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### Control system with coordinated equipment staging

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#### Abstract

A controller for heating, ventilation, or air conditioning (HVAC) equipment includes a communications interface configured to communicate with first HVAC equipment and second HVAC equipment and a processing circuit communicably coupled to the communications interface. The processing circuit is configured to detect a staging event for the first HVAC equipment occurring at a first time, obtain a delay time based on an estimated amount of time required to reach steady state after the staging event for the first HVAC equipment occurs at the first time, determine whether the delay time has elapsed since the staging event for the first HVAC equipment has occurred, and prevent the second HVAC equipment from staging in response to a determination that the delay time has not elapsed since the staging event for the first HVAC equipment has occurred.

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## **Background/Summary**

**CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS** (1) This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/743,640, filed May 13, 2022, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 17/148,094, now U.S. Pat. No. 11,353,834, filed Jan. 13, 2021, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 16/182,362, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,928,790, filed Nov. 6, 2018, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/872,074, now U.S. Pat. No. 10,190,789, filed Sep. 30, 2015. The entire disclosures of each are incorporated by reference herein.

## **BACKGROUND**

(1) The present disclosure relates generally to a central plant that includes multiple subplants configured to serve the heating loads and/or cooling loads of a building. The present invention relates more particularly to systems and methods for coordinating HVAC equipment staging across multiple subplants of a central plant.

(2) A central plant typically includes various types of HVAC equipment configured to serve the thermal energy loads of a building or campus. For example, a central plant may include heaters, chillers, heat recovery chillers (HRCs), cooling towers, or other types of HVAC equipment. The central plant may consume resources from a utility (e.g., electricity, water, natural gas, etc.) to heat or cool a working fluid that is circulated to one or more buildings or stored for later use (e.g., in thermal energy storage tanks) to provide heating or cooling for the building.

(3) Some central plants include multiple subplants (e.g., a heater subplant, a HRC subplant, a chiller subplant, etc.), each of which is configured to serve a particular type of load (e.g., heating,

cooling, hot water, cold water, etc.). For example, a cooling load can be met by activating the chillers in the chiller subplant and/or the HRCs in the HRC subplant. Equipment staging within a subplant (e.g., activating or deactivating HVAC devices) is typically controlled by a subplant level controller configured to manage the equipment within the subplant. The subplant level controllers often operate independently and do not consider the state of any other subplant when determining whether to stage their equipment.

(4) Some types of HVAC equipment consume more energy when they are initially started or activated than they do under steady-state operation. For example, chillers and HRCs may cause a temporary spike in energy consumption when they are initially started or activated. In some instances, an increase in cooling load may cause the load setpoints for the HRC subplant and the chiller subplant to increase simultaneously. However, if the chillers and the HRCs are staged at the same time, the resultant spikes in energy consumption can stack on top of each other, causing a high peak energy consumption.

(5) A demand charge is a cost imposed by a utility provider based on the maximum usage of a particular resource (e.g., maximum energy consumption) during a demand charge period. A high peak energy consumption may be undesirable since it increases the maximum rate of energy consumption used by the utility provider to calculate the demand charge. However, it can be difficult and challenging to avoid spikes in energy consumption while ensuring that the heating and cooling loads are met in an energy efficient manner.

## SUMMARY

(6) One implementation of the present disclosure is a controller for equipment that includes at least a first group of equipment and a second group of equipment that contribute to a peak energy consumption of a building. The controller includes a communications interface configured to communicate with the first group of equipment and the second group of equipment and a processing circuit communicably coupled to the communications interface. The processing circuit includes processor and memory. The memory includes an equipment staging detector configured to detect a staging event for the first group of equipment and to determine when the staging event occurs, a staging evaluator configured to use input from the equipment staging detector to determine whether a predetermined time period has elapsed since the staging event for the first group of equipment has occurred, and a staging preventer configured to prevent the second group of equipment from staging in response to a determination that the predetermined time period has not elapsed since the staging event for the first group of equipment has occurred. Preventing the second group of equipment from staging reduces the peak energy consumption of the building during the predetermined time period and reduces a demand charge based on the peak energy consumption.

(7) In some embodiments, the first group of equipment include equipment of a first subplant of a central plant configured to serve a thermal energy load, the second group of equipment include equipment of a second subplant of the central plant, and the first subplant and the second subplant include at least two of a heater subplant, a heat recovery chiller subplant, a chiller subplant, a cooling tower subplant, a hot thermal energy storage subplant, and a cold thermal energy storage subplant.

(8) In some embodiments, the first group of equipment and the second group of equipment include at least one of boilers, heaters, pumps, chillers, heat recovery chillers, cooling towers, and thermal energy storage tanks.

(9) In some embodiments, the staging event includes at least one of activating or deactivating one or more devices of the first group of equipment, changing a load setpoint for the first group of equipment, and changing a capacity of first group of equipment.

(10) In some embodiments, the controller includes an optimizer configured to perform an optimization process to determine a desired set of equipment of the second group of equipment to operate within the predetermined time period.



- (11) In some embodiments, the controller includes a desired equipment drop detector configured to determine whether the desired set of equipment of the second group of equipment has dropped to zero. The staging preventer can be configured to allow the second group of equipment to stage in response to a determination that the desired set of equipment of the second group of equipment has dropped to zero.
- (12) In some embodiments, the controller includes a toggle input configured to provide opposite binary inputs for the first group of equipment and the second group of equipment. The staging preventer can be configured to allow the second group of equipment to stage in response to a determination that the binary input for the second group of equipment has a first binary value. The staging preventer can be configured to prevent the second group of equipment from staging in response to a determination that the binary input for the second group of equipment has a second binary value, opposite the first binary value.
- (13) In some embodiments, the toggle input is configured to periodically swap the opposite binary inputs for the first group of equipment and the second group of equipment.
- (14) In some embodiments, the staging preventer is configured to use the toggle input as an override signal and determine whether to prevent the second group of equipment from staging based on the toggle input regardless of whether the predetermined time period has elapsed since the staging event for the first group of equipment has occurred.
- (15) In some embodiments, the staging evaluator is configured to determine whether the first group of equipment is at steady state and whether the second group of equipment is at steady state. The staging preventer can be configured to prevent the second group of equipment from staging in response to a determination that the second group of equipment is at steady state and the first group of equipment is not at steady state.
- (16) Another implementation of the present disclosure is a method for coordinating equipment staging across at least a first group of equipment and a second group of equipment that contribute to a peak energy consumption of a building. The method includes detecting a staging event for the first group of equipment and a time at which the staging event occurs, determining whether a predetermined time period has elapsed since the staging event for the first group of equipment has occurred, and preventing the second group of equipment from staging in response to a determination that the predetermined time period has not elapsed since the staging event for the first group of equipment has occurred. Preventing the second group of equipment from staging reduces the peak energy consumption of the building during the predetermined time period and reduces a demand charge based on the peak energy consumption.
- (17) In some embodiments, the first group of equipment include equipment of a first subplant of a central plant configured to serve a thermal energy load, the second group of equipment include equipment of a second subplant of the central plant, and the first subplant and the second subplant include at least two of a heater subplant, a heat recovery chiller subplant, a chiller subplant, a cooling tower subplant, a hot thermal energy storage subplant, and a cold thermal energy storage subplant.
- (18) In some embodiments, the first group of equipment and the second group of equipment include at least one of boilers, heaters, pumps, chillers, heat recovery chillers, cooling towers, and thermal energy storage tanks.
- (19) In some embodiments, the staging event includes at least one of activating or deactivating one or more devices of the first group of equipment, changing a load setpoint for the first group of equipment, and changing a capacity of first group of equipment.
- (20) In some embodiments, the method includes performing an optimization process to determine a desired set of equipment of the second group of equipment to operate within the predetermined time period.
- (21) In some embodiments, the method includes determining whether the desired set of equipment of the second group of equipment has dropped to zero and allowing the second group of equipment

to stage in response to a determination that the desired set of equipment of the second group of equipment has dropped to zero.

(22) In some embodiments, the method includes providing opposite binary inputs for the first group of equipment and the second group of equipment, allowing the second group of equipment to stage in response to a determination that the binary input for the second group of equipment has a first binary value, and preventing the second group of equipment from staging in response to a determination that the binary input for the second group of equipment has a second binary value, opposite the first binary value.

(23) In some embodiments, the method includes periodically swapping the opposite binary inputs for the first group of equipment and the second group of equipment.

(24) In some embodiments, the toggle input is used as an override signal to prevent the second group of equipment from staging regardless of whether the predetermined time period has elapsed since the staging event for the first group of equipment has occurred.

(25) In some embodiments, the method includes determining whether the first group of equipment is at steady state and whether the second group of equipment is at steady state and preventing the second group of equipment from staging in response to a determination that the second group of equipment is at steady state and the first group of equipment is not at steady state.

(26) Those skilled in the art will appreciate that the summary is illustrative only and is not intended to be in any way limiting. Other aspects, inventive features, and advantages of the devices and/or processes described herein, as defined solely by the claims, will become apparent in the detailed description set forth herein and taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

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## Description

### BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

(1) FIG. 1 is a drawing of a building equipped with a HVAC system, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(2) FIG. 2 is a schematic of a central plant that includes a plurality of subplants which may be used to provide heating and/or cooling to the building of FIG. 1, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(3) FIG. 3 is a block diagram of a central plant system including a central plant controller configured to manage the plurality of subplants of FIG. 2, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(4) FIG. 4 is a block diagram illustrating a portion of the central plant system of FIG. 3 in greater detail and showing an equipment staging coordinator configured to coordinate the staging of HVAC equipment across multiple subplants, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(5) FIG. 5 is a block diagram illustrating the equipment staging coordinator of FIG. 4 in greater detail, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(6) FIG. 6 is a block diagram illustrating the equipment staging coordinator of FIG. 4 in greater detail, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(7) FIG. 7A is a block diagram illustrating a set of inputs which may be provided to the equipment staging coordinator of FIG. 4, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(8) FIG. 7B is a block diagram illustrating a set of comparator blocks which may be used by the equipment staging coordinator of FIG. 4, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(9) FIG. 7C is a block diagram of logic components which may be used by the equipment staging coordinator of FIG. 4 to determine whether to prevent or allow HRC equipment staging, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(10) FIG. 7D is a block diagram of logic components which may be used by the equipment staging coordinator of FIG. 4 to determine whether to prevent or allow chiller equipment staging, according to an exemplary embodiment.

(11) FIG. 8 is a flowchart of a process for coordinating HVAC equipment staging across multiple subplants, according to an exemplary embodiment.

#### DETAILED DESCRIPTION

(12) Referring generally to the FIGURES, a central plant with coordinated HVAC equipment staging across multiple subplants is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. The central plant may include various types of HVAC equipment configured to serve the thermal energy loads of a building or campus. For example, the central plant may include heaters, chillers, heat recovery chillers (HRCs), cooling towers, or other types of HVAC equipment. The central plant may consume resources from a utility (e.g., electricity, water, natural gas, etc.) to heat or cool a working fluid that is circulated to one or more buildings or stored for later use (e.g., in thermal energy storage tanks) to provide heating or cooling for the building. The central plant may include multiple subplants (e.g., a heater subplant, a HRC subplant, a chiller subplant, etc.), each of which is configured to serve a particular type of load (e.g., heating, cooling, hot water, cold water, etc.).

(13) The central plant may include an equipment staging coordinator configured to coordinate the staging (e.g., turning on/off, activating/deactivating, etc.) of HVAC equipment across multiple subplants. The equipment staging coordinator may prevent each of the subplants from reacting to a change in building load too quickly (e.g., within a predetermined time period) after a change in another subplant has occurred. Advantageously, the equipment staging coordinator may reduce the peak energy consumption of the central plant by preventing multiple subplants from staging their equipment at the same time and/or within the same time period.

(14) In some embodiments, the equipment staging coordinator prevents two or more of the subplants from staging their equipment simultaneously. In some embodiments, the equipment staging coordinator prevents a first subplant from staging equipment of the first subplant within a predetermined time period after a second subplant has staged equipment of the second subplant. By preventing multiple subplants from staging their equipment at the same time or within the same time period, the equipment staging coordinator ensures that any temporary spikes in energy consumption do not stack on top of each other, thereby reducing the maximum energy consumption used to calculate the demand charge. These and other features and advantages of the equipment staging coordinator are discussed in greater detail below.

#### (15) Building with HVAC System

(16) Referring now to FIG. 1, a perspective view of a building **10** is shown. Building **10** is served by a building automation system (BAS). A BAS is, in general, a system of devices configured to control, monitor, and manage equipment in or around a building or building area. A BAS can include, for example, a HVAC system, a security system, a lighting system, a fire alerting system, any other system that is capable of managing building functions or devices, or any combination thereof.

(17) The BAS that serves building **10** includes an HVAC system **100**. HVAC system **100** may include a plurality of HVAC devices (e.g., heaters, chillers, air handling units, pumps, fans, thermal energy storage, etc.) configured to provide heating, cooling, ventilation, or other services for building **10**. For example, HVAC system **100** is shown to include a waterside system **120** and an airside system **130**. Waterside system **120** may provide a heated or chilled fluid to an air handling unit of airside system **130**. Airside system **130** may use the heated or chilled fluid to heat or cool an airflow provided to building **10**. In some embodiments, waterside system **120** is replaced with a central energy plant such as central plant **200**, described with reference to FIG. 2.

