	Yes	Broad
Decomposition	Very high	Low	Yes	Rarely

energy or assigned among time periods in proportion to the fuel and dispatch O&M. Table 20 provides an illustration of the development of energy-classified costs per MWh (both dispatch- and investment-related) over three time periods.

Table 21 on the next page shows an illustrative example applying these costs per MWh to usage for three customer classes by time period to allocate costs.

The comparable computation for most utilities could use many more periods (perhaps even hourly data), include all resource types and compute usage by generation unit, rather than category.

Manitoba Hydro, which has an almost all-hydro system, assigns energy-classified capital investment costs among four seasons and three time periods (for a total of 12 periods) in proportion to the MISO market prices for exports in those periods, reflecting the reality that there are hours in which

Table 20. Illustrative example of energy-classified cost per MWh by time of use

	Energy-related cost per MWh	Capacity (MWs)	Period (and annual hours): Peak (50)	Midpeak (2,000)	Off-peak (6,710)	Total
Resource type						
Nuclear	$30	500	$750,000	$28,500,000	$90,585,000	$119,835,000
Coal	$40	1,500	$3,000,000	$84,000,000	$161,040,000	$248,040,000
Combined cycle	$35	1,000	$1,750,000	$35,000,000	$0	$36,750,000
Peaking	$100	300	$1,500,000	$12,000,000	$0	$13,500,000
Demand response	$250	100	$1,250,000	$0	$0	$1,250,000
Subtotal of all resources			$8,250,000	$159,500,000	$251,625,000	$419,375,000
Consumption (MWhs)			170,000	4,170,000	7,045,500	11,385,500
Cost per MWh			$48.53	$38.25	$35.71	$36.83

Note: Numbers may not add up to total because of rounding. The illustration assumes that all resources are fully utilized in the peak period, with reductions in capacity factor between periods by 5 percentage points for nuclear, 30 points for coal, 50 points for combined cycle and 80 for peaking.

Table 21. Illustrative example of time-of-use allocation of energy-classified costs

	Period (and annual hours)			
	Peak (50)	Midpeak (2,000)	Off-peak (6,710)	Total
Consumption (MWhs)	170,000	4,170,000	7,045,500	11,385,500
Cost per MWh	$48.53	$38.25	$35.71	$36.83
Class				
Residential				
Consumption (MWhs)	69,250	2,080,000	2,818,200	4,967,450
Allocated costs	$3,360,662	$79,558,753	$100,650,000	$183,569,415
Commercial				
Consumption (MWhs)	85,000	1,460,000	2,113,650	3,658,650
Allocated costs	$4,125,000	$55,844,125	$75,487,500	$135,456,625
Industrial				
Consumption (MWhs)	15,750	630,000	2,113,650	2,759,400
Allocated costs	$764,338	$24,097,122	$75,487,500	$100,348,961

Note: Numbers may not add up to total because of rounding.

transmission constraints preclude additional exports. That approach recognizes that using energy in some time periods is more expensive for Manitoba Hydro (in terms of lost export revenues) than consumption in other time periods.

9.3 Allocating Demand-Related Generation Costs

As discussed in Subsection 9.1.3, some classification methodologies, such as probability of dispatch and more granular hourly variants, simultaneously develop cost by period and the associated allocation factors driven by use by period. This section describes methods for developing allocation factors for demand-related costs developed by legacy demand/energy classification methods.

Typically, utilities allocate demand-related generation based on some form of class contribution to system peak loads, referred to as coincident peak. The loads that determine how much capacity a utility requires may be concentrated in a few hours a year, a few hours in each month, the highest 50 or 100 hours in the year, or some other measure of the loads stressing system reliability.

Frequently used demand allocators include:

- The class contributions to the annual system coincident peak (1 CP).
- The class contributions to three or four seasonal peaks (3 CP or 4 CP).
- The average of the class contributions to multiple high-load hours, such as:
  - The 12 monthly peaks (12 CP).
  - All hours with loads greater than a threshold, such as 80% to 95% of annual peak.
  - **Peak capacity allocation factor** (PCAF), a technique developed in California that weights high-usage hours based on how close each hour is to the peak hour.
  - Hours with some expectation for loss of energy.
  - Hours in which the system is stressed (e.g., operating reserves are below target levels).

As discussed in Chapter 5, generation capacity requirements have always been driven by more than a few hourly loads. Moreover, with peak loads being offset by solar generation and expanding demand response available to serve the highest-load or highest-cost hours, capacity requirements are driven by an even broader group of hours, which should be reflected in the development of the demand allocation factors. Broader allocation factors also have the virtue of limiting the instability resulting from the use of a limited number of peak hours. For example, ERCOT experienced an annual peak in 2017 at approximately

69,500 MWs on July 28 at 5 p.m. However, there were 13 other hours within 2% of that annual peak in 2017, in the hours ending at 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. (Electric Reliability Council of Texas, 2018, and calculations by the authors). Changes in temperature or cloud cover could shift the peak load to any of those hours. The peak timing in the load data can be very important in determining the allocators. The residential class typically will have a greater share of a peak load occurring at 7 p.m. than one occurring at 3 p.m. or 4 p.m.[126]

Utilities have sometimes allocated generation demand costs on the class NCP at the system level.[127] This approach may have been roughly appropriate for some utilities serving distinct classes with peak demands in different seasons, such as winter-peaking ski resorts and summer-peaking irrigation pumping, with both seasons contributing to the need for generation capacity. The class NCP would not recognize whatever load the ski resorts' summer operations contribute to the pumping-dominated peaks and would allocate demand costs to other classes based on their summer or winter peaks — but not their contributions to either of the seasons' high-load hours. Since reliability computations and the need for generation capacity are driven by combined system load, some measure of the combined loads on the system is relevant. With the hourly data collection technologies now available, this class NCP approximation is no longer necessary.

Traditionally, without access to the kind of sophisticated hourly data we can obtain today, utilities have tended to allocate demand costs on a single annual coincident peak, the average of the four monthly peaks in the high-load summer season, the average of some number of summer and winter monthly peaks, a defined number of peak hours when peaking resources are expected to operate, or the average of the 12 monthly peaks.[128] The number of months included in the computations of the demand allocator often reflects the following factors:

- The number of months in which the system may experience its annual peak load.
- Whether high loads occur in both summer and the winter.
- Whether requirements for maintenance outages reduce available capacity in off-peak months enough that available reserves in those months are comparable to the reserves in the peak months.

A more comprehensive approach to these factors would develop the demand allocator from all the hours identified in a loss-of-energy expectation study, after accounting for maintenance scheduling. Depending on the system, that may be several hours or several hundred hours. If data are not available for a comprehensive loss-of-energy expectation analysis, a demand allocator based on all hours within a specified percentage of the peak (e.g., 80% to 95%) or based on a significant number of the highest hours in the year (e.g., 100) is preferable to a coincident peak analysis. In sum, averaging or weighting a small number of coincident peaks incorrectly assumes that the need for capacity is a simple function of the amount of the system monthly peak, even though capacity requirements are driven by many hours,

126 The range of loads in these 14 hours was only about 1,400 MWs, roughly the size of one large nuclear unit or two large coal units. The differences in loads over those hours are of little significance in terms of reliability.

127 In some jurisdictions, the class NCP is referred to as the maximum class peak, maximum diversified demand or something similar, and "NCP" is used to designate the sum of the individual customer noncoincident peaks within each class. We refer to class NCP and customer NCP in this manual to distinguish between the two methods.

128 FERC has a set of guidelines for determining whether wholesale demand-classified costs should be allocated on 3 CPs or 12 CPs (for example, see Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 2008, pp. 30-35). FERC's approach does not contemplate that any other number of months (such as four or eight) might be responsible for the need for capacity.

Table 22. Attributes of generation demand allocation options

Method	Data and computational intensity	Accuracy of cost causality	Allows joint classification/ allocation	Applicability
1 CP	Very low	Very low	No	Rare
3 CP; 4 CP	Low	Low	No	One-season peak; needle peaks
12 CP	Low	Low to medium	No	Multiple seasonal peaks; extensive maintenance requirements; class load shapes near peak similar
Multiple hours near peak (e.g., top 100 hours)	Low to medium	Medium	No	Broad, but loss-of-energy expectation gives more robust results if data exist to calculate them
Loss-of-energy expectation	High	High	No	Broad
Complex base-intermediate-peak	High	High	Yes	Broad
Probability of dispatch	Medium to high	High	Yes	Broad

depending on load; the amount of generation capacity that is available, not just installed; and the scheduling of maintenance outages.

Table 22 summarizes some characteristics of the allocation methods described in this section, along with the POD method described in Subsection 9.1.3 and the more complex variants of the BIP method from Subsection 9.1.2.

9.4 Summary of Generation Allocation Methods and Illustrative Examples

As demonstrated in many ways in the previous sections, it is appropriate to classify some of the long-term investment and O&M costs to energy usage rather than to demand. Table 23 presents a simplified view of appropriate classification results by plant type.

As variable renewable capacity (mostly wind and solar) on a system increases, the role for baseload capacity decreases. At some point, in hours with low load and high renewable output, traditional baseload resources will run only if they cannot shut down and restart on a timely basis.

Cost of service studies can also combine features of the various classification approaches, such as classifying peakers as 100% demand-related; classifying fuel conversion costs, environmental costs and generation without firm transmission as 100% energy-related; and applying the average-and-peak

Table 23. Summary of conceptual generation classification by technology

Resource type	Function	Classification
Nuclear, some hydro and best coal	Baseload	Primarily energy
Modern combined cycle, best gas-fired steam and mediocre coal	Intermediate	Energy and demand
Combustion turbines, mediocre fossil-fueled steam and combined cycle	Peaking and operating reserves	Primarily demand or on-peak energy
Storage and flexible hydro	Peaking and energy shifting	Demand or on-peak energy
Wind and solar	Energy and some capacity	Primarily energy

Note: "Best" refers to resources with the lowest variable costs, "mediocre" to those with higher variable costs. Resources that are worse than mediocre are likely candidates for retirement. "Intermediate" refers to generation that is neither baseload nor peaking.

Table 24. Summary of generation allocation approaches

Resource type	Classification and allocation methods: Legacy	Modern	Evolving
Nuclear	CLASSIFICATION: Average and peak ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 12 CP	CLASSIFICATION: Equivalent peaker ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: Loss-of-energy expectation	All hours
Baseload coal	CLASSIFICATION: Average and peak ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 12 CP	Probability of dispatch	Hours dispatched
Combined cycle	CLASSIFICATION: Average and peak ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 12 CP	Probability of dispatch	Hours dispatched or used for reserve
Gas-fired steam	CLASSIFICATION: Average and peak ENERGY ALLOCATOR: On-peak energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 4 CP*	Probability of dispatch	Hours dispatched or used for reserve
Peaker	CLASSIFICATION: 100% demand DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 4 CP or 12 CP	Probability of dispatch	Hours dispatched or used for reserve
Hydro	CLASSIFICATION: Average and peak ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 12 CP*	Probability of dispatch	Hours dispatched or used for reserve
Wind	CLASSIFICATION: 100% energy ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy	CLASSIFICATION: Equivalent peaker ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: Loss-of-energy expectation	Hours of output
Solar	CLASSIFICATION: Average and peak ENERGY ALLOCATOR: On-peak energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 4 CP	CLASSIFICATION: Equivalent peaker ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: Loss-of-energy expectation	Hours of output
Storage	CLASSIFICATION: Average and peak ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 12 CP	Probability of dispatch	Hours dispatched, used for reserve or reducing ramp rate
Demand response	CLASSIFICATION: 100% demand DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 3 CP to 12 CP**	CLASSIFICATION: 100% demand DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 3 CP to 12 CP**	Hours dispatched or used for reserve

* Depends on use of resource
** Depends on program type and technology

approach to the remaining costs. A hybrid approach is only as equitable as the component techniques but may be useful where particular classification decisions can be made before the application of a generic approach to the residual costs.

Table 24 summarizes examples of allocation factors that might be applied to the capital and nondispatch O&M costs for various types of generation resources, whether utility-owned or purchased.[129] This summary is, by its very nature, highly simplified, ignoring many of the complexities discussed in sections 9.1, 9.2 and 9.3.

129 The probability-of- dispatch and hourly approaches can also be applied to the short-run variable costs of the resources.

