

included in the information in the audit file proposed in the What Report.²⁵ We do not consider price information concerning cost-based transmission services to be commercially sensitive. With respect to information concerning negotiations on transmission requests, we propose that such information not be posted unless an agreement to provide the transmission is reached.²⁶ This information is to be available only in the audit file. In addition, if an agreement is reached, we propose that the identity of parties to transmission transactions be masked until a standard release period elapses. This release period should be a standard period after which it is commonly recognized that most information is no longer commercially sensitive. The Commission proposes that a reasonable standard release period is 30 days after the date when the Transmission Provider's ATC was adjusted in response to the transaction; after that date all transaction data will be made available.

Question 24. The Commission requests comment on what information should be considered commercially sensitive, the 30-day release period proposal, and on how and when commercially sensitive information should be released to concerned parties before the standard release period. Should affiliated transactions be treated differently?

D. Technical Issues Concerning the Development and Implementation of RINS

1. Summary of the "How" Working Group Report

After a review of the process used by the "how" working group (How Group) in formulating its views, and after consideration of the Group's efforts to invite input from a broad spectrum of industry segments, the Commission is satisfied that the How Group conducted its process in an inclusive and open manner. The How Group report (How Report) represents a broad agreement among all segments of the electric power industry. It presents the agreed minimum requirements for computer systems and associated communications facilities needed by public utilities to provide comparable access to transmission and ancillary services information by all wholesale transmission users.²⁷

The How Group proposes a two-phase approach. It believes that the Phase I implementation provides the information needed for the Commission's open access program and works well enough to communicate this information to customers. Under the How Group proposal, RINs would become fully functional in Phase II. The How Report recommends that Phase II requirements be implemented 24 months after the effective date of the final rule establishing Phase I RIN requirements.

a. Phase I Recommendations

The How Group proposes that the required transmission service information be posted on RINs operated by the transmission-owning public utility, jointly with other utilities, or by a third party.²⁸ Each RIN implementation, whether on behalf of a single entity or a group of utilities, is referred to as a Node. A RIN operated jointly by several utilities would be considered one Node. RIN Nodes must be accessible through the Internet. By connecting each Node through the Internet, transmission service information from each utility becomes part of a network. With a single Internet connection, customers would be able to access information from any utility and would even be able to display information from several Nodes at the same time.²⁹

Nodes must support the use of Internet tools. These inexpensive, widely available, and well-tested tools will permit customers to access RIN information easily and to download³⁰ it to available desk-top database programs, spreadsheets, and other applications.³¹ Customers would also be able to upload³² information to RIN Nodes. The specific tools for doing so are described in Appendix B.

RIN users would access Nodes using World Wide Web (WWW) browsers.³³ Each Node would display information using the HTML protocol required by World Wide Web browsers. Screen displays would consist of a series of

pages that may be viewed by customers without requiring them to download the pages.³⁴ Under the standards that will accompany issuance of a final rule on RINs, the information on each page, but not the actual displays, must be standardized. Information would also be required to be made available for downloading, in a standardized ASCII³⁵ format, using the Internet's File Transfer Protocol (FTP).

In Phase I, customers would be able to use the RIN to purchase transmission from public utilities. They would be able to request capacity either by completing a standardized form contained in an on-line HTML page or by uploading a filled-out form using FTP.³⁶ Customers who want to resell transmission capacity would upload (post) the relevant information to the same RIN Node used by the primary provider from whom they purchased the ATC.³⁷ Customers would also be able to upload Want Ads containing such information as requests to purchase transmission capacity.³⁸

In Phase I, transmission-owning public utilities may, but would not be required to, provide private connections at the request of a customer. These connections could include leased-lines or connections to a private network. These connections would have to use the same Internet tools as are required for the Internet connection.³⁹ Customers would pay for the cost of the connections. If a connection is made for one customer, the same type of private connection must be made available to all customers in a comparable manner. In Phase II, utilities would be *required* to provide these connections.

The How Report proposes that utilities may provide value-added services for a fee on a fair and non-discriminatory basis. Such services would include notifying customers of changes in available capacity, beyond simply posting a notice of the change.⁴⁰

The How Group developed a model of the information requirements that the What Group identified as needed for comparable access. For Phase I, the model specifies the information that must be available at each RIN Node, how the information may be requested and the layout of the information received by customers. Customers would be limited to obtaining

(Correspondence with "What" Working Group). The How Report, in its entirety, is posted on CIPS.

²⁸ How Report at § 2.4.1 (a).

²⁹ How Report at § 2.4.1 (f).

³⁰ Download refers to the transfer of a file from a RIN Node to the user's computer system.

³¹ How Report at § 2.4.1 (c).

³² This is accomplished by transferring a file from the user's computer system to a RIN Node.

³³ The World Wide Web is a system of computer resources that are accessed through the Internet.

A Browser is a computer program for retrieving and reading hypermedia documents from the WWW. A hypermedia document can contain, text, graphics, video, sound or data. These documents are often linked to other documents.

³⁴ How Report at § 3.2.3

³⁵ ASCII refers to the American Standard Code for Information Interchange, a code for character representation.

³⁶ How Report at § 3.2.6.

³⁷ How Report at § 3.2.4

³⁸ How Report at § 3.2.3 (e).

³⁹ How Report at § 2.4.1 (g).

⁴⁰ How Report at §§ 3.1.2 (c) and 3.2.2.

²⁵ See What Report at 31-32.

²⁶ An exception would be where the Transmission Provider offers discounts to its merchant function or an affiliate. As noted elsewhere, such information would need to be posted regardless of whether an agreement to provide transmission was reached.

²⁷ The version of this report attached to this proposal intentionally omits Appendix C (Workshop Participants), Appendix D (Survey Questionnaire and Results), and Appendix F