(18) Still referring to FIG. 1, HVAC system **100** is shown to include a chiller **102**, a boiler **104**, and a rooftop air handling unit (AHU) **106**. Waterside system **120** may use boiler **104** and chiller **102** to heat or cool a working fluid (e.g., water, glycol, etc.) and may circulate the working fluid to AHU **106**. In various embodiments, the HVAC devices of waterside system **120** may be located in or around building **10** (as shown in FIG. 1) or at an offsite location such as a central plant (e.g., a chiller plant, a steam plant, a heat plant, etc.). The working fluid may be heated in boiler **104** or

cooled in chiller **102**, depending on whether heating or cooling is required in building **10**. Boiler **104** may add heat to the circulated fluid, for example, by burning a combustible material (e.g., natural gas) or using an electric heating element. Chiller **102** may place the circulated fluid in a heat exchange relationship with another fluid (e.g., a refrigerant) in a heat exchanger (e.g., an evaporator) to absorb heat from the circulated fluid. The working fluid from chiller **102** and/or boiler **104** may be transported to AHU **106** via piping **108**.

(19) AHU **106** may place the working fluid in a heat exchange relationship with an airflow passing through AHU **106** (e.g., via one or more stages of cooling coils and/or heating coils). The airflow may be, for example, outside air, return air from within building **10**, or a combination of both. AHU **106** may transfer heat between the airflow and the working fluid to provide heating or cooling for the airflow. For example, AHU **106** may include one or more fans or blowers configured to pass the airflow over or through a heat exchanger containing the working fluid. The working fluid may then return to chiller **102** or boiler **104** via piping **110**.

(20) Airside system **130** may deliver the airflow supplied by AHU **106** (i.e., the supply airflow) to building **10** via air supply ducts **112** and may provide return air from building **10** to AHU **106** via air return ducts **114**. In some embodiments, airside system **130** includes multiple variable air volume (VAV) units **116**. For example, airside system **130** is shown to include a separate VAV unit **116** on each floor or zone of building **10**. VAV units **116** may include dampers or other flow control elements that can be operated to control an amount of the supply airflow provided to individual zones of building **10**. In other embodiments, airside system **130** delivers the supply airflow into one or more zones of building **10** (e.g., via air supply ducts **112**) without using intermediate VAV units **116** or other flow control elements. AHU **106** may include various sensors (e.g., temperature sensors, pressure sensors, etc.) configured to measure attributes of the supply airflow. AHU **106** may receive input from sensors located within AHU **106** and/or within the building zone and may adjust the flow rate, temperature, or other attributes of the supply airflow through AHU **106** to achieve setpoint conditions for the building zone.

(21) Central Plant and Control System

(22) Referring now to FIG. 2, a block diagram of a central plant **200** is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. In brief overview, central plant **200** may include various types of equipment configured to serve the thermal energy loads of a building or campus (i.e., a system of buildings). For example, central plant **200** may include heaters, chillers, heat recovery chillers, cooling towers, or other types of equipment configured to serve the heating and/or cooling loads of a building or campus. Central plant **200** may consume resources from a utility (e.g., electricity, water, natural gas, etc.) to heat or cool a working fluid that is circulated to one or more buildings or stored for later use (e.g., in thermal energy storage tanks) to provide heating or cooling for the buildings. In various embodiments, central plant **200** may supplement or replace waterside system **120** in building **10** or may be implemented separate from building **10** (e.g., at an offsite location).

(23) Central plant **200** is shown to include a plurality of subplants **202-212** including a heater subplant **202**, a heat recovery chiller subplant **204**, a chiller subplant **206**, a cooling tower subplant **208**, a hot thermal energy storage (TES) subplant **210**, and a cold thermal energy storage (TES) subplant **212**. Subplants **202-212** consume resources from utilities to serve the thermal energy loads (e.g., hot water, cold water, heating, cooling, etc.) of a building or campus. For example, heater subplant **202** may be configured to heat water in a hot water loop **214** that circulates the hot water between heater subplant **202** and building **10**. Chiller subplant **206** may be configured to chill water in a cold water loop **216** that circulates the cold water between chiller subplant **206** building **10**. Heat recovery chiller subplant **204** may be configured to transfer heat from cold water loop **216** to hot water loop **214** to provide additional heating for the hot water and additional cooling for the cold water. Condenser water loop **218** may absorb heat from the cold water in chiller subplant **206** and reject the absorbed heat in cooling tower subplant **208** or transfer the absorbed heat to hot water loop **214**. Hot TES subplant **210** and cold TES subplant **212** may store hot and cold thermal

energy, respectively, for subsequent use.

(24) Hot water loop **214** and cold water loop **216** may deliver the heated and/or chilled water to air handlers located on the rooftop of building **10** (e.g., AHU **106**) or to individual floors or zones of building **10** (e.g., VAV units **116**). The air handlers push air past heat exchangers (e.g., heating coils or cooling coils) through which the water flows to provide heating or cooling for the air. The heated or cooled air may be delivered to individual zones of building **10** to serve the thermal energy loads of building **10**. The water then returns to subplants **202-212** to receive further heating or cooling.

(25) Although subplants **202-212** are shown and described as heating and cooling water for circulation to a building, it is understood that any other type of working fluid (e.g., glycol, CO.sub.2, etc.) may be used in place of or in addition to water to serve the thermal energy loads. In other embodiments, subplants **202-212** may provide heating and/or cooling directly to the building or campus without requiring an intermediate heat transfer fluid. These and other variations to central plant **200** are within the teachings of the present invention.

(26) Each of subplants **202-212** may include a variety of equipment configured to facilitate the functions of the subplant. For example, heater subplant **202** is shown to include a plurality of heating elements **220** (e.g., boilers, electric heaters, etc.) configured to add heat to the hot water in hot water loop **214**. Heater subplant **202** is also shown to include several pumps **222** and **224** configured to circulate the hot water in hot water loop **214** and to control the flow rate of the hot water through individual heating elements **220**. Chiller subplant **206** is shown to include a plurality of chillers **232** configured to remove heat from the cold water in cold water loop **216**. Chiller subplant **206** is also shown to include several pumps **234** and **236** configured to circulate the cold water in cold water loop **216** and to control the flow rate of the cold water through individual chillers **232**.

(27) Heat recovery chiller subplant **204** is shown to include a plurality of heat recovery heat exchangers **226** (e.g., refrigeration circuits) configured to transfer heat from cold water loop **216** to hot water loop **214**. Heat recovery chiller subplant **204** is also shown to include several pumps **228** and **230** configured to circulate the hot water and/or cold water through heat recovery heat exchangers **226** and to control the flow rate of the water through individual heat recovery heat exchangers **226**. Cooling tower subplant **208** is shown to include a plurality of cooling towers **238** configured to remove heat from the condenser water in condenser water loop **218**. Cooling tower subplant **208** is also shown to include several pumps **240** configured to circulate the condenser water in condenser water loop **218** and to control the flow rate of the condenser water through individual cooling towers **238**.

(28) Hot TES subplant **210** is shown to include a hot TES tank **242** configured to store the hot water for later use. Hot TES subplant **210** may also include one or more pumps or valves configured to control the flow rate of the hot water into or out of hot TES tank **242**. Cold TES subplant **212** is shown to include cold TES tanks **244** configured to store the cold water for later use. Cold TES subplant **212** may also include one or more pumps or valves configured to control the flow rate of the cold water into or out of cold TES tanks **244**.

(29) In some embodiments, one or more of the pumps in central plant **200** (e.g., pumps **222**, **224**, **228**, **230**, **234**, **236**, and/or **240**) or pipelines in central plant **200** include an isolation valve associated therewith. Isolation valves may be integrated with the pumps or positioned upstream or downstream of the pumps to control the fluid flows in central plant **200**. In various embodiments, central plant **200** may include more, fewer, or different types of devices and/or subplants based on the particular configuration of central plant **200** and the types of loads served by central plant **200**.

(30) Referring now to FIG. 3, a block diagram illustrating a central plant system **300** is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. System **300** is shown to include a central plant controller **302**, a building automation system (BAS) **308**, and a plurality of subplants **202-212**. Subplants **202-212** may be the same as previously described with reference to FIG. 2. For example, subplants **202-212** are shown to include a heater subplant **202**, a heat recovery chiller subplant **204**, a chiller

subplant **206**, a hot TES subplant **210**, and a cold TES subplant **212**.

(31) Each of subplants **202-212** is shown to include equipment **340** that can be controlled by central plant controller **302** and/or building automation system **308** to optimize the performance of central plant **200**. Equipment **340** may include, for example, heating devices **220**, chillers **232**, heat recovery heat exchangers **226**, cooling towers **238**, thermal energy storage devices **242-244**, pumps, valves, and/or other devices of subplants **202-212**. Individual devices of equipment **340** can be turned on or off to adjust the thermal energy load served by each of subplants **202-212**. In some embodiments, individual devices of equipment **340** can be operated at variable capacities (e.g., operating a chiller at 10% capacity or 60% capacity) according to an operating setpoint received from central plant controller **302**.

(32) In some embodiments, one or more of subplants **202-212** includes a subplant level controller configured to control the equipment **340** of the corresponding subplant. For example, central plant controller **302** may determine an on/off configuration and global operating setpoints for equipment **340**. In response to the on/off configuration and received global operating setpoints, the subplant controllers may turn individual devices of equipment **340** on or off, and implement specific operating setpoints (e.g., damper position, vane position, fan speed, pump speed, etc.) to reach or maintain the global operating setpoints.

(33) In some embodiments, the subplant level controllers receive subplant load setpoints from central plant controller **302**. Each subplant level controller may use the subplant load setpoint for the corresponding subplant to select one or more devices of the equipment **340** within the subplant to activate or deactivate in order to meet the subplant load setpoint in an energy-efficient manner. In other embodiments, the equipment selection and staging decisions (i.e., deciding which devices to turn on/off) are performed by a low level optimizer **332** within central plant controller **302**.

(34) BAS **308** may be configured to monitor conditions within a controlled building or building zone. For example, BAS **308** may receive input from various sensors (e.g., temperature sensors, humidity sensors, airflow sensors, voltage sensors, etc.) distributed throughout the building and may report building conditions to central plant controller **302**. Building conditions may include, for example, a temperature of the building or a zone of the building, a power consumption (e.g., electric load) of the building, a state of one or more actuators configured to affect a controlled state within the building, or other types of information relating to the controlled building. BAS **308** may operate subplants **202-212** to affect the monitored conditions within the building and/or to serve the thermal energy loads of the building.

(35) BAS **308** may receive control signals from central plant controller **302** specifying on/off states and/or setpoints for equipment **340**. BAS **308** may control equipment **340** (e.g., via actuators, power relays, etc.) in accordance with the control signals provided by central plant controller **302**. For example, BAS **308** may operate equipment **340** using closed loop control to achieve the setpoints specified by central plant controller **302**. In various embodiments, BAS **308** may be combined with central plant controller **302** or may be part of a separate building automation system. According to an exemplary embodiment, BAS **308** is a METASYS® brand building automation system, as sold by Johnson Controls, Inc.

(36) Central plant controller **302** may monitor the status of the controlled building using information received from BAS **308**. Central plant controller **302** may be configured to predict the thermal energy loads (e.g., heating loads, cooling loads, etc.) of the building for plurality of time steps in a prediction window (e.g., using weather forecasts from a weather service **324**). Central plant controller **302** may generate on/off decisions and/or setpoints for equipment **340** to minimize the cost of energy consumed by subplants **202-212** to serve the predicted heating and/or cooling loads for the duration of the prediction window. According to an exemplary embodiment, central plant controller **302** is integrated within a single computer (e.g., one server, one housing, etc.). In various other exemplary embodiments, central plant controller **302** can be distributed across multiple servers or computers (e.g., that can exist in distributed locations). In another exemplary

embodiment, central plant controller **302** is integrated with a smart building manager that manages multiple building systems and/or combined with BAS **308**.

(37) Central plant controller **302** is shown to include a communications interface **304** and a processing circuit **306**. Communications interface **304** may include wired or wireless interfaces (e.g., jacks, antennas, transmitters, receivers, transceivers, wire terminals, etc.) for conducting data communications with various systems, devices, or networks. For example, communications interface **304** may include an Ethernet card and port for sending and receiving data via an Ethernet-based communications network and/or a WiFi transceiver for communicating via a wireless communications network. Communications interface **304** may be configured to communicate via local area networks or wide area networks (e.g., the Internet, a building WAN, etc.) and may use a variety of communications protocols (e.g., BACnet, IP, LON, etc.).