For simplicity, we show an illustration only for generation investment-related costs. Table 25 shows the amount of investment in each category, which we will then divide using multiple allocation methods.

Table 26 shows two currently used methods: a legacy 1 CP system measure and a more modern method, equivalent peaker, where 80% of baseload costs are considered to be energy-related. The illustrative load data and allocation factors are from tables 5 through 7 in Chapter 5.

Table 27 shows the calculation of an hourly allocation model, where baseload costs are apportioned to all hours, peaking and intermediate costs to midpeak hours, and storage only to the 2% of usage at the most extreme hours.

Table 25. Illustrative annual generation data

	Net generation (MWhs)	Annual nonfuel revenue requirement	Annual nonfuel cost per MWh
Baseload	1,860,000	$74,400,000	$40
Peaker	534,000	$42,720,000	$80
Solar	1,056,000	$31,680,000	$30
Storage	62,000	$6,200,000	$100
Total	3,512,000	$155,000,000	$44
	Disposition of net generation		
Storage input and delivery losses	412,000		
Sales to customers	3,100,000		

Note: Numbers may not add up to total because of rounding.

Table 26. Allocation of generation capacity costs by traditional methods

	Residential	Secondary commercial	Primary industrial	Street lighting	Total
1 CP (legacy)	$51,667,000	$62,000,000	$41,333,000	$0	$155,000,000
Equivalent peaker	$50,333,000	$52,400,000	$47,750,000	$4,517,000	$155,000,000

Note: Numbers may not add up to total because of rounding.

Table 27. Modern hourly allocation of generation capacity costs

	Residential	Secondary commercial	Primary industrial	Street lighting	Total
Baseload (all hours)	$24,000,000	$24,000,000	$24,000,000	$2,400,000	$74,400,000
Peaker (midpeak)	$14,424,000	$15,735,000	$12,326,000	$236,000	$42,720,000
Solar (daytime)	$10,560,000	$12,320,000	$8,800,000	$0	$31,680,000
Storage (critical peak)	$2,366,000	$2,366,000	$1,420,000	$47,000	$6,200,000
Total hourly allocation	$51,350,000	$54,421,000	$46,545,000	$2,683,000	$155,000,000
Composite hourly factor	33%	35%	30%	2%	100%

Note: Numbers may not add up to total because of rounding.

10. Transmission in Embedded Cost of Service Studies

As discussed in Chapter 3, investments in transmission lines and substations are needed and valuable for a wide assortment of purposes, including integrating inherently remote generation, allowing economic dispatch of generation over large areas and providing backup reliability. Any particular transmission line and the substations to which it is connected may perform multiple functions under varying load and generation conditions. Because the purposes for constructing transmission and the use of the facilities vary so widely, the allocation methods used may need to distinguish among several categories of transmission.

The generation-related portions of transmission equipment — including switching stations, substations and transmission lines required to tie generators into the general transmission network and reinforcements of the transmission system required by remote generation locations and by economic dispatch — are often functionalized as generation.

In regions with FERC-regulated ISOs or RTOs, state regulators may not have authority to determine the amount of bulk transmission cost a local distribution utility must pay. The states may choose to allocate costs among classes in a manner similar to that FERC uses to allocate costs among utilities and other parties. States also retain the authority to allocate that cost using a different method than FERC uses for wholesale market allocation.

10.1 Subfunctionalizing Transmission

As noted in Chapter 3, transmission of different voltage levels often serves similar functions. Nonetheless, some utilities have subfunctionalized transmission between **extra-high-voltage** (EHV) facilities (perhaps over 100 kV) and subtransmission (at lower voltages), sometimes called network transmission as it connects the different substations inside the utility service territory. Subtransmission that FERC does not claim authority over (based on voltage, configuration, direction of power flow and other factors) is regulated by the state or consumer-owned utility governing body.

If those subfunctions were classified and allocated in the same manner, the division of the facilities by voltages would not matter. Unfortunately, some cost of service studies allocate only the EHV facilities to certain customers directly served from these facilities, with customers served at subtransmission or distribution voltages being charged for both the EHV system and the subtransmission. For example, in 2013, Nova Scotia Power proposed to functionalize 23% of transmission costs to subtransmission and excuse from those costs the largest industrial customers, served at 138 kV (Nova Scotia Power, 2013b). Similarly, Manitoba Hydro functionalizes its 66-kV and 33-kV transmission lines as subtransmission, which is allocated to all classes except for the industrial customers served at voltages above 66 kV (Manitoba Public Utility Board, 2016).

This approach is inequitable and fails to reflect cost causality. The various voltages of transmission serve complementary functions. In general, customers and distribution substations that are served from subtransmission would be more expensive to serve from EHV transmission. Subtransmission is a lower-cost alternative to EHV where the higher capacity of the EHV facilities is not required.

For some systems, the subtransmission and EHV systems may seem to be serving different functions since the EHV lines may be more often networked or looped, while the subtransmission lines are often radial. This pattern is due to the higher load-carrying capacity of the EHV lines, which results in their being used in high-load backbone configurations. These lines are usually networked for greater reliability, not due to some inherent difference in the capabilities of the technologies. Higher-voltage lines can be used in radial applications, and subtransmission can be networked or looped in some situations.

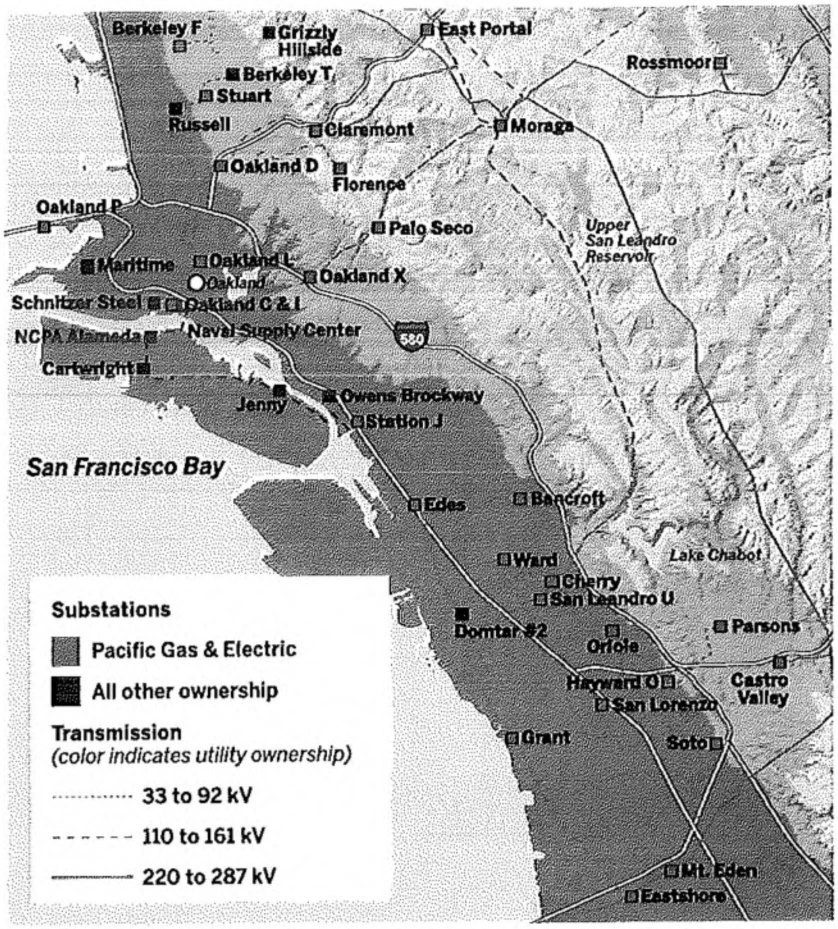
Figure 36 is a section of a California transmission map, showing EHV lines as solid lines (220 to 287 kV) and large dashed lines (110 to 161 kV) and subtransmission as small dashed lines (California Energy Commission, 2014). This excerpt shows some features that are consistent with the proposition that higher-voltage transmission is networked while subtransmission is radial:

- A large backbone transmission line running north-south.
- A looped network of 110- to 161-kV lines coming off the backbone line into the Oakland area.
- Radial subtransmission lines that dead-end at distribution substations in Berkeley and parts of Oakland.

But Figure 36 also illustrates situations contradicting these stereotypes:

- Networked subtransmission lines in the San Leandro-San Lorenzo area.
- Radial 220- to 287-kV lines that dead-end at such substations as Rossmoor and Castro Valley.

Figure 36. Transmission east of San Francisco Bay



Source: California Energy Commission. (2014). *California Transmission Lines – Substations Enlargement Maps*

Thus, the idea that the EHV system is a network and the subtransmission system is a purely radial system served off the EHV network is a gross simplification. If loads to near San Lorenzo were higher, for example, the local utility might have upgraded the subtransmission network to higher voltages.

As a result, the separation of subtransmission is often inappropriate in principle and impractical in application, leading to the conclusion that all voltages of transmission should be allocated consistently as a single function.

However, if a state determines that subtransmission costs are to be allocated to the classes that use the subtransmission system, ignoring the complementary nature of high- and low-voltage transmission, the allocator should approximate the extent to which each class uses the subtransmission system and not be designed simply as a benefit to high-voltage industrial customers.

Not all distribution loads are served from subtransmission. If industrial customers served directly off the EHV system are excused from being allocated a share of the subtransmission, so should the portion of distribution load served by substations that are fed from EHV transmission. Although segregating EHV facilities is typically performed in a manner that benefits a small number of EHV industrial customers, a full subfunctionalization of transmission for all classes would sometimes reduce the allocation to classes served at distribution, at the expense of the classes served directly from the subtransmission system.

A separate subtransmission allocator should approximate the following:

- An EHV industrial class that takes all its power from the EHV system would be allocated no subtransmission costs.
- A subtransmission industrial class that takes all its power from the subtransmission system would be allocated subtransmission costs in proportion to its entire load.
- A general transmission class would be allocated subtransmission costs in proportion to the fraction of its load served from subtransmission.
- The distribution classes would be allocated subtransmission costs in proportion to the fraction of their load served from substations on the subtransmission lines.

Most large utilities appear to serve a significant fraction of distribution load from the EHV system. The utility FERC Form 1 reports indicate that at least 26% of Southern California Edison's distribution substation capacity (the substations with low-side transformers below 30 kV) is served from the EHV system; for Northern Indiana Public Service, the portion is at least 49% (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, n.d.).[130]

10.2 Classification

The classification of transmission costs raises many of the same issues as the classification of generation costs and can often be dealt with in similar ways. As for generation, some approaches for transmission avoid the need for classification by assigning specific transmission facilities to the loads occurring in the hours in which these lines serve customers with improved reliability, lower variable costs or other benefits.

Some assets that are carried on the books as transmission may actually be related to interconnecting or integrating generation (step-up transformers and generation ties for many utilities; more extensive facilities for utilities with extremely remote generators). Those facilities can either be functionalized as generation-related and classified along with the generation resource or functionalized as transmission and classified in the same manner as the investment-related costs of the associated generation. Facilities connecting peakers should be treated as demand-related, while those connecting the baseload generation, especially remote generation, should be primarily treated as energy-related since the facilities were built primarily to provide energy benefits. For example, Manitoba Hydro classifies as entirely energy-related the high-voltage direct current system that brings its northern hydro generation to the southern load centers and export points, as well as its transmission interties, which allow for economic energy exports and for off-peak energy imports to firm up hydro supplies in drought conditions.[131]

In addition to the substations that step up the generator output to transmission voltages and the lines that connect the generator to the broader transmission network, many utilities have transmission facilities that are integrated with the transmission network but are driven largely by the need to move large amounts of power from remote generators. Those transmission facilities may be identifiable because they were originally required to reinforce the transmission system when major baseload (or remote hydro or wind) resources were added or because they connect areas that have surplus generation to areas with generation shortages. For example, a utility may have 60% of its load in a central metropolitan area but 80% of its baseload resources far to the east or north, with multiple major transmission lines connecting the resource-rich east with the load in the center.[132]

130 Some distribution substation transformers are at substations serving multiple transmission voltages. The FERC Form 1 reports provide only the total transformer capacity at the substation, without differentiating among the EHV-subtransmission, EHV-distribution and EHV-EHV capacity. The percentages of distribution capacity served from the EHV system, listed above, do not include any of this multivoltage capacity.

