Energy storage efficiency 250 kWh

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We run our model under a baseline scenario and 38 alternate scenarios, where we vary five main attributes to understand the value and role of LDES: wind-vs-solar capacity shares, hydropower availability, transmission expansion costs, storage energy capacity costs, and storage mandates (labeled A to E as defined in Table 3). The scenarios are chosen to explore parameters that would impact the use of storage, or parameters that could change unexpectedly as the WECC transitions to a zero-emissions grid (see Table 3 for further justification of the scenario selection).

In this section, we analyze the baseline scenario which represents a least-cost zero-emissions WECC. We find seasonal and geographical trends in generation and storage technology use. We also find that the baseline scenario uses little LDES. Excluding Alberta, which holds 300 GW of 18-h storage, the baseline"s energy storage is 99% short-duration energy storage (under 10 h duration).

The baseline scenario represented in time (a) and space (b) highlighting seasonal variations in the dispatch by technology, curtailment and mean marginal electricity price (a) as well as differences between the southern and northern Western Interconnect (b). Temporal values in a are 7-day rolling averages, storage durations are per-load-zone averages, and power capacity is the total combined sum of the installed generation and storage capacity.

This least-cost investment and operational plan for a decarbonized WECC in 2050 relies on regional coordination highlighting the role and importance that the Western Energy Imbalance Market could have. On the other hand, strong regional coordination, thus dependency, may exacerbate reliability challenges during extreme weather events as neighboring regions might not be able to provide power as expected during normal conditions.

The value of LDES is closely tied to the composition and characteristics of the rest of the energy grid. In this section, we share results on how four key factors (wind-vs-solar capacity shares, hydropower availability, transmission expansion and energy storage costs) impact the value of LDES.

The impact relative to the baseline of variations in four key parameters (a-d) on the storage power capacity (area plot), storage energy capacity (green line, TWh), wind capacity (blue line), solar capacity (yellow line), and transmission expansion (red line). The transmission expansion line in (c) does not extend to the "No Tx Build Costs" scenario since that scenario has unlimited transmission capacity.

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