(38) Communications interface **304** may be a network interface configured to facilitate electronic data communications between central plant controller **302** and various external systems or devices (e.g., BAS **308**, subplants **202-212**, etc.). For example, central plant controller **302** may receive information from BAS **308** indicating one or more measured states of the controlled building (e.g., temperature, humidity, electric loads, etc.) and one or more states of subplants **202-212** (e.g., equipment status, power consumption, equipment availability, etc.). Communications interface **304** may receive inputs from BAS **308** and/or subplants **202-212** and may provide operating parameters (e.g., on/off decisions, setpoints, etc.) to subplants **202-212** via BAS **308**. The operating parameters may cause subplants **202-212** to activate, deactivate, or adjust a setpoint for various devices of equipment **340**.

(39) Still referring to FIG. **3**, processing circuit **306** is shown to include a processor **310** and memory **312**. Processor **310** may be a general purpose or specific purpose processor, an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), one or more field programmable gate arrays (FPGAs), a group of processing components, or other suitable processing components. Processor **310** may be configured to execute computer code or instructions stored in memory **312** or received from other computer readable media (e.g., CDROM, network storage, a remote server, etc.).

(40) Memory **312** may include one or more devices (e.g., memory units, memory devices, storage devices, etc.) for storing data and/or computer code for completing and/or facilitating the various processes described in the present disclosure. Memory **312** may include random access memory (RAM), read-only memory (ROM), hard drive storage, temporary storage, non-volatile memory, flash memory, optical memory, or any other suitable memory for storing software objects and/or computer instructions. Memory **312** may include database components, object code components, script components, or any other type of information structure for supporting the various activities and information structures described in the present disclosure. Memory **312** may be communicably connected to processor **310** via processing circuit **306** and may include computer code for executing (e.g., by processor **310**) one or more processes described herein.

(41) Still referring to FIG. **3**, memory **312** is shown to include a building status monitor **334**. Central plant controller **302** may receive data regarding the overall building or building space to be heated or cooled with central plant **200** via building status monitor **334**. In an exemplary embodiment, building status monitor **334** may include a graphical user interface component configured to provide graphical user interfaces to a user for selecting building requirements (e.g., overall temperature parameters, selecting schedules for the building, selecting different temperature levels for different building zones, etc.).

(42) Central plant controller **302** may determine on/off configurations and operating setpoints to satisfy the building requirements received from building status monitor **334**. In some embodiments, building status monitor **334** receives, collects, stores, and/or transmits cooling load requirements, building temperature setpoints, occupancy data, weather data, energy data, schedule data, and other building parameters. In some embodiments, building status monitor **334** stores data regarding energy costs, such as pricing information available from utilities **326** (energy charge, demand

charge, etc.).

(43) Still referring to FIG. 3, memory 312 is shown to include a load/rate predictor 322. Load/rate predictor 322 may be configured to predict the thermal energy loads (custom character) of the building or campus for each time step  $k$  (e.g.,  $k=1 \dots n$ ) of an optimization period. Load/rate predictor 322 is shown receiving weather forecasts from a weather service 324. In some embodiments, load/rate predictor 322 predicts the thermal energy loads custom character.sub.k as a function of the weather forecasts. In some embodiments, load/rate predictor 322 uses feedback from BAS 308 to predict loads custom character.sub.k. Feedback from BAS 308 may include various types of sensory inputs (e.g., temperature, flow, humidity, enthalpy, etc.) or other data relating to the controlled building (e.g., inputs from a HVAC system, a lighting control system, a security system, a water system, etc.).

(44) In some embodiments, load/rate predictor 322 receives a measured electric load and/or previous measured load data from BAS 308 (e.g., via building status monitor 334). Load/rate predictor 322 may predict loads custom character.sub.k as a function of a given weather forecast ( $\{\text{circumflex over } (\phi)\}$ .sub.w), a day type (day), the time of day ( $t$ ), and previous measured load data ( $Y$ .sub.k-1). Such a relationship is expressed in the following equation:

$$\text{custom character.sub.k} = f(\{\text{circumflex over } (\phi)\}\text{.sub.w, day, } t | Y\text{.sub.k-1})$$

(45) In some embodiments, load/rate predictor 322 uses a deterministic plus stochastic model trained from historical load data to predict loads custom character.sub.k. Load/rate predictor 322 may use any of a variety of prediction methods to predict loads custom character.sub.k (e.g., linear regression for the deterministic portion and an AR model for the stochastic portion). Load/rate predictor 322 may predict one or more different types of loads for the building or campus. For example, load/rate predictor 322 may predict a hot water load custom character.sub.Hot,k and a cold water load custom character.sub.Cold,k for each time step  $k$  within the prediction window.

(46) Load/rate predictor 322 is shown receiving utility rates from utilities 326. Utility rates may indicate a cost or price per unit of a resource (e.g., electricity, natural gas, water, etc.) provided by utilities 326 at each time step  $k$  in the prediction window. In some embodiments, the utility rates are time-variable rates. For example, the price of electricity may be higher at certain times of day or days of the week (e.g., during high demand periods) and lower at other times of day or days of the week (e.g., during low demand periods). The utility rates may define various time periods and a cost per unit of a resource during each time period. Utility rates may be actual rates received from utilities 326 or predicted utility rates estimated by load/rate predictor 322.

(47) In some embodiments, the utility rates include demand charges for one or more resources provided by utilities 326. A demand charge may define a separate cost imposed by utilities 326 based on the maximum usage of a particular resource (e.g., maximum energy consumption) during a demand charge period. The utility rates may define various demand charge periods and one or more demand charges associated with each demand charge period. In some instances, demand charge periods may overlap partially or completely with each other and/or with the prediction window. Advantageously, central plant optimizer 328 may be configured to account for demand charges in the high level optimization process performed by high level optimizer 330. Utilities 326 may be defined by time-variable (e.g., hourly) prices, a maximum service level (e.g., a maximum rate of consumption allowed by the physical infrastructure or by contract) and, in the case of electricity, a demand charge or a charge for the peak rate of consumption within a certain period.

(48) Load/rate predictor 322 may store the predicted loads custom character.sub.k and the utility rates in memory 312 and/or provide the predicted loads custom character.sub.k and the utility rates to central plant optimizer 328. Central plant optimizer 328 may use the predicted loads custom character.sub.k and the utility rates to determine an optimal load distribution for subplants 202-212 and to generate on/off decisions and setpoints for equipment 340.

(49) Still referring to FIG. 3, memory 312 is shown to include a central plant optimizer 328.



Central plant optimizer **328** may perform a cascaded optimization process to optimize the performance of central plant **200**. For example, central plant optimizer **328** is shown to include a high level optimizer **330** and a low level optimizer **332**. High level optimizer **330** may control an outer (e.g., subplant level) loop of the cascaded optimization. High level optimizer **330** may determine an optimal distribution of thermal energy loads across subplants **202-212** for each time step in the prediction window in order to optimize (e.g., minimize) the cost of energy consumed by subplants **202-212**. Low level optimizer **332** may control an inner (e.g., equipment level) loop of the cascaded optimization. Low level optimizer **332** may determine how to best run each subplant at the load setpoint determined by high level optimizer **330**. For example, low level optimizer **332** may determine on/off states and/or operating setpoints for various devices of equipment **340** in order to optimize (e.g., minimize) the energy consumption of each subplant while meeting the thermal energy load setpoint for the subplant. The cascaded optimization process is described in greater detail with reference to FIG. 4.

(50) Still referring to FIG. 3, memory **312** is shown to include a subplant monitor **338**. Subplant monitor **338** may store historical data regarding past operating statuses, past operating setpoints, and instructions for calculating and/or implementing control parameters for subplants **202-212**. Subplant monitor **338** may also receive, store, and/or transmit data regarding the conditions of individual devices of equipment **340**, such as operating efficiency, equipment degradation, a date since last service, a lifespan parameter, a condition grade, or other device-specific data. Subplant monitor **338** may receive data from subplants **202-212** and/or BAS **308** via communications interface **304**. Subplant monitor **338** may also receive and store on/off statuses and operating setpoints from low level optimizer **332**.

(51) Data and processing results from central plant optimizer **328**, subplant monitor **338**, or other modules of central plant controller **302** may be accessed by (or pushed to) monitoring and reporting applications **336**. Monitoring and reporting applications **336** may be configured to generate real time system health dashboards that can be viewed and navigated by a user (e.g., a central plant engineer). For example, monitoring and reporting applications **336** may include a web-based monitoring application with several graphical user interface (GUI) elements (e.g., widgets, dashboard controls, windows, etc.) for displaying key performance indicators (KPI) or other information to users of a GUI. In addition, the GUI elements may summarize relative energy use and intensity across central plants in different buildings (real or modeled), different campuses, or the like. Other GUI elements or reports may be generated and shown based on available data that allow users to assess performance across one or more central plants from one screen. The user interface or report (or underlying data engine) may be configured to aggregate and categorize operating conditions by building, building type, equipment type, and the like. The GUI elements may include charts or histograms that allow the user to visually analyze the operating parameters and power consumption for the devices of the central plant.

(52) Still referring to FIG. 3, central plant controller **302** may include one or more GUI servers, web services **314**, or GUI engines **316** to support monitoring and reporting applications **336**. In various embodiments, applications **336**, web services **314**, and GUI engine **316** may be provided as separate components outside of central plant controller **302** (e.g., as part of a smart building manager). Central plant controller **302** may be configured to maintain detailed historical databases (e.g., relational databases, XML, databases, etc.) of relevant data and includes computer code modules that continuously, frequently, or infrequently query, aggregate, transform, search, or otherwise process the data maintained in the detailed databases. Central plant controller **302** may be configured to provide the results of any such processing to other databases, tables, XML files, or other data structures for further querying, calculation, or access by, for example, external monitoring and reporting applications.

(53) Central plant controller **302** is shown to include configuration tools **318**. Configuration tools **318** can allow a user to define (e.g., via graphical user interfaces, via prompt-driven wizards, etc.)

how central plant controller **302** should react to changing conditions in the central plant subsystems. In an exemplary embodiment, configuration tools **318** allow a user to build and store condition-response scenarios that can cross multiple central plant devices, multiple building systems, and multiple enterprise control applications (e.g., work order management system applications, entity resource planning applications, etc.). For example, configuration tools **318** can provide the user with the ability to combine data (e.g., from subsystems, from event histories) using a variety of conditional logic. In varying exemplary embodiments, the conditional logic can range from simple logical operators between conditions (e.g., AND, OR, XOR, etc.) to pseudo-code constructs or complex programming language functions (allowing for more complex interactions, conditional statements, loops, etc.). Configuration tools **318** can present user interfaces for building such conditional logic. The user interfaces may allow users to define policies and responses graphically. In some embodiments, the user interfaces may allow a user to select a pre-stored or pre-constructed policy and adapt it or enable it for use with their system.

(54) Referring now to FIG. 4, a block diagram illustrating a portion of central plant system **300** in greater detail is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. FIG. 4 illustrates the cascaded optimization process performed by central plant optimizer **328** to optimize the performance of central plant **200**. In the cascaded optimization process, high level optimizer **330** performs a subplant level optimization that determines an optimal distribution of thermal energy loads across subplants **202-212** for each time step in the prediction window in order to minimize the cost of energy consumed by subplants **202-212**. Low level optimizer **332** performs an equipment level optimization that determines how to best run each subplant at the subplant load setpoint determined by high level optimizer **330**. For example, low level optimizer **332** may determine on/off states and/or operating setpoints for various devices of equipment **340** in order to optimize the energy consumption of each subplant while meeting the thermal energy load setpoint for the subplant.

(55) One advantage of the cascaded optimization process performed by central plant optimizer **328** is the optimal use of computational time. For example, the subplant level optimization performed by high level optimizer **330** may use a relatively long time horizon due to the operation of the thermal energy storage. However, the equipment level optimization performed by low level optimizer **332** may use a much shorter time horizon or no time horizon at all since the low level system dynamics are relatively fast (compared to the dynamics of the thermal energy storage) and the low level control of equipment **340** may be handled by BAS **308**. Such an optimal use of computational time makes it possible for central plant optimizer **328** to perform the central plant optimization in a short amount of time, allowing for real-time predictive control. For example, the short computational time enables central plant optimizer **328** to be implemented in a real-time planning tool with interactive feedback.

(56) Another advantage of the cascaded optimization performed by central plant optimizer **328** is that the central plant optimization problem can be split into two cascaded subproblems. The cascaded configuration provides a layer of abstraction that allows high level optimizer **330** to distribute the thermal energy loads across subplants **202-212** without requiring high level optimizer **330** to know or use any details regarding the particular equipment configuration within each subplant. The interconnections between equipment **340** within each subplant may be hidden from high level optimizer **330** and handled by low level optimizer **332**. For purposes of the subplant level optimization performed by high level optimizer **330**, each subplant may be completely defined by one or more subplant curves **342**.

(57) Low level optimizer **332** may generate and provide subplant curves **342** to high level optimizer **330**. Subplant curves **342** may indicate the rate of utility use by each of subplants **202-212** (e.g., electricity use measured in kW, water use measured in L/s, etc.) as a function of the subplant load. In some embodiments, low level optimizer **332** generates subplant curves **342** based on equipment models **320** (e.g., by combining equipment models **320** for individual devices into an aggregate curve for the subplant). Low level optimizer **332** may generate subplant curves **342** by

running the low level optimization process for several different loads and weather conditions to generate multiple data points. Low level optimizer **332** may fit a curve to the data points to generate subplant curves **342**. In other embodiments, low level optimizer **332** provides the data points to high level optimizer **330** and high level optimizer **330** generates the subplant curves using the data points.