131 The northern AC gathering system that brings the hydro to the HVDC converters is also classified as energy-related.

132 Examples of this phenomenon include Nova Scotia Power's concentration of coal in the eastern end of the province; BC Hydro's, Manitoba Hydro's and Hydro-Quebec's northern generation; PacifiCorp's Rocky Mountain Power division (with load concentrated around Salt Lake City and generation in Colorado, Wyoming, Arizona and Montana); Arizona Public Service Co. with load in Phoenix and generation in the Four Corners and Palo Verde areas; Puget Sound Energy and the Colstrip transmission system from Montana; the California utilities and the AC and DC interties to the Pacific Northwest and lines to the Southwest; and Texas' concentration of wind generation in the Panhandle, serving load throughout ERCOT. This pattern is also emerging for California's imports of solar energy from Nevada and Arizona, Minnesota's imports of wind power from North Dakota and hydro energy from Manitoba, and the transfers of large amounts of wind power from generation in the western parts of Kansas and Oklahoma to load centers in the eastern parts of those states.

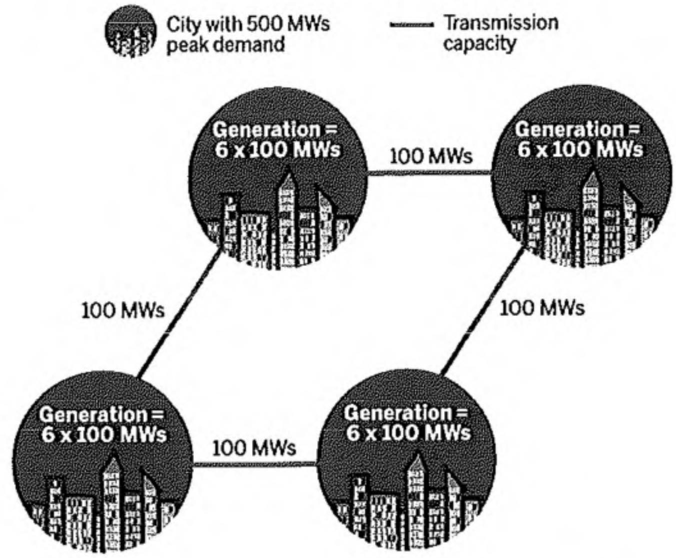
Utility transmission system design typically lowers energy costs in at least three ways. First, a large portion of many transmission systems is required to move power from the remote generators to the load centers and for export. If generation were located nearer the load centers, the long, expensive transmission lines would not be required, and transmission losses would be smaller. These transmission costs were incurred as part of the trade-off against the higher operating costs of plants that could be located nearer the load centers — in other words, as a trade-off against energy-related costs. This category includes transmission built to allow the addition of remote wind resources, which are often the least-cost energy resources even where the utility already has sufficient capacity and energy supply. In other cases, the remote wind resources may be more expensive than conventional resources, new or existing, but less expensive than local renewables (e.g., solar, wind turbines in areas with lower wind speed, higher land costs and more complex siting problems) that would otherwise need to be built to comply with energy-related renewable energy standards.

Second, transmission systems are more expensive because they are designed to allow for large transfers of energy between neighboring utilities. Third, transmission systems are designed to minimize energy losses and to function over extended hours of high loading. Were the system designed only to meet peak demands, a less costly system would suffice; in some cases, entire lines or circuits would not be required, voltage levels could be lower, and fewer or smaller substations would be needed.

Figure 37 shows a simple illustrative system with relatively small units of a single generation resource co-located with each load center. Since all the generators are the same, economic dispatch does not require shipping power from one load center to another, so transmission is limited to the amount needed to allow reserve capacity in one center to back up multiple outages in another center. In this simple illustration, the transmission costs would truly be demand-related.

Figure 38 on the next page illustrates a more complex system, with baseload coal concentrated in one area, combined cycle generation in another and combustion turbines in a third. Additional transmission corridors and substations are required to connect remote generation (wind from one direction and hydro from another), and the transmission lines between the load centers need to be beefed up to support backup of the larger units and the economic dispatch of the lowest-cost available generation to meet load. In this more complex system, the incremental costs of transmission (compared with the simple system in Figure 37) should be classified as energy-related.

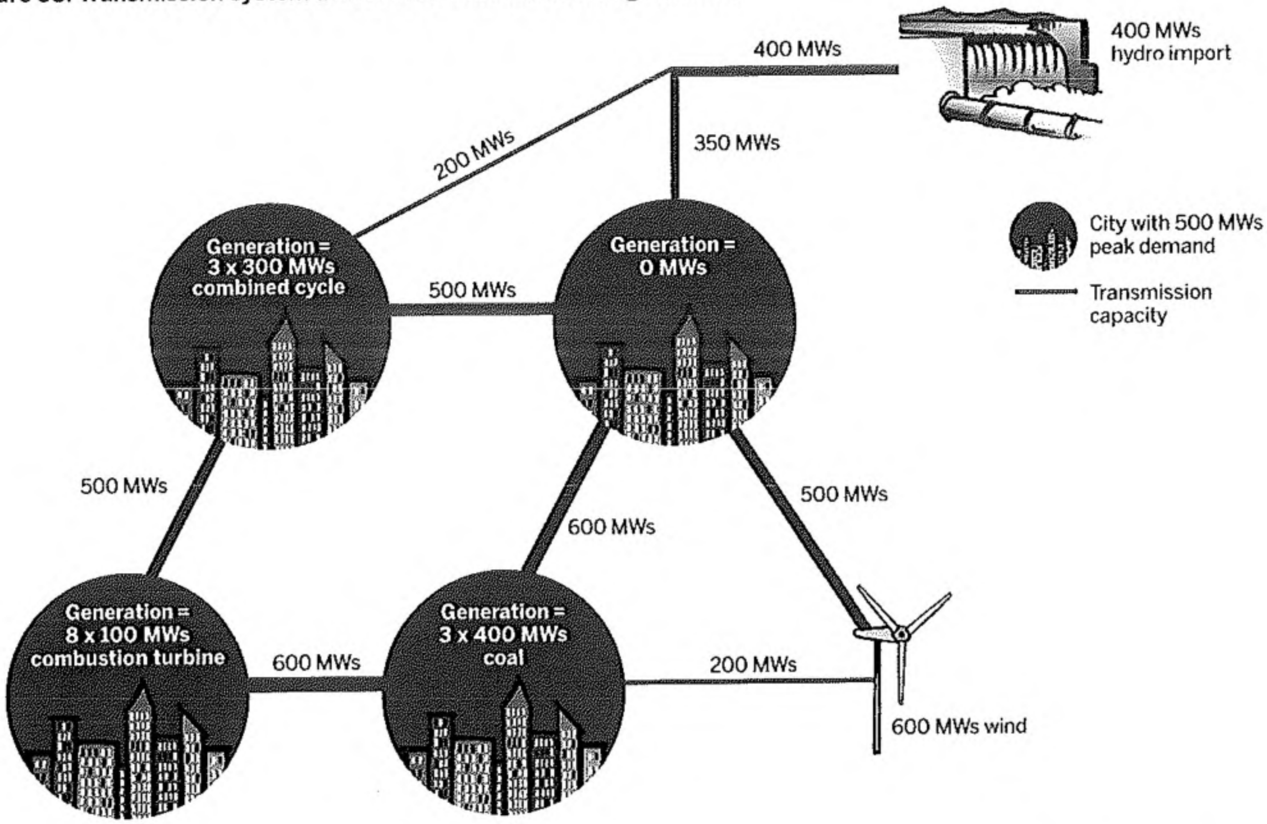
Figure 37. Transmission system with uniformly distributed demand and generation



It may be possible to identify and classify the costs of the individual lines or classify total costs in proportion to circuit-miles of each voltage serving various energy functions. If all else fails, a more judgment-based classification method, such as average and peak, may be the best feasible option.

PacifiCorp's Rocky Mountain Power subsidiary in Utah classifies transmission as 75% demand-related and 25% energy-related (Steward, 2014, p. 7). This classification recognizes that, although peak loads are a major driver of transmission costs, a significant portion of transmission costs is incurred to reduce energy costs. Since PacifiCorp has a large amount of transmission connecting remote coal plants in Wyoming, Arizona and Colorado to its load centers and connecting its Northwestern hydro assets to its load centers, an even higher energy classification may be

Figure 38. Transmission system with remote and centralized generation



appropriate. PacifiCorp's highest-voltage lines (500 kV, 345 kV and 230 kV) primarily connect its load with remote baseload generation and would not be needed except to access low-cost energy. Those lines account for more than half of PacifiCorp's transmission investment. Hence, more than half of PacifiCorp's transmission revenue requirement is likely to be attributable to energy.

Similarly, Nova Scotia Power has much of its generation (coal plants, storage hydro and an HVDC import of hydropower from Newfoundland) in the eastern end of the province, but most of its load is about 250 miles to the west. To reflect the large contribution of remote generation to its transmission cost, the company uses an average-and-peak (system load factor) approach that effectively classifies about 62% to energy and 38% to demand (Nova Scotia Utility and Review Board, 2014, pp. 22-23).

Washington state has explicitly rejected a single hour of peak as a determinant and ruled that transmission costs should be classified to both energy and demand (Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, 1981, p. 23). Appropriate classification percentages will vary among utilities and transmission owners.

10.3 Allocation Factors

Historically, most cost of service studies have computed transmission allocation factors from some combination of monthly peak demands from 1 CP to 12 CP.

Some utilities have recognized that transmission investments are justified by loads in more than one hour in a month. For example, Manitoba Hydro has used a transmission allocator computed from class contribution to the highest 50 hours in the winter, Manitoba Hydro's peak period, and the highest 50 hours in the summer, the period of Manitoba Hydro's maximum exports, which also drive intraprovincial transmission construction (Manitoba Hydro, 2015, Appendix 3.1, p. 9).

The hours of maximum transmission loads may be different from the hours of maximum generation stress. For example, the power lines from remote baseload units to the load centers may be most heavily loaded at moderate demand levels. At high load levels, more of the low-cost remote generation may be used by load closer to the generator, while higher-cost generation in and near the load centers increases, reducing the long-distance transmission line loading. In addition, generator maintenance does not necessarily smooth out transmission reliability risk across months in the same way that it spreads generation shortage risk. If transmission loads peak in winter, when carrying capacity is higher, then transmission peaks may not match even the maximum transmission stress period.

In its Order 1000, establishing regional transmission planning and cost allocation principles, FERC includes the following cost allocation principles, which recognize that transmission is justified by multiple drivers and that different allocation approaches may be justified for different types of transmission facilities:

> (1) The cost of transmission facilities must be allocated to those ... that benefit from those facilities in a manner that is at least roughly commensurate with estimated benefits. In determining the beneficiaries of transmission facilities, a regional transmission planning process may consider benefits including, but not limited to, the extent to which transmission facilities, individually or in the aggregate, provide for maintaining reliability and sharing reserves, production cost savings and congestion relief, and/or meeting public policy requirements established by state or federal laws or regulations that may drive transmission needs. ...
>
> (5) The cost allocation method and data requirements for determining benefits and identifying beneficiaries for a transmission facility must be transparent with adequate documentation to allow a stakeholder to determine how they were applied to a proposed transmission facility.
>
> (6) A transmission planning region may choose to use a different cost allocation method for different types of transmission facilities in the regional plan, such as transmission facilities needed for reliability, congestion relief or to achieve public policy requirements established by state or federal laws or regulations (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, 2011, ¶ 586).

The FERC guidance clearly anticipates differential treatment of transmission facilities built for different purposes. Aligning costs with benefits may require allocation of transmission costs to most or all hours in which a transmission facility provides service.[133]

Demand-related transmission costs may be allocated to hours in proportion to the usage of the lines or to the high-load hours in which transmission capacity may be tight following a contingency (the failure of some part of the system) or two. The high-load hours may be chosen as a more or less arbitrary number of the highest hours, as in Manitoba, or as the hours in which loads on a particular line or substation are high enough that the worst-case planning contingency (such as the loss of two lines) would leave the transmission system with no more reserve than it has on the system peak with no contingencies.[134]

10.4 Summary of Transmission Allocation Methods and Illustrative Examples

The discussion above has indicated why transmission investments must be carefully scrutinized in the cost allocation process. Different transmission facilities provide different services and are thus appropriately allocated by different allocation methods. Table 28 on the next page lists some types of transmission facilities and identifies appropriate methods for each.