(58) High level optimizer **330** may receive the load and rate predictions from load/rate predictor **322** and the subplant curves **342** from low level optimizer **332**. The load predictions may be based on weather forecasts from weather service **324** and/or information from building automation system **308** (e.g., a current electric load of the building, measurements from the building, a history of previous loads, a setpoint trajectory, etc.). The utility rate predictions may be based on utility rates received from utilities **326** and/or utility prices from another data source. High level optimizer **330** may determine the optimal load distribution for subplants **202-212** (e.g., a subplant load for each subplant) for each time step the prediction window and may provide the subplant loads as setpoints to low level optimizer **332**. In some embodiments, high level optimizer **330** determines the subplant loads by minimizing the total operating cost of central plant **200** over the prediction window. In other words, given a predicted load and utility rate information from load/rate predictor **322**, high level optimizer **330** may distribute the predicted load across subplants **202-212** over the optimization period to minimize operating cost.

(59) In some instances, the optimal load distribution may include using TES subplants **210** and/or **212** to store thermal energy during a first time step for use during a later time step. Thermal energy storage may advantageously allow thermal energy to be produced and stored during a first time period when energy prices are relatively low and subsequently retrieved and used during a second time period when energy prices are relatively high. The high level optimization may be different from the low level optimization in that the high level optimization has a longer time constant due to the thermal energy storage provided by TES subplants **210-212**. The high level optimization may be described by the following equation:

$$(60) \theta_{HL}^* = \underset{HL}{\operatorname{argmin}} J_{HL}(\theta_{HL})$$

where  $\theta_{HL}^*$  contains the optimal high level decisions (e.g., the optimal load for each of subplants **202-212**) for the entire optimization period and  $J_{HL}$  is the high level cost function.

(61) To find the optimal high level decisions  $\theta_{HL}^*$ , high level optimizer **330** may minimize the high level cost function  $J_{HL}$ . The high level cost function  $J_{HL}$  may be the sum of the economic (e.g., monetary) costs of each utility consumed by each of subplants **202-212** for the duration of the optimization period. In some embodiments, the high level cost function  $J_{HL}$  may be described using the following equation:

$$(62) J_{HL}(\theta_{HL}) = \sum_{k=1}^{n_h} \sum_{i=1}^{n_s} \left[ \sum_{j=1}^{n_u} t_s c_{jk} u_{jik}(\theta_{HL}) \right]$$

where  $n_h$  is the number of time steps  $k$  in the optimization period,  $n_s$  is the number of subplants,  $t_s$  is the duration of a time step,  $c_{jk}$  is the economic cost of utility  $j$  at a time step  $k$  of the optimization period, and  $u_{jik}$  is the rate of use of utility  $j$  by subplant  $i$  at time step  $k$ .

(63) In some embodiments, the cost function  $J_{HL}$  includes an additional demand charge term such as:

$$(64) w_d c_{\text{demand}} \max_{n_h}(u_{\text{elec}}(\theta_{HL}), u_{\text{max, ele}})$$

where  $w_d$  is a weighting term,  $c_{\text{demand}}$  is the demand cost, and the  $\max(\cdot)$  term selects the peak electricity use during the applicable demand charge period. Accordingly, the high level cost function  $J_{HL}$  may be described by the equation:

$$(65) J_{HL}(\theta_{HL}) = \sum_{k=1}^{n_h} \sum_{i=1}^{n_s} \left[ \sum_{j=1}^{n_u} t_s c_{jk} u_{jik}(\theta_{HL}) \right] + w_d c_{\text{demand}} \max_{n_h}(u_{\text{elec}}(\theta_{HL}), u_{\text{max, ele}})$$

(66) The decision vector  $\theta_{\text{sub.HL}}$  may be subject to several constraints. For example, the constraints may require that the subplants not operate at more than their total capacity, that the thermal storage not charge or discharge too quickly or under/over flow for the tank, and that the thermal energy loads for the building or campus are met. These restrictions may lead to both equality and inequality constraints on the high level optimization problem.

(67) In some embodiments, the high level optimization performed by high level optimizer **330** is the same or similar to the high level optimization process described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/634,609 filed Feb. 27, 2015 and titled “High Level Central Plant Optimization,” the entire disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein. High level optimizer **330** may include some or all of the features and/or functionality of the high level optimization module described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/634,609.

(68) Still referring to FIG. 4, low level optimizer **332** may use the subplant loads determined by high level optimizer **330** to determine optimal low level decisions  $\theta^*_{\text{sub.LL}}$  (e.g. binary on/off decisions, flow setpoints, temperature setpoints, etc.) for equipment **340**. The low level optimization process may be performed for each of subplants **202-212**. In various embodiments, the low level optimization process may be performed by centralized low level optimizer **332** that performs a separate low level optimization for each of subplants **202-212** or by a set of subplant level controllers that operate within each subplant (e.g., each subplant controller running an instance of low level optimizer **332**). Low level optimizer **332** may be responsible for determining which devices of the subplant to use and/or the operating setpoints for such devices that will achieve the subplant load setpoint while minimizing energy consumption. The low level optimization may be described using the following equation:

$$(69) \theta^*_{\text{sub.LL}} = \underset{\text{sub.LL}}{\operatorname{argmin}} J_{\text{sub.LL}}(\theta_{\text{sub.LL}})$$

where  $\theta^*_{\text{sub.LL}}$  contains the optimal low level decisions and  $J_{\text{sub.LL}}$  is the low level cost function.

(70) To find the optimal low level decisions  $\theta^*_{\text{sub.LL}}$  low level optimizer **332** may minimize the low level cost function  $J_{\text{sub.LL}}$ . The low level cost function  $J_{\text{sub.LL}}$  may represent the total energy consumption for all of equipment **340** in the applicable subplant. The low level cost function  $J_{\text{sub.LL}}$  may be described using the following equation:

$$(71) J_{\text{sub.LL}}(\theta_{\text{sub.LL}}) = L \sum_{j=1}^N t_s \cdot \text{Math. } b_j \cdot \text{Math. } u_j(\theta_{\text{sub.LL}})$$

where  $N$  is the number of devices of equipment **340** in the subplant,  $t_{\text{sub.s}}$  is the duration of a time step,  $b_{\text{sub.j}}$  is a binary on/off decision (e.g., 0=off, 1=on), and  $u_{\text{sub.j}}$  is the energy used by device  $j$  as a function of the setpoint  $\theta_{\text{sub.LL}}$ . Each device may have continuous variables which can be changed to determine the lowest possible energy consumption for the overall input conditions.

(72) Low level optimizer **332** may minimize the low level cost function  $J_{\text{sub.LL}}$  subject to inequality constraints based on the capacities of equipment **340** and equality constraints based on energy and mass balances. In some embodiments, the optimal low level decisions  $\theta^*_{\text{sub.LL}}$  are constrained by switching constraints defining a short horizon for maintaining a device in an on or off state after a binary on/off switch. The switching constraints may prevent devices from being rapidly cycled on and off. In some embodiments, low level optimizer **332** performs the equipment level optimization without considering system dynamics. The optimization process may be slow enough to safely assume that the equipment control has reached its steady-state. Thus, low level optimizer **332** may determine the optimal low level decisions  $\theta^*_{\text{sub.LL}}$  at an instance of time rather than over a long horizon.

(73) In some embodiments, the optimal low level decisions  $\theta^*_{\text{sub.LL}}$  are constrained by an equipment staging coordinator **344** that prevents two or more of subplants **202-212** from reacting to a change in the subplant load too quickly after a change in another of subplants **202-212** has occurred. For example, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown receiving equipment status

information from BAS **308**. Equipment staging coordinator **344** may use the equipment status information to determine when the equipment **340** within a given subplant has been staged (e.g., turned on/off). Equipment staging coordinator **344** may prevent multiple subplants from staging their equipment **340** simultaneously or within a predetermined time period after another subplant has staged its equipment **340**. Advantageously, this functionality reduces the peak energy consumption for central plant **200** at any instant in time and results in a lower demand charge.

(74) In some embodiments, equipment staging coordinator **344** causes low level optimizer **332** to halt its efficiency calculations and hold the optimal low level decisions BLL for a given subplant at previously-determined values shortly after the equipment **340** for another subplant has been staged (e.g., by providing a freeze signal to low level optimizer **332**). Once a threshold time has passed since the equipment **340** for the other subplant has been staged, equipment staging coordinator **344** may allow low level optimizer **332** to resume its efficiency calculations and to determine new values for the optimal low level decisions  $\theta^*_{\text{sub.LL}}$  (e.g., by withdrawing the freeze signal).

Equipment staging coordinator **344** is described in greater detail with reference to FIGS. 5-7D.

(75) Low level optimizer **332** may determine optimum operating statuses (e.g., on or off) for a plurality of devices of equipment **340**. According to an exemplary embodiment, the on/off combinations may be determined using binary optimization and quadratic compensation. Binary optimization may minimize a cost function representing the power consumption of devices in the applicable subplant. In some embodiments, non-exhaustive (i.e., not all potential combinations of devices are considered) binary optimization is used. Quadratic compensation may be used in considering devices whose power consumption is quadratic (and not linear). Low level optimizer **332** may also determine optimum operating setpoints for equipment using nonlinear optimization. Nonlinear optimization may identify operating setpoints that further minimize the low level cost function  $J_{\text{sub.LL}}$ . Low level optimizer **332** may provide the on/off decisions and setpoints to building automation system **308** for use in controlling the central plant equipment **340**.

(76) In some embodiments, the low level optimization performed by low level optimizer **332** is the same or similar to the low level optimization process described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/634,615 filed Feb. 27, 2015 and titled "Low Level Central Plant Optimization," the entire disclosure of which is incorporated by reference herein. Low level optimizer **332** may include some or all of the features and/or functionality of the low level optimization module described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 14/634,615.

(77) Coordinated HVAC Equipment Staging Across Multiple Subplants

(78) Referring now to FIGS. 5-7, several block diagrams illustrating equipment staging coordinator **344** in greater detail is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. In some embodiments, equipment staging coordinator **344** is a component of central plant controller **302**. Equipment staging coordinator **344** may be configured to coordinate the staging (e.g., turning on/off, activating/deactivating, etc.) of HVAC equipment across multiple subplants. For example, equipment staging coordinator **344** may prevent each of subplants **202-212** from reacting to a change in the building load (e.g., a change in the load setpoint received from high level optimizer **330**) too quickly (e.g., within a predetermined time period) after a change in another subplant has occurred.

(79) Some types of HVAC equipment require more power (i.e., energy per unit time) when they are initially started or activated than they do under steady-state operation. For example, the chillers **232** within chiller subplant **206** and the heat recovery chillers (HRCs) **226** within heat recovery chiller subplant **204** may cause a temporary spike in energy consumption when they are initially started or activated. A cooling load can be met by activating chillers **232** and/or HRCs **226**. In some instances, an increase in cooling load may cause the load setpoints for HRC subplant **204** and chiller subplant **206** to increase simultaneously. However, if both chillers **232** and HRCs **226** are staged at the same time, the resultant spikes in energy consumption can stack on top of each other, causing a high peak energy consumption. A high peak energy consumption may be undesirable

since it increases the maximum rate of utility consumption (e.g., maximum rate of electricity usage) used by a utility provider to calculate the demand charge.

(80) Advantageously, equipment staging coordinator **344** may reduce the peak energy consumption of central plant **200** by preventing multiple subplants from staging their equipment at the same time and/or within the same time period. In some embodiments, equipment staging coordinator **344** prevents two or more of subplants **202-212** from staging their equipment **340** simultaneously. In some embodiments, equipment staging coordinator **344** prevents a first subplant (e.g., any of subplants **202-212**) from staging equipment of the first subplant within a predetermined time period after a second subplant (e.g., any other of subplants **202-212**) has staged equipment of the second subplant. By preventing multiple subplants from staging their equipment at the same time or within the same time period, equipment staging coordinator **344** ensures that any temporary spikes in energy consumption do not stack on top of each other, thereby reducing the maximum energy consumption used to calculate the demand charge.

(81) In some embodiments, equipment staging coordinator **344** coordinates the staging of chillers **232** and HRCs **226** across chiller subplant **206** and HRC subplant **204**. However, it should be understood that the current invention is not limited to any particular type of equipment or subplants. Chillers **232** and HRCs **226** are provided merely as examples to illustrate the features of equipment staging coordinator **344**. It is contemplated that equipment staging coordinator **344** can be used to coordinate the staging of any type of equipment across any of subplants **202-212**. For example, equipment staging coordinator **344** may be configured to coordinate the staging of heaters **220** in heater subplant **202** with HRCs **226** in HRC subplant **204**. In some embodiments, equipment staging coordinator **344** coordinates the staging of cooling towers **238**, pumps, fans, or any other type of equipment across subplants **202-212**. It is also contemplated that equipment staging coordinator **344** can be used to coordinate the staging of equipment across multiple plants, multiple buildings, multiple HVAC systems within the same building, and/or across any two or more systems or subsystems. The remainder of this disclosure describes an exemplary embodiment in which equipment staging coordinator **344** coordinates the staging of chillers **232** and HRCs **226** across chiller subplant **206** and HRC subplant **204**.