Transmission is a very difficult challenge for the cost analyst because each transmission segment may have a

133 Attributing transmission to hours is more complicated than assigning generation costs by hours, because of the flow of electricity in a network. Once a transmission line is in service, power will flow over it any time there is a voltage differential between the ends of the line, whether or not the line was in any way needed to meet load in that hour.

134 The latter definition would require load flow modeling for each transmission line or a representative sample; the practicality of this approach will depend on the extent of transmission modeling undertaken for system planning.

Table 28. Summary of transmission classification and allocation approaches

Element	Example methods	Comments	Hourly allocation
Bulk transmission	CLASSIFICATION: To energy* — costs to allow centralized generation and economic dispatch; cost due to heating ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: Highest 100 hours	• Typically above 150 kV • Mostly bidirectional • Operates in all hours	Allocate in proportion to usage or hours needed
Integration of remote generation	CLASSIFICATION: To energy* — costs to connect remote energy resources ENERGY ALLOCATOR: All energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: Highest 100 hours	Treat same as connected remote resources	Allocate in same manner as remote resources
Economy interconnections	CLASSIFICATION: Energy and demand	Depends on purpose and use of connection	• Allocate reliability value as equivalent peaker • Allocate energy value in proportion to use
Local network	CLASSIFICATION: To energy* — cost due to heating ENERGY ALLOCATOR: On-peak energy DEMAND ALLOCATOR: 4 CP to 12 CP	• Typically below 150 kV • Mostly radial	Allocate in proportion to usage or hours needed
Transmission substations	As lines**	May also have distribution functions	As lines**

* "To energy" = portion classified as energy-related
** "As lines" = in proportion to the classification or allocation of the lines served by each substation

different history and purpose and that purpose may have changed over time. For example, a line originally built to connect a baseload generating unit that has since been retired is repurposed to facilitate economic energy interchange with nearby utilities. In Table 29, we use only three methods, which may or may not be relevant to particular types of transmission costs, including purchased transmission service from another utility, a transmission-owning entity or an ISO. The illustrative data for the 1 CP and equivalent peaker methods are from tables 5 through 7 in Chapter 5, and the hourly allocation factor is derived in Table 27 in Chapter 9.

Table 29. Illustrative allocation of transmission costs by different methods

	Residential	Secondary commercial	Primary industrial	Street lighting	Total
1 CP (legacy)	$16,667,000	$20,000,000	$13,333,000	$0	$50,000,000
Equivalent peaker	$16,237,000	$16,903,000	$15,403,000	$1,457,000	$50,000,000
Hourly	$16,565,000	$17,555,000	$15,015,000	$866,000	$50,000,000

Note: Numbers may not add up to total because of rounding.

11. Distribution in Embedded Cost of Service Studies

Distribution costs are all incurred to deliver energy to customers and are primarily investment-related costs that do not vary in response to load in the short term. Different rate analysts approach these costs in very different ways. These costs are often divided into two categories.

1. Shared distribution, which typically includes at least:
   - Distribution substations, both those that step power down from transmission voltages to distribution voltages and those that step it down from a higher distribution voltage (such as 25 kV) to a lower voltage (such as 12 kV).
   - Primary feeders, which run from the substations to other substations and to customer premises, including the conductors, supports (poles and underground conduit) and various control and monitoring equipment.
   - Most line transformers, which step the primary voltage down to secondary voltages (under 600 V, and mostly in the 120 V and 240 V ranges) for use by customers.
   - A large portion of the secondary distribution lines, which run from the line transformers to customer service lines or drops.
   - The supervisory control and data acquisition equipment that monitors the system operation and records system data. This is a network of sensors, communication devices, computers, software and typically a central control center.
2. Customer-specific costs, which include:
   - Service drops connecting a customer (or multiple customers in a building) to the common distribution system (a primary line, a line transformer or a secondary line or network).
   - Meters, which measure each customer's energy use by month, TOU period or hour and sometimes by maximum demand in the month.[135] Advanced meters can also provide other capabilities, including measurement of voltage, remote sensing of outages, and remote connection and disconnection.[136]
   - Street lighting and signal equipment, which usually can be directly assigned to the corresponding rate classes.
   - In some systems with low customer spatial density, a significant portion of primary lines and transformers serving only one customer.

11.1 Subfunctionalizing Distribution Costs

One important issue in cost allocation is the determination of the portion of distribution cost that is related to primary service (the costs of which are allocated to all customers, except those served at transmission voltage) as opposed to secondary service (the costs of which are borne solely by the secondary voltage customers — residential, some C&I customers, street lighting, etc.).

Some plant accounts and associated expenses are easily subfunctionalized. Substations (which are all primary equipment) have their own FERC accounts (plant accounts 360 to 362, expense accounts 582 and 592). In addition, distribution substations take power from transmission lines and feed it into the distribution system at primary voltage. All distribution substations deliver only primary power and therefore should be subfunctionalized as 100% primary.

135 The Uniform System of Accounts treats meters as distribution plant and the costs of keeping the meters operable as distribution expenses, even though all other metering and billing costs are treated as customer accounts or A&G plant or expenses. Traditional meters that tally only customer usage are not really necessary for the operation of the distribution system, only for the billing function. As a result, references to meters in this chapter are quite limited, and the costs of meters are discussed with meter reading and billing in the next chapter.

136 These capabilities require additional supporting technology, some of which is also required to provide remote meter reading. These costs should be spread among a variety of functions, including distribution and retail services, as discussed in Section 11.5.

However, many other types of distribution investments pose more difficult questions. The FERC accounts do not differentiate lines, poles or conduit between primary and secondary equipment, and many utilities do not keep records of distribution plant cost by voltage level. This means any subfunctionalization requires some sort of special analysis, such as the review of the cost makeup of distribution in areas constituting a representative sample of the system.

Traditionally, most cost of service studies have functionalized a portion of distribution poles as secondary plant, to be allocated only to classes taking service at secondary voltage. This approach is based on misconceptions regarding the joint and complementary nature of various types of poles. Although distribution poles come in all sorts of sizes and configurations, the important distinction for functionalization is what sorts of lines the poles carry: only primary, both primary and secondary or only secondary. The proper functionalization of the first category — poles that carry only primary lines — is not controversial; they are required for all distribution load, the sum of load served at primary and the load for which power is subsequently stepped down to secondary.[137]

For the second category — poles carrying both primary and secondary lines — some cost of service studies have treated a portion of the pole cost as being due to all distribution load and the remainder as being due to secondary loads, to be allocated only to classes served at secondary voltage. There is no cost basis for allocating any appreciable portion of these joint poles to secondary. The incremental pole cost for adding secondary lines to a pole carrying primary is generally negligible. The height of the pole is determined by the voltage of the primary circuits it carries, the number of primary phases and circuits and the local topography. Much of the equipment on the poles (cross arms, insulators, switches and other monitoring and control equipment) is used only for the primary lines. The required strength of the pole (determined by the diameter and material) is determined by the weight of the lines and equipment and by the leverage exerted by that weight (which increases with the height of the equipment and the breadth of the cross arms, again due to primary lines).[138] Equipment used in holding secondary lines has a very low cost compared with those used for primary lines. If the poles currently used for both secondary and primary lines had been designed without secondary lines, the reduction in costs would be very small. Thus, the costs of the joint poles are essentially all due to primary distribution.

Although nearly all poles carry primary lines, a utility sometimes will use a pole just to carry secondary lines, such as to reach from the last transformer on a street to the last house, or to carry a secondary line across a wide road to serve a few customers on the far side. Secondary-only poles are usually shorter and skinnier and thus less expensive than primary poles and do not require cross arms and other primary equipment. Some cost of service studies functionalize a portion of pole costs to secondary, based on the population of secondary-only poles (either from an actual inventory or an estimate) or of short poles (less than 35 feet, for example), on the theory that these short poles must carry secondary.

The assumption that all short poles carry secondary is not correct; some utility poles carry no conductor but rather are stubs used to counterbalance the stresses on heavily loaded (mostly primary) poles, as illustrated in Figure 39 on the next page. Depending on the nature of the distribution system and the utility's design standards, the number of stub poles may rival the number of secondary-only poles.

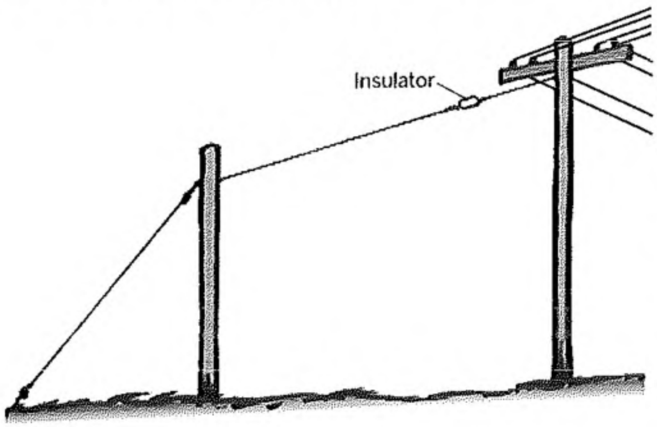
Where only secondary lines are needed, the utility typically saves on pole costs due to the customer taking secondary service, rather than requiring primary voltage service and a bigger pole. Some kind of pole would be needed in that location regardless of the voltage level of service. Hence, the primary customers are better off paying for their share of the secondary poles than if the customers using those poles were to require primary service. It does not seem fair to penalize customers served at secondary for the fact that the utility is able to serve some of them using a type of pole that is less expensive than the poles required for primary service.

As a result, the vast majority of pole costs (other than for

137 The class loads should be measured at primary voltage, including losses, which will be higher for power metered at secondary.

138 There is one situation in which secondary distribution can add to the cost of poles. A very large pole-mounted transformer (perhaps over 75 kVA) may require a stronger pole, which would be a secondary distribution cost. A highly detailed analysis of pole subfunctionalization might thus result in a portion of the cost of those few poles being treated as an extra cost of secondary service, offset to some extent by the savings from some poles being designed to carry only secondary lines.

Figure 39. Stub pole used to guy a primary pole



dedicated poles directly assigned to street lighting or similar services) generally should be treated as serving all distribution customers.[139] For many cost of service studies, that would result in the costs being subfunctionalized as primary distribution, which is then allocated to classes in proportion to their contribution to demand at the primary voltage level.

Line transformers dominate two FERC accounts (plant account 368 and expense account 595), but those accounts also include the costs of capacitors and voltage regulators. These three types of equipment should be subfunctionalized in three different manners:

- Secondary line transformers (which compose the bulk of these accounts) are needed only for customers served at secondary voltage and thus can be subfunctionalized as 100% secondary.
- Voltage regulators are devices on the primary system that adjust voltage levels along the feeder to keep delivered voltage within the design range. The number and capacity of voltage regulators is determined by the distribution of load along the feeder, regardless of whether that load is served at primary or secondary. The regulator costs should be subfunctionalized as primary distribution and classified in the same manner as substations and primary conductors.
- Capacitors improve the power factor on distribution lines at primary voltage, thus reducing line losses (reducing generation, transmission and distribution costs), reducing voltage drop (avoiding the need for larger and additional primary conductors) and increasing primary distribution line capacity. Capacitors can be functionalized as some mix of generation, transmission and primary distribution; in any case they should be functionalized separately from line transformers.

Overhead and underground conductors as well as conduit must be subfunctionalized between primary and secondary using special studies of the composition of the utility's distribution system, since secondary conductors are mostly incremental to primary lines. Estimates of the percentage of these investments that are secondary equipment typically range from 20% to 40%.

Within the primary conductor category, utilities use three-phase feeders for areas with high loads and single-phase (or occasionally two-phase) feeders in areas with lower loads. The additional phases (and hence additional conductors) are due to load levels and the use of equipment that specifically requires three-phase supply (such as some large motors), which is one reason that primary distribution is overwhelmingly load-related and should be so treated in classification.

Some utilities subfunctionalize single- and three-phase conductors, treating the single-phase lines as incremental to the three-phase lines (see, for example, Peppin, 2013, pp. 25-26). Classes that use a lot of single-phase lines are allocated both the average cost of the three-phase lines and the average cost of the single-phase lines. This treatment of single-phase service as being more expensive than three-phase service gets it backward. If load of a single-phase customer or area changed in a manner that required three-phase service, the utility's costs would increase; if anything, classes disproportionally served with single-phase primary should be assigned lower costs than those requiring three-phase service. The classification of primary conductor as load-related will allocate more of the three-phase costs to the classes whose loads require that equipment.