(82) Referring particularly to FIG. 5, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include a chiller staging detector **502** and a chiller staging timer **504**. Chiller staging detector **502** may be configured to detect the staging of chillers **232** within chiller subplant **206**. Staging chillers **232** may include activating or deactivating one or more of chillers **232** and/or changing the capacity of the set of chillers **232** (e.g., by adding or removing active chillers, adjusting the capacity limits of individual chillers, etc.). Staging chillers **232** may include turning on/off one or more of chillers **232**, increasing or decreasing the load setpoints or flow rates through chillers **232**, and/or any other change to chillers **232** that affects the cooling load provided by chillers **232**.

(83) In some embodiments, chiller staging detector **502** receives an input from BAS **308** or chiller subplant **206** indicating the current status of chillers **232** (e.g., the capacity of chillers **232**, a list of active chillers **232**, etc.). In some embodiments, chiller staging detector **502** receives an input from BAS **308** or chiller subplant **206** indicating which of chillers **232** are currently being commanded. The chillers **232** that are currently being commanded are referred to herein as “interim chillers.” The interim chillers may be a set of chillers **232** that are currently receiving staging commands from BAS **308** or chiller subplant **206** with the intent of moving toward the optimal set of chillers **232** determined by low level optimizer **332**. The optimal set of chillers **232** determined by low level optimizer **332** may be referred to herein as “desired chillers.” Chiller staging detector **502** may use the inputs from BAS **308** or chiller subplant **206** to determine whether chillers **232** are currently being staged.

(84) In response to a determination by chiller staging detector **502** that chillers **232** are currently being staged, chiller staging detector **502** may provide a chiller staging signal to chiller staging timer **504**. The chiller staging signal may cause chiller staging timer **504** to reset to a predetermined

value. In some embodiments, the predetermined value is greater than or equal to the duration of the optimization period used by low level optimizer **332** to determine the set of desired chillers. In some embodiments, the predetermined value is greater than or equal to the duration of a demand charge period or a period used by a utility provider to determine the maximum rate of energy consumption. In some embodiments, the predetermined value is greater than or equal to an estimated time for chillers **232** to reach steady-state after an initial startup.

(85) Chiller staging timer **504** may countdown from the predetermined value and may reset to the predetermined value each time the chiller staging signal is received. Equipment staging coordinator **344** may be configured to monitor chiller staging timer **504** to determine whether chiller staging timer **504** has expired. If chiller staging timer **504** is not expired (i.e., the result of the determination in block **506** is “no”), equipment staging coordinator **344** may prevent HRC subplant **204** from staging HRCs **226**. However, if chiller staging timer **504** is expired (i.e., the result of the determination in block **506** is “yes”), equipment staging coordinator **344** may allow HRC subplant **204** to stage HRCs **226**.

(86) Still referring to FIG. 5, equipment staging coordinator **344** may use a similar process to determine whether to allow or prevent chiller subplant **206** from staging chillers **232**. For example, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include a HRC staging detector **508** and a HRC staging timer **510**. HRC staging detector **508** may be configured to detect the staging of HRCs **226** within HRC subplant **204**. Staging HRCs **226** may include activating or deactivating one or more of HRCs **226** and/or changing the capacity of the set of HRCs **226** (e.g., by adding or removing active HRCs, adjusting the capacity limits of individual HRCs, etc.). Staging HRCs **226** may include turning on/off one or more of HRCs **226**, increasing or decreasing the load setpoints or flow rates through HRCs **226**, and/or any other change to HRCs **226** that affects the cooling load provided by HRCs **226**.

(87) In some embodiments, HRC staging detector **508** receives an input from BAS **308** or HRC subplant **204** indicating the current status of HRCs **226** (e.g., the capacity of HRCs **226**, a list of active HRCs **226**, etc.). In some embodiments, HRC staging detector **508** receives an input from BAS **308** or HRC subplant **204** indicating which of HRCs **226** are currently being commanded. The HRCs **226** that are currently being commanded are referred to herein as “interim HRCs.” The interim HRCs may be a set of HRCs **226** that are currently receiving staging commands from BAS **308** or HRC subplant **204** with the intent of moving toward the optimal set of HRCs **226** determined by low level optimizer **332**. The optimal set of HRCs **226** determined by low level optimizer **332** may be referred to herein as “desired HRCs.” HRC staging detector **508** may use the inputs from BAS **308** or HRC subplant **204** to determine whether HRCs **226** are currently being staged.

(88) In response to a determination by HRC staging detector **508** that HRCs **226** are currently being staged, HRC staging detector **508** may provide a HRC staging signal to HRC staging timer **510**. The HRC staging signal may cause HRC staging timer **510** to reset to a predetermined value. In some embodiments, the predetermined value is greater than or equal to the duration of the optimization period used by low level optimizer **332** to determine the set of desired HRCs. In some embodiments, the predetermined value is greater than or equal to the duration of a demand charge period or a period used by a utility provider to determine the maximum rate of energy consumption. In some embodiments, the predetermined value is greater than or equal to an estimated time for HRCs **226** to reach steady-state after an initial startup.

(89) HRC staging timer **510** may countdown from the predetermined value and may reset to the predetermined value each time the HRC staging signal is received. Equipment staging coordinator **344** may be configured to monitor HRC staging timer **510** to determine whether HRC staging timer **510** has expired. If HRC staging timer **510** is not expired (i.e., the result of the determination in block **512** is “no”), equipment staging coordinator **344** may prevent chiller subplant **206** from staging chillers **232**. However, if HRC staging timer **510** is expired (i.e., the result of the

determination in block 512 is “yes”), equipment staging coordinator 344 may allow chiller subplant 206 to stage chillers 232.

(90) As shown in FIG. 5, equipment staging coordinator 344 may prevent each of subplants 204-206 from staging its equipment until a threshold amount of time has passed since the other subplant has staged its equipment. For example, equipment staging coordinator 344 may prevent HRC subplant 204 from staging HRCs 226 until a threshold amount of time has passed since chiller subplant 206 has staged chillers 232. The threshold amount of time may be defined by chiller staging timer 504, which may be reset each time chillers 232 are staged. Similarly, equipment staging coordinator 344 may prevent chiller subplant 206 from staging chillers 232 until a threshold amount of time has passed since HRC subplant 204 has staged HRCs 226. The threshold amount of time may be defined by HRC staging timer 510, which may be reset each time HRCs 226 are staged.

(91) Referring now to FIG. 6, a block diagram illustrating equipment staging coordinator 344 in greater detail is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. Equipment staging coordinator 344 is shown to include chiller staging detector 502, chiller staging timer 504, HRC staging detector 508, and HRC staging timer 510, which may be the same as described with reference to FIG. 5. In the embodiment shown in FIG. 6, equipment staging coordinator 344 may prevent or allow equipment staging based on several factors in addition to whether timers 504 and 510 are expired. For example, equipment staging coordinator 344 is shown to include a HRC subplant staging preventer 612. HRC subplant staging preventer 612 may be configured to determine whether to prevent HRC staging or allow HRC staging based on inputs received from a desired HRCs drop detector 604, a toggle input 602, and a HRC subplant staging evaluator 606.

(92) Desired HRCs drop detector 604 may receive an input of the desired HRCs from low level optimizer 332. The desired HRCs may be the set of HRCs 226 determined by low level optimizer 332 as being the optimal set of HRCs 226 to meet the cooling load for HRC subplant 204. Desired HRCs drop detector 604 may determine whether the desired HRCs has dropped to zero (i.e., changed from a non-zero value to a zero value, changed from a non-empty set to an empty set, etc.). The desired HRCs may drop to zero, for example, if HRC subplant 204 has been disabled, the load setpoint for HRC subplant 204 has dropped to zero, and/or if the entire set of HRCs 226 have been disabled. If the desired HRCs has dropped to zero, desired HRCs drop detector 604 may provide a “drop to zero” signal to HRC subplant staging preventer 612. In some embodiments, HRC subplant staging preventer 612 is configured to allow HRC staging in response to receiving the drop to zero signal from desired HRCs drop detector 604, regardless of other inputs to HRC subplant staging preventer 612. If the desired HRCs has not dropped to zero, HRC subplant staging preventer 612 may use inputs from toggle input 602 and/or HRC subplant staging evaluator 606 to determine whether to allow or prevent HRC staging.

(93) Toggle input 602 may be configured to toggle between binary values (e.g., true/false, on/off, 1/0, etc.) and may provide opposite inputs to HRC subplant staging preventer 612 and chiller subplant staging preventer 622. For example, if toggle input 602 provides an input of “true” to HRC subplant staging preventer 612, toggle input 602 may provide an input of “false” to chiller subplant staging preventer 622. Similarly, if toggle input 602 provides an input of “false” to HRC subplant staging preventer 612, toggle input 602 may provide an input of “true” to chiller subplant staging preventer 622. In some embodiments, toggle input 602 toggles between binary inputs on a periodic basis (e.g., every 30 seconds, every 15 minutes, etc.). In other embodiments, toggle input 602 toggles between binary inputs in response to an input from BAS 308, subplants 202-212, or central plant controller 302. Advantageously, toggle input 602 may ensure that at least one of HRC subplant 204 and chiller subplant 206 is always at steady state by preventing HRC subplant 204 and chiller subplant 206 from staging their equipment simultaneously.

(94) If HRC subplant staging preventer 612 receives a first binary input (e.g., “true”) from toggle input 602, HRC subplant staging preventer 612 may prevent HRC staging regardless of the input



from HRC subplant staging evaluator **606**. However, if HRC subplant staging preventer **612** receives an opposite binary input (e.g., “false”) from toggle input **602**, HRC subplant staging preventer **612** may use the input from HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** to determine whether to allow or prevent HRC staging.

(95) HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** is shown receiving inputs from chiller staging detector **502**, chiller staging timer **504**, a HRC subplant steady state detector **610**, and a desired chillers change detector **608**. Chiller staging detector **502** may provide HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** with a chiller staging input indicating whether any of the chillers **232** within chiller subplant **206** are currently being staged. Chiller staging timer **504** may reset each time chiller staging is detected and may provide HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** with an input indicating whether the chiller staging timer **504** has expired.

(96) HRC subplant steady state detector **610** may provide HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** with an input indicating whether HRC subplant **204** is at steady state. In some embodiments, HRC subplant steady state detector **610** determines that HRC subplant **204** is at steady state if the set of desired HRCs from low level optimizer **332** (e.g., the optimal set of HRCs **226** to meet a cooling load) and the set of interim HRCs (e.g., the set of HRCs **226** currently being commanded) are equal. Conversely, HRC subplant steady state detector **610** may determine that HRC subplant **204** is not at steady state if the set of desired HRCs and the set of interim HRCs are not equal.

(97) Desired chillers change detector **608** may provide HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** with an input indicating whether chiller subplant **206** is at steady state. In some embodiments, desired chillers change detector **608** determines that chiller subplant **206** is at steady state if the set of desired chillers from low level optimizer **332** (e.g., the optimal set of chillers **232** to meet a cooling load) has not recently changed. Conversely, desired chillers change detector **608** may determine that chiller subplant **206** is not at steady state if the set of desired chillers has recently changed.

(98) HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** may use the inputs from chiller staging detector **502**, chiller staging timer **504**, HRC subplant steady state detector **610**, and desired chillers change detector **608** to determine whether it is desired to prevent HRC subplant **204** from staging its equipment. In some embodiments, HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** determines that it is desired to prevent HRC subplant **204** from staging its equipment when one or more of the following factors is true: (a) chiller staging detector **502** reports that chiller subplant **206** is currently staging its equipment, (b) HRC subplant steady state detector **610** reports that HRC subplant **204** is at steady state, and/or (c) desired chillers change detector **608** reports that chiller subplant **206** is not at steady state. In some embodiments, HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** determines that it is desired to prevent HRC subplant **204** from staging its equipment in response to all of factors (a)-(c) being true.

(99) When HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** determines that it is desired to prevent HRC subplant **204** from staging its equipment, HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** may send a “prevent staging” signal (e.g., a binary signal) to HRC subplant staging preventer **612** to prevent HRC equipment staging (e.g., prevent HRC equipment staging=true). Conversely, when HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** determines that it is not desired to prevent HRC subplant **204** from staging its equipment, HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** may send an “allow staging” signal to HRC subplant staging preventer **612** to allow HRC equipment staging (e.g., prevent HRC equipment staging=false).