139 As noted above, some utilities may be able to attribute some upgrades in pole class to line transformers; that increment is appropriately functionalized to secondary service. On the other hand, the secondary classes may be due a small credit to reflect the fact that they allow the use of some less expensive poles.

11.2 Distribution Classification

Newly evolving methods can fairly allocate a substantial portion of distribution costs on an energy basis.

The classification of distribution infrastructure has been one of the most controversial elements of utility cost allocation for more than a half-century. Bonbright devoted an entire section to a discussion of why none of the methods then commonly used was defensible (1961, pp. 347-368). In any case, traditional methods have divided up distribution costs as either demand-related or customer-related, but newly evolving methods can fairly allocate a substantial portion of these costs on an energy basis.

Distribution equipment can be usefully divided into three groups:

- Shared distribution plant, in which each item serves multiple customers, including substations and almost all spans of primary lines.
- Customer-related distribution plant that serves only one customer, particularly traditional meters used solely for billing.
- A group of equipment that may serve one customer in some cases or many customers in others, including transformers, secondary lines and service drops.

The basic customer method for classification counts only customer-specific plant as customer-related and the entire shared distribution network as demand- or energy-related. For relatively dense service territories, in cities and suburbs, this would be only the traditional meter and a portion of service drop costs.[140] For very thinly settled territories, particularly rural cooperatives, customer-specific plant may include some portion of transformer costs and the percentage of the primary system that consists of line extensions to individual customers. Many jurisdictions have mandated or accepted the basic customer classification approach, sometimes including a portion of transformers in the customer cost. These jurisdictions include Arkansas,[141] California,[142] Colorado,[143] Illinois,[144] Iowa,[145] Massachusetts,[146] Texas[147] and Washington.[148]

The basic customer method for classification is by far the most equitable solution for the vast majority of utilities.

140 Alternatively, all service drops may be treated as customer-related and the sharing of service drops can be reflected in the allocation factor. As discussed in Section 5.2, treating multifamily housing as a separate class facilitates crediting those customers with the savings from shared service drops, among other factors.

141 The Arkansas Public Service Commission found that "accounts 364-368 should be allocated to the customer classes using a 100% demand methodology and ... that [large industrial consumer parties] do not provide sufficient evidence to warrant a determination that these accounts reflect a customer component necessary for allocation purposes" (2013, p. 126).

142 California classifies all lines (accounts 364 through 367) as demand-related for the calculation of marginal costs, while classifying transformers (Account 368) as customer-related with different costs per customer for each customer class, reflecting the demands of the various classes.

143 In 2018, the state utility commission affirmed a decision by an administrative law judge that rejected the **zero-intercept approach** and classified FERC accounts 364 through 368 as 100% demand-related (Colorado Public Utilities Commission, 2018, p. 16).

144 "As it has in the past, ... the [Illinois Commerce] Commission rejects the minimum distribution or zero-intercept approach for purposes of allocating distribution costs between the customer and demand functions in this case. In our view, the coincident peak method is consistent with the fact that distribution systems are designed primarily to serve electric demand. The Commission believes that attempts to separate the costs of connecting customers to the electric distribution system from the costs of serving their demand remain problematic" (Illinois Commerce Commission, 2008, p. 208).

145 According to 199 Iowa Administrative Code 20.10(2)e, "customer cost component estimates or allocations shall include only costs of the distribution system from and including transformers, meters and associated customer service expenses." This means that all of accounts 364 through 367 are demand-related. Under this provision, the Iowa Utilities Board classifies the cost of 10 kVA per transformer as customer-related but reduces the cost that is assigned to residential and small commercial customers to reflect the sharing of transformers by multiple customers.

146 "Plant items classified as customer costs included only meters, a portion of services, street lighting plant, and a portion of labor-related general plant" (La Capra, 1992, p. 15). See also Gorman, 2018, pp. 13-15.

147 Texas has explicitly adopted the basic customer approach for the purposes of rate design: "Specifically, the customer charge shall be comprised of costs that vary by customer such as metering, billing and customer service" (Public Utility Commission of Texas, 2000, pp. 5-6). But it has followed this rule in practice for cost allocation as well.

148 "The Commission finds that the Basic Customer method represents a reasonable approach. This method should be used to analyze distribution costs, regardless of the presence or absence of a decoupling mechanism. We agree with Commission Staff that proponents of the Minimum System approach have once again failed to answer criticisms that have led us to reject this approach in the past. We direct the parties not to propose the Minimum System approach in the future unless technological changes in the utility industry emerge, justifying revised proposals" (Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, 1993, p. 11).

For certain rural utilities, this may be reasonable under the conceptual view that the size of distribution components (e.g., the diameter of conductors or the capacity of transformers) is load-related, but the number and length of some types of equipment is customer-related. In some rural service territories, the basic customer cost may require nearly a mile of distribution line along the public way as essentially an extended service drop.

However, more general attempts by utilities to include a far greater portion of shared distribution system costs as customer-related are frequently unfair and wholly unjustified. These methods include straight fixed/variable approaches where all distribution costs are treated as customer-related (analogous to the misuse of the concept of fixed costs in classifying generation discussed in Section 9.1) and the more nuanced minimum system and zero-intercept approaches included in the 1992 NARUC cost allocation manual.

The minimum system method attempts to calculate the cost (in constant dollars) if the utility's installed units (transformers, poles, feet of conductors, etc.) were each the minimum-sized unit of that type of equipment that would ever be used on the system. The analysis asks: How much would it have cost to install the same number of units (poles, feet of conductors, transformers) but with the size of the units installed limited to the current minimum unit normally installed? This minimum system cost is then designated as customer-related, and the remaining system cost is designated as demand-related. The ratio of the costs of the minimum system to the actual system (in the same year's dollars) produces a percentage of plant that is claimed to be customer-related.

This minimum system analysis does not provide a reliable basis for classifying distribution investment and vastly overstates the portion of distribution that is customer-related. Specifically, it is unrealistic to suppose that the mileage of the shared distribution system and the number of physical units are customer-related and that only the size of the components is demand-related, for at least eight reasons.

1. Much of the cost of a distribution system is required to cover an area and is not sensitive to either load or customer number. The distribution system is built to cover an area because the total load that the utility expects to serve will justify the expansion into that area. Serving many customers in one multifamily building is no more expensive than serving one commercial customer of the same size, other than metering. The shared distribution cost of serving a geographical area for a given load is roughly the same whether that load is from concentrated commercial or dispersed residential customers along a circuit of equivalent length and hence does not vary with customer number.[149] Bonbright found that there is "a very weak correlation between the area (or the mileage) of a distribution system and the number of customers served by the system." He concluded that "the inclusion of the costs of a minimum-sized distribution system among the customer-related costs seems ... clearly indefensible. [Cost analysts are] under impelling pressure to fudge their cost apportionments by using the category of customer costs as a dumping ground" (1961, p. 348).
2. The minimum system approach erroneously assumes that the minimum system would consist of the same number of units (e.g., number of poles, feet of conductors) as the actual system. In reality, load levels help determine the number of units as well as their size. Utilities build an additional feeder along the route of an existing feeder (or even on the same poles); loop a second feeder to the end of an existing line to pick up some load from the existing line; build an additional feeder in parallel with an existing feeder to pick up the load of some of its branches; and upgrade feeders from single-phase to three-phase. As secondary load grows, the utility typically will add transformers, splitting smaller customers among the existing and new transformers.[150] Some other feeder construction is designed to improve reliability (e.g., to interconnect feeders with automatic switching to reduce the number of customers affected by outages and outage duration).

149 As noted above, for some rural utilities, particularly cooperatives that extend distribution without requiring that the extension be profitable, a portion of the distribution system may effectively be customer-specific.

150 Adding transformers also reduces the length of the secondary lines from the transformers to the customers, reducing losses, voltage drop or the required gauge of the secondary lines.

3. Load can determine the type of equipment installed as well. When load increases, electric distribution systems are often relocated from overhead to underground (which is more expensive) because the weight of lines required to meet load makes overhead service infeasible. Voltages may also be increased to carry more load, requiring early replacement of some equipment with more expensive equipment (e.g., new transformers, increased insulation, higher poles to accommodate higher voltage or additional circuits). Thus, a portion of the extra costs of moving equipment underground or of newer equipment may be driven in part by load.
4. The "minimum system" would still meet a large portion of the average residential customer's demand requirements. Using a minimum system approach requires reducing the demand measure for each class or otherwise crediting the classes with many customers for the load-carrying capability of the minimum system (Sterzinger, 1981, pp. 30-32).
5. Minimum system analyses tend to use the current minimum-sized unit typically installed, not the minimum size ever installed or available. The current minimum unit is sized to carry expected demand for a large percentage of customers or situations. As demand has risen over time, so has the minimum size of equipment installed. In fact, utilities usually stop stocking some less expensive small equipment because rising demand results in very rare use of the small equipment and the cost of maintaining stock is no longer warranted.[151] However, the transformer industry could produce truly minimum-sized utility transformers, the size of those used for cellular telephone chargers, if there were a demand for these.
6. Adding customers without adding peak demand or serving new areas does not require any additional poles or conductors. For example, dividing an existing home into two dwelling units increases the customer count but likely adds nothing in utility investment other than a second meter. Converting an office building from one large tenant to a dozen small offices similarly increases customer number without increasing shared distribution costs. And the shared distribution investment on a block with four large customers is essentially the same as for a block with 20 small customers with the same load characteristics. If an additional service is added into an existing street with electrical service, there is usually no need to add poles, and it would not be reasonable to assume any pole savings if the number of customers had been half the actual number.
7. Most utilities limit the investment they will make for low projected sales levels, as we also discuss in Section 15.2, where we address the relationship between the utility line extension policy and the utility cost allocation methodology. The prospect of adding revenues from a few commercial customers may induce the utility to spend much more on extending the distribution system than it would invest for dozens of residential customers.
8. Not all of the distribution system is embedded in rates, since some customers pay for the extension of the system with **contributions in aid of construction**, as discussed in Section 15.2. Factoring in the entire length of the system, including the part paid for with these contributions, overstates the customer component of ratepayer-funded lines.

Thus, the frequent assumption that the number of feet of conductors and the number of secondary service lines is related to customer number is unrealistic. A piece of equipment (e.g., conductor, pole, service drop or meter) should be considered customer-related only if the removal of one customer eliminates the need for the unit. The number of meters and, in most cases, service drops is customer-related, while feet of conductors and number of poles are almost entirely load-related. Reducing the number of customers, without reducing area load, will only rarely affect the length of lines or the number of poles or transformers. For example, removing one customer will avoid

151 For example, in many cases, utilities that make an allocation based on a minimum system use 10-kVA transformers, even though they installed 3-kVA or 5-kVA transformers in the past. Some utilities also have used conductor sizes and costs significantly higher than the actual minimum conductor size and cost on their systems.

overhead distribution equipment only under several unusual circumstances.[152] These circumstances represent a very small part of the shared distribution cost for the typical urban or suburban utility, particularly since many of the most remote customers for these utilities might be charged a contribution in aid of construction. These circumstances may be more prevalent for rural utilities, principally cooperatives.

The related zero-intercept method attempts to extrapolate from the cost of actual equipment (including actual minimum-sized equipment) to the cost of hypothetical equipment that carries zero load. The zero-intercept method usually involves statistical regression analysis to decompose the costs of distribution equipment into customer-related costs and costs that vary with load or size of the equipment, although some utilities use labor installation costs with no equipment. The idea is that this procedure identifies the amount of equipment required to connect existing customers that is not load-related (a zero-kVA transformer, a zero-**ampere** conductor or a pole that is zero feet high). The zero-intercept regression analysis is so abstract that it can produce a wide range of results, which vary depending on arcane statistical methods and the choice of types of equipment to include or exclude from an equation. As a result, the zero-intercept method is even less realistic than the minimum system method.