(100) In some embodiments, HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** includes a logical latch configured to provide a fixed output until the latch is reset. The latch may be triggered in response to HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** providing the prevent staging signal and may cause HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** to continue providing the prevent staging signal until the latch is reset. In other words, once HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** determines that it is desired to prevent HRC equipment staging, HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** may continue to provide the prevent staging signal to HRC subplant staging preventer **612** until the latch is reset. In some

embodiments, the latch can be reset in response to a signal from chiller staging timer **504** that the timer has expired. Once the latch is reset, HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** may provide HRC subplant staging preventer **612** with the allow staging signal until HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** determines once again that it is desired to prevent HRC equipment staging.

(101) HRC subplant staging preventer **612** may evaluate the inputs from HRC subplant staging evaluator **606**, toggle input **602**, and desired HRCs drop detector **604** to determine whether to prevent or allow HRC equipment staging. In some embodiments, HRC subplant staging preventer **612** allows HRC equipment staging in response to receiving the drop to zero input from desired HRCs drop detector **604**, regardless of the inputs from HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** and toggle input **602**. If desired HRCs drop detector **604** does not provide the drop to zero input, HRC subplant staging preventer **612** may prevent HRC equipment staging in response to one or both of the following factors: (a) toggle input **602** providing a particular binary input (e.g., true) or (b) HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** providing the prevent staging signal. If either (or both) of factors (a)-(b) are true, HRC subplant staging preventer **612** may prevent HRC equipment staging.

(102) In some embodiments, HRC subplant staging preventer **612** prevents HRC equipment staging by providing a HRC freeze signal to low level optimizer **332** or an instance of low level optimizer configured to optimize HRC subplant **204**. The HRC freeze signal may cause low level optimizer **332** to halt its efficiency calculations and/or optimization routine for HRC subplant **204**, thereby preventing the set of desired HRCs from changing until the freeze signal is removed. In other embodiments, HRC subplant staging preventer **612** prevents HRC equipment staging by providing a HRC freeze signal to BAS **308** and/or HRC subplant **204** (e.g., a subplant level controller for HRC subplant **204**). The HRC freeze signal may cause BAS **308** and/or HRC subplant **204** to maintain the HRC equipment in its current state, thereby preventing HRC equipment staging from occurring.

(103) Still referring to FIG. **6**, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include similar components configured to determine whether to allow or prevent chiller subplant **206** from staging its equipment. For example, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include a chiller subplant staging preventer **622**. Chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may be configured to determine whether to prevent chiller staging or allow chiller staging based on inputs received from a desired chillers drop detector **614**, toggle input **602**, and a chiller subplant staging evaluator **616**.

(104) Desired chillers drop detector **614** may receive an input of the desired chillers from low level optimizer **332**. The desired chillers may be the set of chillers **232** determined by low level optimizer **332** as being the optimal set of chillers **232** to meet the cooling load for chiller subplant **206**. Desired chillers drop detector **614** may determine whether the desired chillers has dropped to zero (i.e., changed from a non-zero value to a zero value, changed from a non-empty set to an empty set, etc.). The desired chillers may drop to zero, for example, if chiller subplant **206** has been disabled, the load setpoint for chiller subplant **206** has dropped to zero, and/or if the entire set of chillers **232** have been disabled. If the desired chillers has dropped to zero, desired chillers drop detector **614** may provide a “drop to zero” signal to chiller subplant staging preventer **622**. In some embodiments, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** is configured to allow chiller staging in response to receiving the drop to zero signal from desired chillers drop detector **614**, regardless of other inputs to chiller subplant staging preventer **622**. If the desired chillers has not dropped to zero, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may use inputs from toggle input **602** and/or chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** to determine whether to allow or prevent chiller staging.

(105) If chiller subplant staging preventer **622** receives a first binary input (e.g., “true”) from toggle input **602**, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may prevent chiller staging regardless of the input from chiller subplant staging evaluator **616**. However, if chiller subplant staging preventer **622** receives an opposite binary input (e.g., “false”) from toggle input **602**, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may use the input from chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** to determine whether to allow or prevent chiller staging.

(106) Chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** is shown receiving inputs from HRC staging detector **508**, HRC staging timer **510**, a chiller subplant steady state detector **620**, and a desired HRCs change detector **618**. HRC staging detector **508** may provide chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** with a HRC staging input indicating whether any of the HRCs **226** within HRC subplant **204** are currently being staged. HRC staging timer **510** may reset each time HRC staging is detected and may provide chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** with an input indicating whether the HRC staging timer **510** has expired.

(107) Chiller subplant steady state detector **620** may provide chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** with an input indicating whether chiller subplant **206** is at steady state. In some embodiments, chiller subplant steady state detector **620** determines that chiller subplant **206** is at steady state if the set of desired chillers from low level optimizer **332** (e.g., the optimal set of chillers **232** to meet a cooling load) and the set of interim chillers (e.g., the set of chillers **232** currently being commanded) are equal. Conversely, chiller subplant steady state detector **620** may determine that chiller subplant **206** is not at steady state if the set of desired chillers and the set of interim chillers are not equal.

(108) Desired HRCs change detector **618** may provide chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** with an input indicating whether HRC subplant **204** is at steady state. In some embodiments, desired HRCs change detector **618** determines that HRC subplant **204** is at steady state if the set of desired HRCs from low level optimizer **332** (e.g., the optimal set of HRCs **226** to meet a cooling load) has not recently changed. Conversely, desired HRCs change detector **618** may determine that HRC subplant **204** is not at steady state if the set of desired HRCs has recently changed.

(109) Chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** may use the inputs from HRC staging detector **508**, HRC staging timer **510**, chiller subplant steady state detector **620**, and desired HRCs change detector **618** to determine whether it is desired to prevent chiller subplant **206** from staging its equipment. In some embodiments, chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** determines that it is desired to prevent chiller subplant **206** from staging its equipment when one or more of the following factors is true: (a) HRC staging detector **508** reports that HRC subplant **204** is currently staging its equipment, (b) chiller subplant steady state detector **620** reports that chiller subplant **206** is at steady state, and/or (c) desired HRCs change detector **618** reports that HRC subplant **204** is not at steady state. In some embodiments, chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** determines that it is desired to prevent chiller subplant **206** from staging its equipment in response to all of factors (a)-(c) being true.

(110) When chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** determines that it is desired to prevent chiller subplant **206** from staging its equipment, chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** may send a “prevent staging” signal (e.g., a binary signal) to chiller subplant staging preventer **622** to prevent chiller equipment staging (e.g., prevent chiller equipment staging=true). Conversely, when chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** determines that it is not desired to prevent chiller subplant **206** from staging its equipment, chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** may send an “allow staging” signal to chiller subplant staging preventer **622** to allow chiller equipment staging (e.g., prevent chiller equipment staging=false).

(111) In some embodiments, chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** includes a logical latch configured to provide a fixed output until the latch is reset. The latch may be triggered in response to chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** providing the prevent staging signal and may cause chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** to continue providing the prevent staging signal until the latch is reset. In other words, once chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** determines that it is desired to prevent chiller equipment staging, chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** may continue to provide the prevent staging signal to chiller subplant staging preventer **622** until the latch is reset. In some embodiments, the latch can be reset in response to a signal from HRC staging timer **510** that the timer has expired. Once the latch is reset, chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** may provide chiller subplant staging preventer **622** with the allow staging signal until chiller subplant staging evaluator

**616** determines once again that it is desired to prevent chiller equipment staging.

(112) Chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may evaluate the inputs from chiller subplant staging evaluator **616**, toggle input **602**, and desired chillers drop detector **614** to determine whether to prevent or allow chiller equipment staging. In some embodiments, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** allows chiller equipment staging in response to receiving the drop to zero input from desired chillers drop detector **614**, regardless of the inputs from chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** and toggle input **602**. If desired chillers drop detector **614** does not provide the drop to zero input, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may prevent chiller equipment staging in response to one or both of the following factors: (a) toggle input **602** providing a particular binary input (e.g., true) or (b) chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** providing the prevent staging signal. If either (or both) of factors (a)-(b) are true, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may prevent chiller equipment staging.

(113) In some embodiments, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** prevents chiller equipment staging by providing a chiller freeze signal to low level optimizer **332** or an instance of low level optimizer configured to optimize chiller subplant **206**. The chiller freeze signal may cause low level optimizer **332** to halt its efficiency calculations and/or optimization routine for chiller subplant **206**, thereby preventing the set of desired chillers from changing until the freeze signal is removed. In other embodiments, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** prevents chiller equipment staging by providing a chiller freeze signal to BAS **308** and/or chiller subplant **206** (e.g., a subplant level controller for chiller subplant **206**). The chiller freeze signal may cause BAS **308** and/or chiller subplant **206** to maintain the chiller equipment in its current state, thereby preventing chiller equipment staging from occurring.

(114) Subplant Staging Coordination Logic

(115) Referring now to FIGS. 7A-7D, a set of block diagrams illustrating the logic used by equipment staging coordinator **344** to determine whether to allow or prevent subplant equipment staging is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. Referring particularly to FIG. 7A, a set of inputs which may be provided to equipment staging coordinator **344** are shown. The inputs shown in FIG. 7A may be received from BAS **308**, low level optimizer **332**, other components of central plant controller **302**, or from any other data source.

(116) Equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown receiving a desired chillers input **702** and a desired HRCs input **703** from low level optimizer **332**. As previously described, desired chillers input **702** and desired HRCs input **703** may indicate the optimal set of chillers and HRCs, respectively, selected by low level optimizer to meet the cooling load setpoints for chiller subplant **206** and HRC subplant **204**. Equipment staging coordinator **344** may apply a delay element **740** to desired chillers input **702** to generate a previous desired chillers input **726** representing the set of desired chillers from a previous time step. Similarly, equipment staging coordinator **344** may apply a delay element **741** to desired HRCs input **703** to generate a previous desired HRCs input **725** representing the set of desired HRCs from a previous time step.

(117) Equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown receiving an interim chillers input **705** and an interim HRCs input **704** from BAS **308**. As previously described, interim chillers input **705** and interim HRCs input **704** may indicate the set of chillers and HRCs, respectively, that are currently being commanded by BAS **308** and/or subplants **204-206** with the goal of moving toward the set of desired chillers and HRCs. Equipment staging coordinator **344** may apply a delay element **742** to interim chillers input **705** to generate a previous interim chillers input **723** representing the set of interim chillers from a previous time step. Similarly, equipment staging coordinator **344** may apply a delay element **743** to interim HRCs input **704** to generate a previous interim HRCs input **724** representing the set of interim HRCs from a previous time step.

(118) Equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown receiving a chillers capacity input and a HRCs capacity input from BAS **308**. The capacity inputs may indicate the current status of the chillers **232** in chiller subplant **206** and the HRCs **226** in HRC subplant **204**. For example, the capacity

inputs may indicate which of chillers **232** and HRCs **226** are currently active or inactive, a quantity of chillers **232** and HRCs **226** that are currently active or inactive, individual capacities for each of chillers **232** and HRCs **226**, and/or the total cooling capacities of chiller subplant **206** and HRC subplant **204**.

(119) Equipment staging coordinator **344** may apply a delay element **744** to the chillers capacity input to generate a previous chillers capacity input representing the chillers capacity from a previous time step. The chillers capacity input may be compared with the previous chillers capacity input at comparator blocks **745** and **746**. Comparator block **745** may determine whether the current chillers capacity is greater than the previous chillers capacity (i.e., whether the chillers capacity has just increased). Comparator block **745** may output a binary variable **709** (e.g., true/false, yes/no, etc.) indicating whether the chillers capacity has increased. For example, variable **709** may be true if the current chillers capacity is greater than the previous chillers capacity and false if the current chillers capacity is not greater than the previous chillers capacity. Similarly, comparator block **746** may determine whether the current chillers capacity is less than the previous chillers capacity (i.e., whether the chillers capacity has just decreased). Comparator block **746** may output a binary variable **711** indicating whether the chillers capacity has decreased. For example, variable **711** may be true if the current chillers capacity is less than the previous chillers capacity and false if the current chillers capacity is not less than the previous chillers capacity.

(120) Equipment staging coordinator **344** may apply a delay element **748** to the HRCs capacity input to generate a previous HRCs capacity input representing the HRCs capacity from a previous time step. The HRCs capacity input may be compared with the previous HRCs capacity input at comparator blocks **749** and **750**. Comparator block **749** may determine whether the current HRCs capacity is greater than the previous HRCs capacity (i.e., whether the HRCs capacity has just increased). Comparator block **749** may output a binary variable **717** indicating whether the HRCs capacity has increased. For example, variable **717** may be true if the current HRCs capacity is greater than the previous HRCs capacity and false if the current HRCs capacity is not greater than the previous HRCs capacity. Similarly, comparator block **750** may determine whether the current HRCs capacity is less than the previous HRCs capacity (i.e., whether the HRCs capacity has just decreased). Comparator block **750** may output a binary variable **718** indicating whether the HRCs capacity has decreased. For example, variable **718** may be true if the current HRCs capacity is less than the previous HRCs capacity and false if the current HRCs capacity is not less than the previous HRCs capacity.