The best practice is to determine customer-related costs using the basic customer method, then use more advanced techniques to split the remainder of shared distribution system costs as energy-related and demand-related. Energy use, especially in high-load hours and in off-peak hours on high-load days, affects distribution investment and outage costs in the following ways:

- The fundamental reason for building distribution systems is to deliver energy to customers, not simply to connect them to the grid.
- The number and extent of overloads determines the life of the insulation on lines and in transformers (in both substations and line transformers) and hence the life of the equipment. A transformer that is very heavily loaded for a couple of hours a year and lightly loaded in other hours may last 40 years or more until the enclosure rusts away. A similar transformer subjected to the same annual peaks, but also to many smaller overloads in each year, may burn out in 20 years.
- All energy in high-load hours, and even all hours on high-load days, adds to heat buildup and results in sagging overhead lines, which often defines the thermal limit on lines; aging of insulation in underground lines and transformers; and a reduction the ability of lines and transformers to survive brief load spikes on the same day.
- Line losses depend on load in every hour (marginal line losses due to another kWh of load greatly exceed the average loss percentage in that hour, and losses at peak loads dramatically exceed average losses).[153] To the extent that a utility converts a distribution line from single-phase to three-phase, selects a larger conductor or increases primary voltage to reduce losses, the costs are primarily energy-related.
- Customers with a remote need for power only a few hours per year, such as construction sites or temporary businesses like Christmas tree lots, will often find non-utility solutions to be more economical. But when those same types of loads are located along existing distribution lines, they typically connect to utility service if the utility's **connection charges** are reasonable.

A portion of distribution costs can thus be classified to energy, or the demand allocation factor can be modified to reflect energy effects.

The average-and-peak method, discussed in Section 9.1 in the context of generation classification, is commonly used by natural gas utilities to classify distribution mains and other shared distribution plant.[154] This approach recognizes that a portion of shared distribution would be needed even if all

152 These circumstances are: (1) if the customer would have been the farthest one from the transformer along a span of secondary conductor that is not a service drop; (2) if the customer is the only one served off the last pole at the end of a radial primary feeder, a pole and a span of secondary, or a span of primary and a transformer; and (3) if several poles are required solely for that customer.

153 For a detailed analysis of the measurement and valuation of marginal line losses, see Lazar and Baldwin (2011).

154 See *Gas Distribution Rate Design Manual* from the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (1989, pp. 27-28) as well as more recent orders from the Minnesota Public Utilities Commission describing the range of states that use basic customer and average-and-peak methods for natural gas cost allocation (2016, pp. 53-54) and the Michigan Public Service Commission affirming the usage of the average-and-peak method (2017, pp. 113-114).

customers used power at a 100% load factor, while other costs are incurred to upsize the system to meet local peak demands. The same approach may have a place in electric distribution system classification and allocation, with something over half the basic infrastructure (poles, conductors, conduit and transformers) classified to energy to reflect the importance of energy use in justifying system coverage and the remainder to demand to reflect the higher cost of sizing equipment to serve a load that isn't uniform.

Nearly every electric utility has a line extension policy that dictates the circumstances under which the utility or a new customer must pay for an extension of service. Most of these provide only a very small investment by the utility in shared facilities such as circuits, if expected customer usage is very small, but much larger utility investment for large added load. Various utilities compute the allowance for line extensions in different ways, which are usually a variant of one of the following approaches:

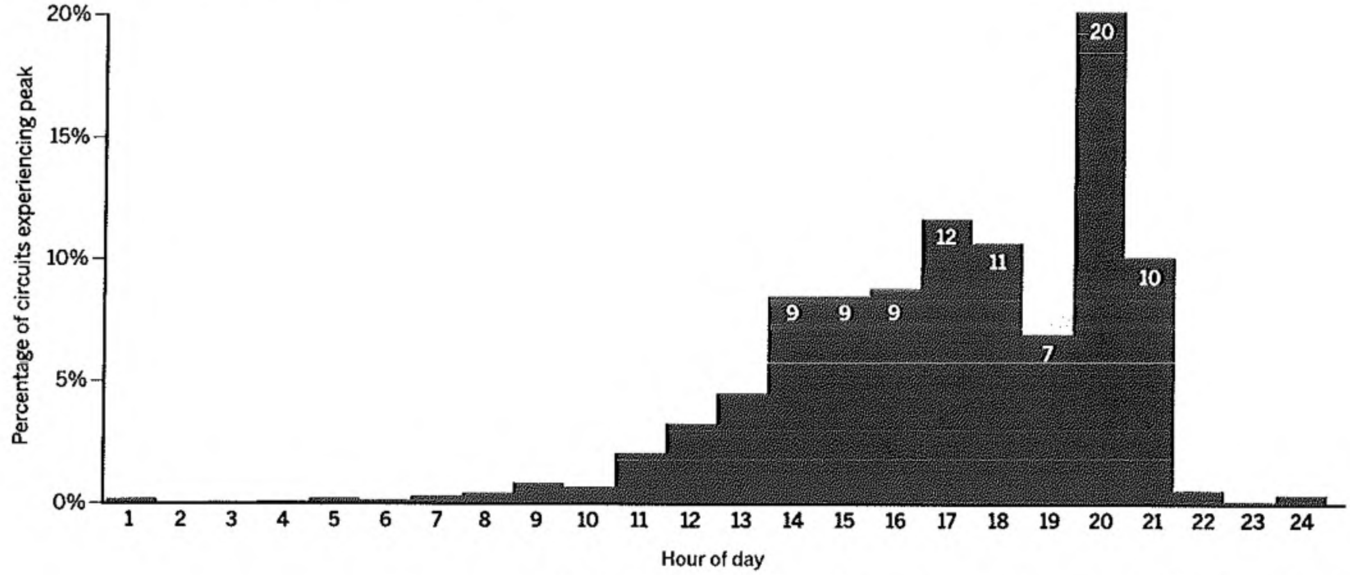
- The credit equals a multiple of revenue. For example, Otter Tail Power Co. in Minnesota will invest up to three times the expected annual revenue, with the customer bearing any excess (Otter Tail Power Co., 2017, Section 5.04). Xcel Energy's Minnesota subsidiary uses 3.5 times expected annual revenue for nonresidential customers (Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota, 2010, Sheet 6-23). Other utilities base their credits on expected nonfuel revenue or the distribution portion of the tariff; on different periods of revenue; and on either simple total revenue or present value of revenue.[155] These are clearly usage-related allowances that, in turn, determine how much cost for distribution circuits is reflected in the utility revenue requirement. Applying this logic, all shared distribution plant should thus be classified as usage-related, and none of the shared distribution system should be customer-related.
- The credit is the actual extension cost, capped at a fixed value. For example, Minnesota Power pays up to $850 for the cost of extending lines, charges $12 per foot for costs over $850 and charges actual costs for extensions over 1,000 feet (Minnesota Power, 2013, p. 6). Xcel Energy's Colorado subsidiary gives on-site construction allowances of $1,659 for residential customers, $2,486 for small commercial, $735 per kW for other secondary nonresidential and $680 per kW for primary customers (Public Service Company of Colorado, 2018, Sheet R226). The company describes these allowances as "based on two and three-quarters (2.75) times estimated annual non-fuel revenue" — a simplified version of the revenue approach.[156]
- The credit is determined by distance. Xcel Energy's Minnesota subsidiary includes the first 100 feet of line extension for a residential customer into rate base, with the customer bearing the cost for any excess length (Northern States Power Co.-Minnesota, 2010, Sheet 6-23). Green Mountain Power applies a credit equal to the cost of 100 feet of overhead service drop but no costs for poles or other equipment (Green Mountain Power, 2016, Sheet 148). The portion of the line extensions paid by the utility might be thought of as customer-related, with some caveats. First, the amount of the distribution system that was built out under this provision is almost certainly much less than 100 feet times the number of residential customers. Second, these allowances are often determined as a function of expected revenue, as in the Xcel Colorado example, and thus are usage-related.

If the line extension investment is tied to revenue (and most revenue is associated with usage-related costs, such as fuel, purchased power, generation, transmission and substations), then the resulting investment should be classified and allocated on a usage basis. The cost of service study should ensure that the costs customers prepay are netted out (including not just the costs but the footage of lines or excess costs of poles and transformers if a minimum system method is used) before classifying any distribution costs as customer-related.

155 California sets electric line extension allowances at expected net distribution revenue divided by a cost of service factor of roughly 16% (California Public Utilities Commission, 2007, pp. 8-9).

156 The company also has the option of applying the 2.75 multiple directly (Public Service Company of Colorado, 2018, Sheet R212).

Figure 40. San Diego Gas & Electric circuit peaks



Source: Fang, C. (2017, January 20). Direct testimony on behalf of San Diego Gas & Electric. California Public Utilities Commission Application No. 17-01-020

11.3 Distribution Demand Allocators

In any traditional study, a significant portion of distribution plant is classified as demand-related. A newer hourly allocation method may omit this step, assigning distribution costs to all hours when the asset (or a portion of the cost of the asset) is required for service.

For demand-related costs, class NCP is commonly, but often inappropriately, used for allocation. This allocator would be appropriate if each component overwhelmingly served a single class, if the equipment peaks occurred roughly at the time of the class peak, and if the sizing of distribution equipment were due solely to load in a single hour. But to the contrary, most substations and many feeders serve several tariffs, in different classes, and many tariff codes.[157]

11.3.1 Primary Distribution Allocators

Customers in a single class, in different areas and served by different substations and feeders, may experience peak loads at different times. Figure 40 shows the hours when each of San Diego Gas & Electric's distribution circuits experienced peak loads (Fang, 2017, p. 21). The peaks are clustered between the early afternoon (on circuits that are mostly commercial) and the early evening (mostly residential), while other circuits experience their peaks at a wide variety of hours.

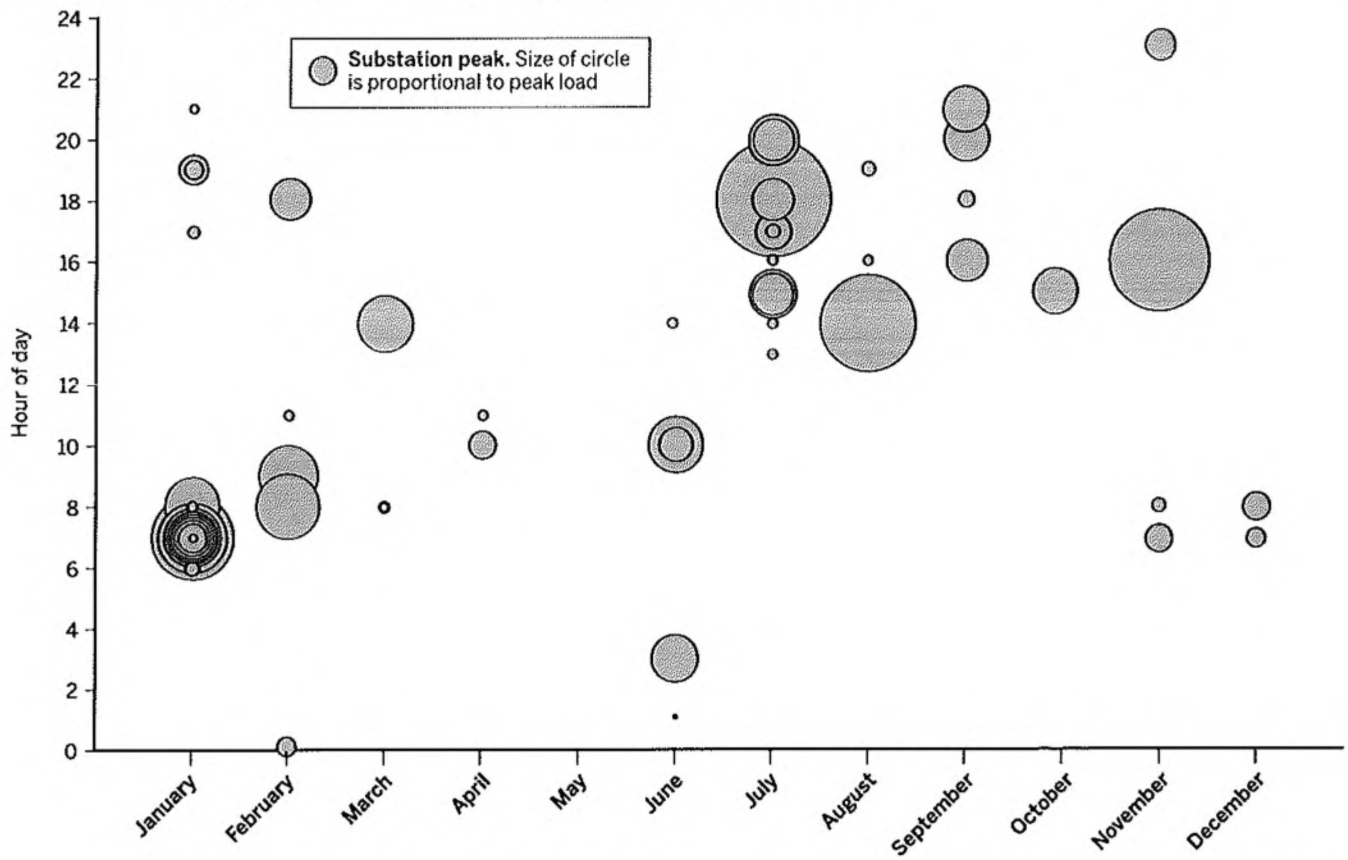
Figure 41 on the next page shows the distribution of substation peaks for Delmarva Power & Light over a period of one year (Delmarva Power & Light, 2016). The area of each bubble is proportional to the peak load on the station. Clearly, no one peak hour (or even a combination of monthly peaks) is representative of the class contribution to substation peaks.

The peaks for substations, lines and other distribution equipment do not necessarily align with the class NCPs. Indeed, even if all the major classes are summer peaking, some of the substations and feeders may be winter peaking, and vice versa. Even within a season, substation and feeder peaks will be distributed to many hours and days.

Although load levels drive distribution costs, the maximum load on each piece of equipment is not the only important load. As explained in Subsection 5.1.3, increased

157 Some utilities design their substations so that each feeder is fed by a single transformer, rather than all the feeders being served by all the transformers at the substation. In those cases, the relevant loads (for timing and class mix) are at the transformer level, rather than the entire substation.

Figure 41. Month and hour of Delmarva Power & Light substation peaks in 2014



Source: Delmarva Power & Light. (2016, August 15). Response to the Office of the People's Counsel data request 5-11, Attachment D. Maryland Public Service Commission Case No. 9424

energy use, especially at high-load hours and prior to those hours, can also affect the sizing and service life of transformers and underground lines, which is thus driven by the energy use on the equipment in high-load periods, not just the maximum demand hour. The peak hourly capacity of a line or transformer depends on how hot the equipment is prior to the peak load, which depends in turn on the load factor in the days leading up to the peak and how many high-load hours occur prior to the peak. More frequent events of load approaching the equipment capacity, longer peaks and hotter equipment going into the peak period all contribute to faster insulation deterioration and cumulative line sag, increasing the probability of failure and accelerating aging.

Ideally, the allocators for each distribution plant type should reflect the contribution of each class to the hours when load on the substation, feeder or transformer contributes to the potential for overloads. That allocation could be constructed by assigning costs to hours or by constructing a special demand allocator for each category of distribution equipment. If a detailed allocation is too complex, the allocators for costs should still reflect the underlying reality that distribution costs are driven by load in many hours.

The resulting allocator should reflect the variety of seasons and times at which the load on this type of equipment experiences peaks. In addition, the allocator should reflect the near-peak and prepeak loads that contribute to overheating and aging of equipment. Selecting the important hours for distribution loads and the weight to be given to the prepeak loads may require some judgments. Class NCP allocators do not serve this function.

Rocky Mountain Power allocates primary distribution on monthly coincident distribution peak, weighted by the percentage of substations peaking in each month (Steward, 2014, p. 7). Under this weighting scheme, for example:

- A small substation has as much effect on a month's weighting factor as a large substation. The month with the largest number of large substations seriously overloaded could be the highest-cost month yet may not receive the highest weight since each substation is weighted equally.
- The month's contribution to distribution demand costs is assumed to occur entirely at the hour of the monthly distribution peak, even though most of the substation capacity that peaks in the month may have peaked in a variety of different hours.
- A month would receive a weight of 100% whether each substation's maximum load was only 1 kVA more than its maximum in every other month or four times its maximum in every other month.

This approach could be improved by reflecting the capacity of the substations, the actual timing of the peak hours and the number of near-peak hours of each substation in each month. The hourly loads might be weighted by the square or some other power of load or by using a peak capacity allocation factor for the substation, to reflect the fact that the contribution to line losses and equipment life falls rapidly as load falls below peak.

Many utilities will need to develop additional information on system loads for cost allocation, as well as for planning, operational and rate design purposes. Specifically, utilities should aim to understand when each feeder and substation reaches its maximum loads and the mix of rate classes on each feeder and distribution substation.

In the absence of detailed data on the loads on line transformers, feeders and substations, utilities will be limited to cruder aggregate load data. For primary equipment, the best available proxy may be the class energy usage in the expected high-load period for the equipment, the class contribution to coincident peak or possibly class NCP, but only if that NCP is computed with respect to the peak load of the customers sharing the equipment. Although most substations and feeders serving industrial and commercial customers will also serve some residential customers, and most residential substations and feeders will have some commercial load, some percentage of distribution facilities serve a single class.

The NCP approximation is not a reasonable approximation for finer disaggregation of class loads. For example, there are many residential areas that contain a mix of single-family and multifamily housing and homes with and without electric space heating, electric water heating and solar panels. The primary distribution plant in those areas must be sized for the combined load in coincident peak periods, which may be the late afternoon summer cooling peak, the evening winter heating and lighting peak or some other time — but it will be the same time for all the customers in the area.[158]

Many utilities have multiple tariffs or tariff codes for residential customers (e.g., heating, water heating, all-electric and solar; single-family, multifamily and public housing; low-income and standard), for commercial customers (small, medium and large; primary and secondary voltage; schools, dormitories, churches and other customer types) and for various types of industrial customers, in addition to street lighting and other services. In most cases, those subclasses will be mixed together, resulting in customers with gas and electric space heat, gas and electric water heat, and with and without solar in the same block, along with street lights. The substation and feeder will be sized for the combined load, not for the combined peak load of just the electric heat customers or the combined peak of the customers with solar panels[159] or the street lighting peak.

Unless there is strong geographical differentiation of the subclasses, any NCP allocator should be computed for the

158 Distribution conductors and transformers have greater capacity in winter (when heat is removed quickly) than in summer; even if winter peak loads are higher, the sizing of some facilities may be driven by summer loads.

159 The division of the residential class into subclasses for calculation of the class NCP has been an issue in several recent Texas cases. In Docket No. 43695, at the recommendation of the Office of Public Utility Counsel, the Public Utility Commission of Texas reversed its former method for Southwestern Public Service to use the NCP for a single residential class (instead of separate subclasses for residential customers with and without electric heat), which reduced the costs allocated to residential customers as a whole (Public Utility Commission of Texas, 2015, pp. 12-13 and findings of fact 277A, 277B and 339A). The issue was also raised in dockets 44941 and 46831 involving El Paso Electric Co. El Paso Electric proposed separate NCP allocations for residential customers with and without solar generation, which the Office of Public Utility Counsel and solar generator representatives opposed. Both of these cases were settled and did not create a precedent.

combined load of the customer classes, with the customer class NCP assigned to rate tariffs in proportion to their estimated contribution to the customer class peak.

11.3.2 Relationship Between Line Losses and Conductor Capacity

In some situations, conductor size is determined by the economics of line losses rather than by thermal overloads or voltage drop. Even at load levels that do not threaten reliability, larger conductors may cost-effectively reduce line losses, especially in new construction.[160] The incremental cost of larger capacity can be entirely justified by loss reduction (which is mostly an energy-related benefit), with higher load-carrying capability as a free additional benefit.

11.3.3 Secondary Distribution Allocators

Each piece of secondary distribution equipment generally serves a smaller number of customers than a single piece of primary distribution equipment. On a radial system, a line transformer may serve a single customer (a large commercial customer or an isolated rural residence) or 100 apartments; a secondary line may serve a few customers or a dozen, depending on the density of load and construction. Older urban neighborhoods often have secondary lines that are connected to several transformers, and some older large cities such as Baltimore have full secondary networks in city centers.[161] In contrast, a primary distribution feeder may serve thousands of customers, and a substation can serve several feeders.

Thus, loads on secondary equipment are less diversified than loads on primary equipment. Hence, cost of service studies frequently allocate secondary equipment on load measures that reflect customer loads diversified for the number of customers on each component. Utilities often use assumed diversity factors to determine the capacity required for secondary lines and transformers, for various numbers of customers. Figure 42 on the next page provides an example of the diversity curve from El Paso Electric Co. (2015, p. 24).

Even identical houses with identical equipment may routinely peak at different times, depending on household composition, work and school schedules and building orientation. The actual peak load for any particular house may occur not at typical peak conditions but because of events not correlated with loads in other houses. For example, one house may experience its maximum load when the family returns from vacation to a hot house in the summer or a very cold one in the winter, even if neither temperatures nor time of day would otherwise be consistent with an annual maximum load. The house next door may experience its maximum load after a water leak or interior painting, when the windows are open and fans, dehumidifiers and the heating or cooling system are all in use.

Accounting for diversity among different types of residential customers, the load coincidence factors would be even lower. A single transformer may serve some homes with electric heat, peaking in the winter, and some with fossil fuel heat, peaking in the summer.

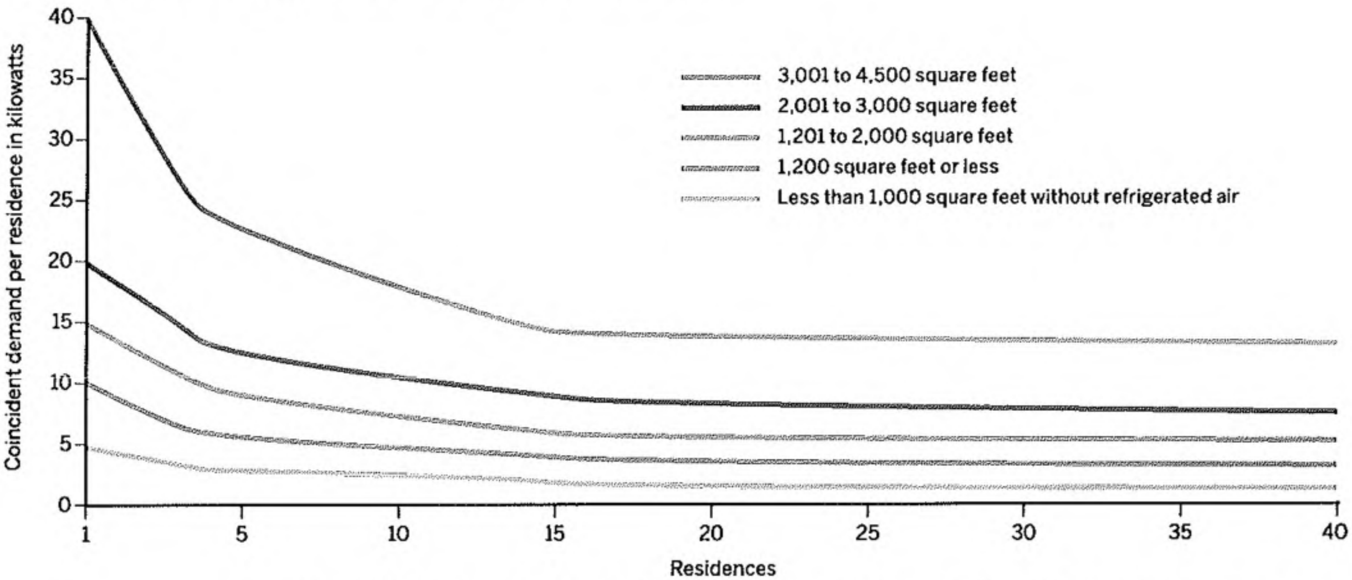
The average transformer serving residential customers may serve a dozen customers, depending on the density of the service territory and the average customer NCP, which for the example in Figure 42 suggests that the customers' average contribution to the transformer peak load would be about 40% of the customers' undiversified load. Thus, the residential allocator for transformer demand would be the class NCP times 40%. Larger commercial customers generally have very little diversity at the transformer level, since each transformer (or bank of transformers) typically serves only one or a few customers.