(121) Equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown receiving an input **707** from toggle input **602** and a zero input **727**. As previously described, toggle input **602** may provide an input **707** that toggles between binary values (e.g., true/false, yes/no, etc.) on a periodic basis (e.g., every 30 seconds, every 15 minutes, etc.) or in response to a control signal from an external system or device. Equipment staging coordinator **344** may apply a “not” element **751** to input **707** to generate binary input **712**. Input **712** may be the opposite of input **707**. For example, if input **707** is true, input **712** may be false. If input **707** is false, input **712** may be true. Each of inputs **707** and **712** may be used to determine whether to allow or prevent staging of a particular subplant.

Advantageously, because only one of inputs **707** and **712** can have the same binary value at the same time, only one of chiller subplant **206** and HRC subplant **204** may be allowed to stage its equipment at any given time. Zero input **727** may be used as part of a comparison to determine whether various other inputs are greater than or equal to zero.

(122) Referring now to FIG. 7B, a set of comparator blocks **752-767** which may be used by equipment staging coordinator **344** are shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. Equipment staging coordinator **344** may use comparator blocks **752-767** to compare various input variables and to determine whether the input variables satisfy predetermined criteria incorporated into each comparator block (e.g., whether a variable is greater than another variable, equal to another variable, less than another variable, etc.). Comparator blocks **752-767** may output binary values

(e.g., true/false, etc.) indicating whether the compared variables satisfy the criteria or relationship defined by each block. For example, if the relationship between the input variables defined by a comparator block is true (e.g., variable  $X > \text{variable } Y$ ), the comparator block may output a binary “true” value. However, if the relationship between the input variables defined by a comparator block is not true, the comparator block may output a binary “false” value.

(123) Comparator block **752** may compare previous desired HRCs input **725** with zero input **727** to determine whether previous desired HRCs input **725** is greater than zero. If previous desired HRCs input **725** is greater than zero, comparator block **752** may set variable **729** to true. However, if previous desired HRCs input **725** is not greater than zero, comparator block **752** may set variable **729** to false.

(124) Comparator block **753** may compare current desired HRCs input **703** with zero input **727** to determine whether current desired HRCs input **703** is equal to zero. If current desired HRCs input **703** is equal to zero, comparator block **753** may set variable **730** to true. However, if current desired HRCs input **703** is not equal to zero, comparator block **753** may set variable **730** to false.

(125) Comparator block **754** may compare desired HRCs input **703** with interim HRCs input **704** to determine whether desired HRCs input **703** is equal to interim HRCs input **704**. If desired HRCs input **703** is equal to interim HRCs input **704**, comparator block **754** may set variable **710** to true, indicating that HRC subplant **204** is at steady state. However, if current desired HRCs input **703** is not equal to interim HRCs input **704**, comparator block **754** may set variable **710** to false, indicating that HRC subplant **204** is not at steady state.

(126) Comparator block **755** may compare desired chillers input **702** with previous desired chillers input **726** to determine whether desired chillers input **702** is not equal to previous desired chillers input **726**. If desired chillers input **702** is not equal to previous desired chillers input **726**, comparator block **755** may set variable **706** to true, indicating that chiller subplant **206** is not at steady state. However, if desired chillers input **702** is equal to previous desired chillers input **726**, comparator block **755** may set variable **706** to false, indicating that chiller subplant **206** is at steady state.

(127) Comparator block **756** may compare current interim chillers input **705** with previous interim chillers input **723** to determine whether current interim chillers input **705** is greater than previous interim chillers input **723**. If current interim chillers input **705** is greater than previous interim chillers input **723**, comparator block **756** may set variable **708** to true, indicating that the set of interim chillers has just increased. However, current interim chillers input **705** is not greater than previous interim chillers input **723**, comparator block **756** may set variable **708** to false, indicating that the set of interim chillers has not increased.

(128) Comparator block **757** may compare current interim chillers input **705** with previous interim chillers input **723** to determine whether current interim chillers input **705** is less than previous interim chillers input **723**. If current interim chillers input **705** is less than previous interim chillers input **723**, comparator block **757** may set variable **701** to true, indicating that the set of interim chillers has just decreased. However, current interim chillers input **705** is not less than previous interim chillers input **723**, comparator block **757** may set variable **701** to false, indicating that the set of interim chillers has not decreased.

(129) Comparator block **762** may compare previous desired chillers input **726** with zero input **727** to determine whether previous desired chillers input **726** is greater than zero. If previous desired chillers input **726** is greater than zero, comparator block **762** may set variable **731** to true. However, if previous desired chillers input **726** is not greater than zero, comparator block **762** may set variable **731** to false.

(130) Comparator block **763** may compare current desired chillers input **702** with zero input **727** to determine whether current desired chillers input **702** is equal to zero. If current desired chillers input **702** is equal to zero, comparator block **763** may set variable **732** to true. However, if current desired chillers input **702** is not equal to zero, comparator block **763** may set variable **732** to false.

(131) Comparator block **764** may compare desired chillers input **713** with interim chillers input **705** to determine whether desired chillers input **702** is equal to interim chillers input **705**. If desired chillers input **702** is equal to interim chillers input **705**, comparator block **764** may set variable **713** to true, indicating that chiller subplant **206** is at steady state. However, if current desired chillers input **702** is not equal to interim chillers input **705**, comparator block **764** may set variable **713** to false, indicating that chiller subplant **206** is not at steady state.

(132) Comparator block **765** may compare desired HRCs input **703** with previous desired HRCs input **725** to determine whether desired HRCs input **703** is not equal to previous desired HRCs input **725**. If desired HRCs input **703** is not equal to previous desired HRCs input **725**, comparator block **765** may set variable **714** to true, indicating that HRC subplant **204** is not at steady state. However, if desired HRCs input **703** is equal to previous desired HRCs input **725**, comparator block **765** may set variable **714** to false, indicating that HRC subplant **204** is at steady state.

(133) Comparator block **766** may compare current interim HRCs input **704** with previous interim HRCs input **724** to determine whether current interim HRCs input **704** is greater than previous interim HRCs input **724**. If current interim HRCs input **704** is greater than previous interim HRCs input **724**, comparator block **766** may set variable **715** to true, indicating that the set of interim HRCs has just increased. However, current interim HRCs input **704** is not greater than previous interim HRCs input **724**, comparator block **766** may set variable **715** to false, indicating that the set of interim HRCs has not increased.

(134) Comparator block **767** may compare current interim HRCs input **704** with previous interim HRCs input **724** to determine whether current interim HRCs input **704** is less than previous interim HRCs input **724**. If current interim HRCs input **704** is less than previous interim HRCs input **724**, comparator block **767** may set variable **716** to true, indicating that the set of interim HRCs has just decreased. However, current interim HRCs input **704** is not less than previous interim HRCs input **724**, comparator block **767** may set variable **716** to false, indicating that the set of interim HRCs has not decreased.

(135) Referring now to FIG. 7C, a block diagram of logic components which may be used by equipment staging coordinator **344** to determine whether to prevent or allow HRC equipment staging is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. Equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include a chiller stage-up delay timer **503** and a chiller stage-down delay timer **505**. In some embodiments, timers **503** and **505** are components of chiller staging detector **502** and chiller staging timer **504**.

(136) Chiller stage-up delay timer **503** may be configured to determine whether a chiller stage-up has recently occurred or is in progress. In some embodiments, a chiller stage-up includes at least one of an increase in the interim chillers or an increase in chiller capacity. Chiller stage-up delay timer **503** is shown to include an “OR” block **771** that receives variable **708** indicating whether the interim chillers have increased and variable **709** indicating whether the chillers capacity has increased. If either of variables **708** or **709** are true, OR block **771** may set variable **719** to true. However, if both of variables **708** or **709** are false, OR block **771** may set variable **719** to false.

(137) Chiller stage-up delay timer **503** is shown to include a timer **772**. Timer **772** may be configured to output a binary value indicating whether timer **772** has expired. In some embodiments, timer **772** outputs a binary value of “false” while timer **772** has not yet expired, and a binary value of “true” once timer **772** has expired. Timer **772** may be a countdown timer that resets to a predetermined value when variable **719** is true. Since variable **719** represents a chiller stage-up, timer **772** may reset each time a chiller stage-up occurs. Timer **772** may expire if the value of variable **719** remains false (i.e., a chiller stage-up does not occur) for the duration of timer **772**. Once timer **772** expires, timer **772** may relay the value of the variable received at its input port, which is shown as the opposite of variable **719** (i.e., variable **719** passed through NOT element **770**). Variable **719** may be set to false when a chiller stage-up has not occurred for the duration of timer **772**, which causes timer **772** to relay a value of “true” (i.e., the opposite of

variable **719**) to AND block **776** upon expiration of timer **772**. Timer **772** may continue to output a binary value of true to AND block **776** until a chiller stage-up is once again detected, at which time timer **772** may switch to outputting a binary value of false.

(138) Chiller stage-down delay timer **505** may be configured to determine whether a chiller stage-down has recently occurred or is in progress. In some embodiments, a chiller stage-down includes at least one of a decrease in the interim chillers or a decrease in chiller capacity. Chiller stage-down delay timer **505** is shown to include an “OR” block **774** that receives variable **701** indicating whether the interim chillers have decreased and variable **711** indicating whether the chillers capacity has decreased. If either of variables **701** or **711** are true, OR block **774** may set variable **720** to true. However, if both of variables **701** or **711** are false, OR block **774** may set variable **720** to false.

(139) Chiller stage-down delay timer **505** is shown to include a timer **775**. Timer **775** may be configured to output a binary value indicating whether timer **775** has expired. In some embodiments, timer **775** outputs a binary value of “false” while timer **775** has not yet expired, and a binary value of “true” once timer **775** has expired. Timer **775** may be a countdown timer that resets to a predetermined value when variable **720** is true. Since variable **720** represents a chiller stage-down, timer **775** may reset each time a chiller stage-down occurs. Timer **775** may expire if the value of variable **720** remains false (i.e., a chiller stage-down does not occur) for the duration of timer **775**. Once timer **775** expires, timer **775** may relay the value of the variable received at its input port, which is shown as the opposite of variable **720** (i.e., variable **720** passed through NOT element **773**). Variable **720** may be set to false when a chiller stage-down has not occurred for the duration of timer **775**, which causes timer **775** to relay a value of “true” (i.e., the opposite of variable **720**) to AND block **776** upon expiration of timer **775**. Timer **775** may continue to output a binary value of true to AND block **776** until a chiller stage-down is once again detected, at which time timer **775** may switch to outputting a binary value of false.

(140) Still referring to FIG. 7C, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include HRC subplant staging evaluator **606**. HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** is shown to include an AND block **776** that receives the outputs from timers **772** and **775**. AND block **776** may output a binary value of “true” if both of the outputs from timers **772** and **775** are true and a binary value of “false” if either of the outputs from timers **772** and **775** are false. In some embodiments, AND block **776** outputs a value of true when both timers **772** and **775** are expired, indicating that neither a chiller stage-up nor a chiller stage-down has recently occurred. However, AND block **776** may output a value of false when one or both of timers **772** and **775** are not yet expired, indicating that a chiller stage-up and/or a chiller stage-down has decently occurred.

(141) HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** is shown to include a latch **779**. Latch **779** may be configured to provide a fixed output (e.g., a binary value of “true”) until latch **779** is reset. In some embodiments, latch **779** is reset in response to receiving a binary value of “true” at its reset port (i.e., from AND block **776**), which may occur when both chiller stage-up delay timer **503** and chiller stage-down delay timer **505** have expired. Once latch **779** is reset, latch **779** may relay the value of the variable received at its input port. The input port of latch **779** is shown receiving an input from AND block **778**.

(142) AND block **778** may provide latch **779** with a binary value of “true” if all of the inputs to AND block **778** are true. Conversely, AND block **778** may provide latch **779** with a binary value of “false” if one or more of the inputs to AND block **778** is false. AND block **778** is shown receiving inputs of variable **710** indicating whether the desired HRCs equal the interim HRCs (i.e., whether HRC subplant **204** is at steady state), variable **706** indicating whether the desired chillers is not equal to the previous desired chillers (i.e., chiller subplant **206** is not at steady state), and an input from OR block **777** indicating whether a chiller stage-up or a chiller stage-down has recently occurred. Once reset, latch **779** may provide an output of false until all of the inputs to AND block **778** are true. When all of the inputs to AND block **778** become true, latch **779** may switch to



providing an output of true, which may be maintained until latch **779** is reset.

(143) Still referring to FIG. **7C**, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include a desired HRCs drop detector **604** and a HRC subplant staging preventer **612**. Desired HRCs drop detector **604** is shown to include an AND block **780** that receives variable **729** indicating whether the previous desired HRCs is greater than zero and variable **730** indicating whether the current desired HRCs is equal to zero. If both variables **729** and **730** are true, desired HRCs drop detector **604** may conclude that the desired HRCs has recently dropped to zero from a previous non-zero value. AND block **780** may output a binary value of “true” when both variables **729-730** are true, and a binary value of “false” when either of variables **729-730** is false. The output of AND block **780** may be passed through “not” block **781**, which outputs the opposite of the output from AND block **780**. This causes the output from desired HRCs drop detector **604** to be false when a HRC drop to zero is detected, and true when a HRC drop to zero is not detected.