The same factors (household composition, work and

160 The same is true for increased distribution voltage. Seattle City Light upgraded its residential distribution system from 4 kV to 26 kV in the early 1980s based on analysis done in the Energy 1990 study, prepared in 1976, which focused on avoiding new baseload generation. The line losses justified the expenditure, but the result was also a dramatic increase in distribution system circuit capacity. The Energy 1990 study was discussed in detail in a meeting of the City Council Utilities Committee (Seattle Municipal Archives, 1977).

161 In high-load areas, such as city centers, utilities often operate secondary distribution networks, in which multiple primary feeders serve multiple transformers, which then feed a network of interconnected secondary lines that feed all the customers on the network (See Behnke et al., 2005, p. 11, Figure 8). In secondary networks, the number of transformers and the investment in secondary lines are driven by the aggregate load of the entire network or large parts of the network. The loss of any one feeder and one transformer, or any one run of secondary line, will not disconnect any customer. The existence of the network, the number of transformers and the number and length of primary and secondary lines are entirely load-related. Similar arrangements, called spot networks, are used to serve individual large customers with high reliability requirements. A single spot network customer may thus have multiple transformers, providing redundant capacity.

Figure 42. Typical utility estimates of diversity in residential loads



Source: El Paso Electric Co. (2015, October 29). *El Paso Electric Company's Response to Office of Public Utility Counsel's Fifth Request for Information.* Public Utility Commission of Texas Docket No. 44941

school schedules, unit-specific events) apply in multifamily housing as well as in single-family housing. But the effects of orientation are probably even stronger in multifamily housing than in single-family homes. For example, units on the east side of a building are likely to have summer peak loads in the morning, while those on the west side are likely to experience maximum loads in the evening and those on the south in the middle of the day.

Importantly, Figure 42 represents the diversity of similar neighboring single-family houses. Diversity is likely to be still higher for other applications, such as different types and vintages of neighboring homes, or the great variety of customers who may be served from the shared transformers and lines of a secondary network.

Until 2001, the major U.S. electric utilities were required to provide the number and capacity of transformers in service on their FERC Form 1 reports. Assuming an average of one transformer per commercial and industrial customer, these reports typically suggest a ratio ranging from 3 to more than 20 residential customers per transformer, with the lower ratios for the most rural IOUs and the highest for utilities with dense urban service territories and many multifamily consumers.[162] Only about a dozen electric co-ops filed a FERC Form 1 with the transformer data in 2001, and their ratios vary from about 1 transformer per residential customer for a few very rural co-ops to about 8 residential customers per transformer for Chugach Electric, which serves part of Anchorage as well as rural areas.

Utilities can often provide detailed current data from their geographic information systems. Table 30 on the next page shows Puget Sound Energy's summary of the number of transformers serving a single residential customer and the number serving multiple customers (Levin, 2017, pp. 8-9). More than 95% of customers are served by shared transformers, and those transformers serve an average of 5.3 customers. Using the method described in the previous paragraph, an estimated average of 4.9 Puget Sound Energy residential customers would share a transformer, which is close to the actual average of 4.5 customers per transformer shown in Table 30 (Levin, 2017, and additional calculations by the authors).

The customers who have their own transformer may be too far from their neighbors to share a transformer, or local load growth may have required that the utility add a transformer. In many cases, residential customers with

162 Ratios computed using Form 1, p. 429, transformer data (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, n.d.) and 2001 numbers from utilities' federal Form 861 (U.S. Energy Information Administration, n.d.-a, file 2).

Table 30. Residential shared transformer example

	With multiple residences per transformer	With single residence per transformer	Total
Number of transformers	197,503	47,699	245,202
Number of customers	1,054,296	47,699	1,101,995
Customers per transformer	5.3	1	4.5

Sources: Levin, A. (2017, June 30). Prefiled response testimony on behalf of NW Energy Coalition, Renewable Northwest and Natural Resources Defense Council. Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission Docket No. UE-170033; additional calculations by the authors

individual transformers may need to pay to obtain service that is more expensive than their line extension allowances (see Section 11.2 or Section 15.2).

Small customers will have similar, but lower, diversity on secondary conductors, which generally serve multiple customers but not as many as a transformer. A transformer that serves a dozen customers may serve two of them directly without secondary lines, four customers from one stretch of secondary line and six from another stretch of secondary line running in the opposite direction or across the street.

Where no detailed data are available on the number of customers per transformer in each class, a reasonable approximation might be to allocate transformer demand costs on a simple average of class NCP and customer NCP for residential and small commercial customers and just customer NCP for larger nonresidential customers.

11.3.4 Distribution Operations and Maintenance Allocators

Distribution O&M accounts associated with a single type of equipment (FERC accounts 582, 591 and 592 for substations and Account 595 for transformers) should be classified and allocated in the same manner as associated equipment. Other accounts serve both primary and secondary lines and service drops (accounts 583, 584, 593 and 594) or include services to a range of equipment (accounts 580 and 590). These costs normally should be classified and allocated in proportion to the plant in service, for the plant accounts they support, subfunctionalized as appropriate. For example, typical utility tree-trimming activities are almost entirely related to primary overhead lines, with very little cost driven by secondary distribution and no costs for protecting service lines (see, for example, Entergy Corp., n.d.).

11.3.5 Multifamily Housing and Distribution Allocation

One common error in distribution cost allocation is treating the residential class as if all customers were in single-family structures, with one service drop per customer and a relatively small number of customers on each transformer.[163] For multifamily customers, one or a few transformers may serve 100 or more customers through a single service line.[164] Treating multifamily customers as if they were single-family customers would overstate their contribution to distribution costs, particularly line transformers and secondary service lines.[165]

This problem can be resolved in either of two ways. The broadest solution is to separate residential customers into two allocation classes: single-family residential and multifamily residential, as we discuss in Section 5.2.[166] Alternatively, the allocation of transformer and service costs to a combined residential class (as well as residential rate design) should take into account the percentage of customers who are in multifamily buildings, and only components that are not shared should be considered customer-related.

163 One large service drop is much less expensive than the multiple drops needed to serve the same number of customers in single-customer buildings. Small commercial customers may also share service drops, although probably to a more limited extent than residential customers.

164 Similarly, if the cost of service study includes any classification of shared distribution plant as customer-related (such as from a minimum system), each multifamily building should be treated as a single location, rather than a large number of dispersed customers. For utilities without remote meter reading, the labor cost for that activity per multifamily customer will be lower than for single-family customers.

165 Allocating transformer costs on demand eliminates the bias for that cost category.

166 If any sort of NCP allocator is used in the cost of service study, the multifamily class load generally should be combined with the load of the type of customers that tend to surround the multifamily buildings in the particular service territory, which may be single-family residential or medium commercial customers.

11.3.6 Direct Assignment of Distribution Plant

Direct cost assignment may be appropriate for equipment required for particular customers, not shared with other classes, and not double-counted in class allocation of common costs. Examples include distribution-style poles that support streetlights and are not used by any other class; the same may be true for spans of conductor to those poles. Short tap lines from a main primary voltage line to serve a single primary voltage customer's premises may be another example, as they are analogous to a secondary distribution service drop.

Beyond some limited situations, it is not practical or useful to determine which distribution equipment (such as lines and poles) was built for only one class or currently serves only one class and to ensure that the class is properly credited for not using the other distribution equipment jointly used by other classes in those locations.

11.4 Allocation Factors for Service Drops

The cost of a service drop clearly varies with a number of factors that vary by class: customer load (which affects the capacity of the service line), the distance from the distribution line to the customer, underground versus overhead service, the number of customers sharing a service (or the number of services required by a single customer) and whether customers require three-phase service.

Some utilities, including Baltimore Gas & Electric, attempt to track service line costs by class over time (Chernick, 2010, p. 7). This approach is ideal but complicated. Although assigning the costs of new and replacement service lines just requires careful cost accounting, determining the costs of services that are retired and tracking changes in the class or classes in a building (which may change over time from manufacturing to office space to mixed residential and retail) is much more complex. Other utilities allocate service lines on the sum of customer maximum demands in each class. This has the advantage of reflecting the fact that larger customers require larger (and often longer) service lines, without requiring a detailed analysis of the specific lines in use for each class.

Many utilities have performed bottom-up analyses, selecting a typical customer or an arguably representative sample of customers in each class, pricing out those customers' service lines and extrapolating to the class. Since the costs are estimated in today's dollars, the result of these studies is the ratio of each class's cost of services to the total cost, or a set of weights for service costs per customer. Either approach should reflect the sharing of services in multifamily buildings.

11.5 Classification and Allocation for Advanced Metering and Smart Grid Costs

Traditional meters are often discussed as part of the distribution system but are primarily used for billing purposes.[167] These meters typically record energy and, for some classes, customer NCP demand for periodic manual or remote reading and generally are classified as customer-related. Meter costs are then typically allocated on a basis that reflects the higher costs of meters for customers who take power at higher voltage or three phases, for demand-recording meters, for TOU meters and for hourly-recording energy meters. The weights may be developed from the current costs of installing the various types of meters, but as technology changes, those costs may not be representative of the costs of equipment in rates.

In many parts of the country, this traditional metering has been replaced with advanced metering infrastructure. AMI investments were funded in many cases by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the economic stimulus passed during the Great Recession, but in other cases ratepayers are paying for them in full in the traditional method. In many jurisdictions, AMI has been accompanied by other complementary "smart grid"

167 Some customers who are small or have extremely consistent load patterns are not metered; instead, their bills are estimated based on known load parameters. The largest group of these customers is street lighting customers, but some utilities allow unmetered loads for various small loads that can be easily estimated or nearly flat loads with very high load factors (such as traffic signals). An example of an unmetered customer from the past was a phone booth. Unmetered customers should not be allocated costs of traditional metering and meter reading.

Table 31. Smart grid cost classification

	Legacy approach			
Smart grid element	**Equivalent cost**	**FERC account**	**Classification**	**Smart grid classification**
Smart meters	Meters	370	Customer	Demand, energy and customer
Distribution control devices	Station equipment and devices	362, 365, 367	Demand	Demand and energy
Data collection system	Meter readers	902	Customer	Demand, energy and customer
Meter data management system	Customer accounting and general plant	903, 905, 391	Customer and overhead	Demand, energy and customer

investments. On the whole, these investments include:

- Smart meters, which are usually defined to include the ability to record and remotely report granular load data, measure voltage and power factor, and allow for remote connection and disconnection of the customer.
- Distribution system improvements, such as equipment to remotely monitor power flow on feeders and substations, open and close switches and breakers and otherwise control the distribution system.
- Voltage control equipment on substations to allow modulation of input voltage in response to measured voltage at the end of each feeder.
- Power factor control equipment to respond to signals from the meters.
- Data collection networks for the meters and line monitors.
- Advanced data processing hardware and software to handle the additional flood of data.
- Supporting overhead costs to make the new system work.

The potential benefits of the smart grid, depending on how it is designed and used, include reduced costs for generation, transmission, distribution and customer service, as described in Subsection 7.1.1. A smart meter is much more than a device to measure customer usage to assure an accurate bill — it is the foundation of a system that may provide some or all of the following:

- Benefits at every level of system capacity, by enabling peak load management since the communication system can be used to control compatible end uses, and because customer response to calls for load reduction can be measured and rewarded.
- Distribution line loss savings from improved power factor and phase balancing.
- Reduced energy costs due to load shifting.
- Reliability benefits, saving time and money on service restoration after outages, since the utility can determine which meters do not have power and can determine whether a customer's loss of service is due to a problem inside the premises or on the distribution system.
- Allowing utilities to determine maximum loads on individual transformers.
- Retail service benefits, by reducing meter reading costs compared with manual meter reads and even automated meter reading and by reducing the cost of disconnecting and reconnecting customers.[168]

The installations have also been very expensive, running into the hundreds of millions of dollars for some utilities, and the cost-effectiveness of the AMI projects has been a matter of dispute in many jurisdictions. Since these new systems are much more expensive than the older metering systems and are largely justified by services other than billing, their costs must be allocated over a wider range of activities, either by functionalizing part of the costs to generation, distribution and so on or reflecting those functions in classification or the allocation factor.

Special attention must be given to matching costs and benefits associated with smart grid deployment. The expected benefits spread across the entire spectrum of utility costs, from lower labor costs for meter reading to lower energy

168 The data systems can also be configured to provide systemwide Wi-Fi internet access, although they usually are not. See Burbank Water and Power (n.d.).