(144) HRC subplant staging preventer **612** is shown to include an OR block **782** that receives the output from latch **779** and toggle input **707**. If either of the inputs to OR block **782** are true, OR block **782** may output a value of true. In other words, OR block **782** may output a value of true when toggle input **707** is true and/or HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** outputs a value of true, indicating that it is desired to prevent HRC equipment staging. The output from OR block **782** and the output from desired HRCs drop detector **604** may be provided to an AND block **783**, which outputs a signal to prevent HRC staging if both of the inputs to AND block **783** are true.

(145) The overall function of the logic components shown in FIG. **7C** causes HRC subplant staging preventer **612** to allow HRC equipment staging in response to receiving a binary “false” value from desired HRCs drop detector **604** (indicating that the desired HRCs has dropped to zero), regardless of the inputs from HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** and toggle input **707**. However, if desired HRCs drop detector **604** provides a binary output of “true,” HRC subplant staging preventer **612** may prevent HRC equipment staging in response to toggle input **707** providing a binary input of true and/or HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** providing a binary input of true. HRC subplant staging evaluator **606** may provide a binary output of true when a chiller stage-up or stage-down has recently occurred, and a binary output of false when a chiller stage-up or stage-down has not recently occurred. Therefore, HRC subplant staging preventer **612** may prevent HRC equipment staging when the toggle input **707** is true and/or chiller subplant staging has recently occurred, provided that the desired HRCs have not dropped to zero.

(146) Referring now to FIG. **7D**, a block diagram of logic components which may be used by equipment staging coordinator **344** to determine whether to prevent or allow chiller equipment staging is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. Equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include a HRC stage-up delay timer **507** and a HRC stage-down delay timer **509**. In some embodiments, timers **507** and **509** are components of HRC staging detector **508** and HRC staging timer **510**.

(147) HRC stage-up delay timer **507** may be configured to determine whether a HRC stage-up has recently occurred or is in progress. In some embodiments, a HRC stage-up includes at least one of an increase in the interim HRCs or an increase in HRC capacity. HRC stage-up delay timer **507** is shown to include an “OR” block **791** that receives variable **715** indicating whether the interim HRCs have increased and variable **717** indicating whether the HRCs capacity has increased. If either of variables **715** or **717** are true, OR block **791** may set variable **721** to true. However, if both of variables **715** or **717** are false, OR block **791** may set variable **721** to false.

(148) HRC stage-up delay timer **507** is shown to include a timer **792**. Timer **792** may be configured to output a binary value indicating whether timer **792** has expired. In some embodiments, timer **792** outputs a binary value of “false” while timer **792** has not yet expired, and a binary value of “true” once timer **792** has expired. Timer **792** may be a countdown timer that resets to a predetermined value when variable **721** is true. Since variable **721** represents a HRC stage-up, timer **792** may reset each time a HRC stage-up occurs. Timer **792** may expire if the value of variable **721** remains false

(i.e., a HRC stage-up does not occur) for the duration of timer **792**. Once timer **792** expires, timer **792** may relay the value of the variable received at its input port, which is shown as the opposite of variable **721** (i.e., variable **721** passed through NOT element **790**). Variable **721** may be set to false when a HRC stage-up has not occurred for the duration of timer **792**, which causes timer **792** to relay a value of “true” (i.e., the opposite of variable **721**) to AND block **796** upon expiration of timer **792**. Timer **792** may continue to output a binary value of true to AND block **796** until a HRC stage-up is once again detected, at which time timer **792** may switch to outputting a binary value of false.

(149) HRC stage-down delay timer **509** may be configured to determine whether a HRC stage-down has recently occurred or is in progress. In some embodiments, a HRC stage-down includes at least one of a decrease in the interim HRCs or a decrease in HRC capacity. HRC stage-down delay timer **509** is shown to include an “OR” block **794** that receives variable **716** indicating whether the interim HRCs have decreased and variable **718** indicating whether the HRCs capacity has decreased. If either of variables **716** or **718** are true, OR block **794** may set variable **722** to true. However, if both of variables **716** or **718** are false, OR block **794** may set variable **722** to false.

(150) HRC stage-down delay timer **509** is shown to include a timer **795**. Timer **795** may be configured to output a binary value indicating whether timer **795** has expired. In some embodiments, timer **795** outputs a binary value of “false” while timer **795** has not yet expired, and a binary value of “true” once timer **795** has expired. Timer **795** may be a countdown timer that resets to a predetermined value when variable **722** is true. Since variable **722** represents a HRC stage-down, timer **795** may reset each time a HRC stage-down occurs. Timer **795** may expire if the value of variable **722** remains false (i.e., a HRC stage-down does not occur) for the duration of timer **795**. Once timer **795** expires, timer **795** may relay the value of the variable received at its input port, which is shown as the opposite of variable **722** (i.e., variable **722** passed through NOT element **793**). Variable **722** may be set to false when a HRC stage-down has not occurred for the duration of timer **795**, which causes timer **795** to relay a value of “true” (i.e., the opposite of variable **722**) to AND block **796** upon expiration of timer **795**. Timer **795** may continue to output a binary value of true to AND block **796** until a HRC stage-down is once again detected, at which time timer **795** may switch to outputting a binary value of false.

(151) Still referring to FIG. 7D, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include chiller subplant staging evaluator **616**. Chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** is shown to include an AND block **796** that receives the outputs from timers **792** and **795**. AND block **796** may output a binary value of “true” if both of the outputs from timers **792** and **795** are true and a binary value of “false” if either of the outputs from timers **792** and **795** are false. In some embodiments, AND block **796** outputs a value of true when both timers **792** and **795** are expired, indicating that neither a HRC stage-up nor a HRC stage-down has recently occurred. However, AND block **796** may output a value of false when one or both of timers **792** and **795** are not yet expired, indicating that a HRC stage-up and/or a HRC stage-down has recently occurred.

(152) Chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** is shown to include a latch **799**. Latch **799** may be configured to provide a fixed output (e.g., a binary value of “true”) until latch **799** is reset. In some embodiments, latch **799** is reset in response to receiving a binary value of “true” at its reset port (i.e., from AND block **796**), which may occur when both HRC stage-up delay timer **507** and HRC stage-down delay timer **509** have expired. Once latch **799** is reset, latch **799** may relay the value of the variable received at its input port. The input port of latch **799** is shown receiving an input from AND block **798**.

(153) AND block **798** may provide latch **799** with a binary value of “true” if all of the inputs to AND block **798** are true. Conversely, AND block **798** may provide latch **799** with a binary value of “false” if one or more of the inputs to AND block **798** is false. AND block **798** is shown receiving inputs of variable **713** indicating whether the desired chillers equal the interim chillers (i.e., whether chiller subplant **206** is at steady state), variable **714** indicating whether the desired HRCs

is not equal to the previous desired HRCs (i.e., HRC subplant **204** is not at steady state), and an input from OR block **797** indicating whether a HRC stage-up or a HRC stage-down has recently occurred. Once reset, latch **799** may provide an output of false until all of the inputs to AND block **798** are true. When all of the inputs to AND block **798** become true, latch **799** may switch to providing an output of true, which may be maintained until latch **799** is reset.

(154) Still referring to FIG. 7D, equipment staging coordinator **344** is shown to include a desired chillers drop detector **614** and a HRC subplant staging preventer **612**. Desired chillers drop detector **614** is shown to include an AND block **784** that receives variable **731** indicating whether the previous desired chillers is greater than zero and variable **732** indicating whether the current desired chillers is equal to zero. If both variables **731** and **732** are true, desired chillers drop detector **614** may conclude that the desired chillers has recently dropped to zero from a previous non-zero value. AND block **784** may output a binary value of “true” when both variables **731-732** are true, and a binary value of “false” when either of variables **731-732** is false. The output of AND block **784** may be passed through “not” block **785**, which outputs the opposite of the output from AND block **784**. This causes the output from desired chillers drop detector **614** to be false when a chiller drop to zero is detected, and true when a chiller drop to zero is not detected.

(155) Chiller subplant staging preventer **622** is shown to include an OR block **786** that receives the output from latch **799** and toggle input **712**. If either of the inputs to OR block **786** are true, OR block **786** may output a value of true. In other words, OR block **786** may output a value of true when toggle input **712** is true and/or chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** outputs a value of true, indicating that it is desired to prevent chiller equipment staging. The output from OR block **786** and the output from desired chillers drop detector **614** may be provided to an AND block **787**, which outputs a signal to prevent chiller staging if both of the inputs to AND block **787** are true.

(156) The overall function of the logic components shown in FIG. 7D causes chiller subplant staging preventer **622** to allow chiller equipment staging in response to receiving a binary “false” value from desired chillers drop detector **614** (indicating that the desired chillers has dropped to zero), regardless of the inputs from chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** and toggle input **712**. However, if desired chillers drop detector **614** provides a binary output of “true,” chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may prevent chiller equipment staging in response to toggle input **712** providing a binary input of true and/or chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** providing a binary input of true. Chiller subplant staging evaluator **616** may provide a binary output of true when a HRC stage-up or stage-down has recently occurred, and a binary output of false when a HRC stage-up or stage-down has not recently occurred. Therefore, chiller subplant staging preventer **622** may prevent chiller equipment staging when the toggle input **712** is true and/or HRC subplant staging has recently occurred, provided that the desired chillers have not dropped to zero.

(157) Coordinated HVAC Equipment Staging Process

(158) Referring now to FIG. 8, a flowchart of a process **800** for coordinating HVAC equipment staging across multiple subplants is shown, according to an exemplary embodiment. In some embodiments, process **800** is performed by equipment staging coordinator **344**, as described with reference to FIGS. 5-7D.

(159) Process **800** is shown to include identifying equipment selected for activation in a first subplant (step **802**). The first subplant may be chiller subplant **206**, HRC subplant **204**, or any other subplant of central plant **200**. In some embodiments, the first subplant includes a collection of HVAC equipment configured to serve a particular type of load (e.g., heating, cooling, ventilation, etc.). Identifying equipment selected for activation in the first subplant may include identifying a set of the subplant equipment that is desired to be used to meet the subplant load. In some embodiments, the equipment selected for activation may be selected by a subplant optimizer (e.g., low level optimizer **332**) configured to automatically determine an optimal set of subplant equipment to meet a load setpoint for the first subplant. For example, the equipment identified in step **802** may include the set of desired chillers (if the first subplant is a chiller subplant) or a set of

HRCs (if the first subplant is a HRC subplant).

(160) Process **800** is shown to include determining whether the selected equipment has dropped to zero (step **804**). In some embodiments, step **804** is performed by desired HRCs drop detector **604** and/or desired chillers drop detector **614**, as previously described. For example, step **804** may include determining whether the selected set of equipment is an empty set or if the load setpoint for the subplant has dropped to zero. In response to a determination that the selected equipment has dropped to zero (i.e., the result of step **804** is “yes”), process **800** may proceed to allowing the first subplant to stage its equipment (step **826**) and process **800** may end. However, in response to a determination that the selected equipment has not dropped to zero (i.e., the result of step **804** is “no”), process **800** may proceed to step **806**.

(161) Process **800** is shown to include determining whether the toggle input is true (step **806**). Step **806** may be performed in response to a determination in step **804** that the selected equipment has not dropped to zero. The toggle input may be configured to toggle between binary values (e.g., true/false, on/off, 1/0, etc.) and may provide opposite inputs to different instances of process **800**. For example, if the toggle input provides an input of “true” to an instance of process **800** that determines whether to allow or prevent chiller equipment staging, the toggle input may provide an input of “false” to a parallel instance of process **800** that determines whether to allow or prevent HRC equipment staging.

(162) In some embodiments, the toggle input toggles between binary inputs on a periodic basis (e.g., every 30 seconds, every 15 minutes, etc.). In other embodiments, the toggle input toggles between binary inputs in response to an input from BAS **308**, subplants **202-212**, or central plant controller **302**. Advantageously, the toggle input may ensure that at least one of the subplants configured to meet a particular load is always at steady state by preventing both subplants from staging their equipment simultaneously. If the toggle input is true (i.e., the result of step **806** is “yes”), process **800** may proceed to preventing the first subplant from staging its equipment (step **824**) and process **800** may end. However, if the toggle input false true (i.e., the result of step **806** is “no”), process **800** may proceed to step **808**.

(163) Still referring to FIG. **8**, process **800** is shown to include monitoring the equipment of a second subplant (step **808**). In some embodiments, the second subplant is another subplant configured to meet the same type of load as the first subplant. For example, if the first subplant is a chiller subplant, the second subplant may be a HRC subplant or another chiller subplant. In various embodiments, the first and second subplants may be located within the same building or facility or distributed across multiple buildings or facilities.

(164) Step **808** may include monitoring the equipment of the second subplant for staging events. Staging events may include stage-up events or stage-down events for the equipment of the second subplant. Stage-up events may include, for example, increasing the capacity of the equipment of the second subplant, activating equipment of the second subplant, turning on equipment of the second subplant, and/or increasing a load setpoint for the second subplant. In some embodiments, stage-up events include an increase in the number of devices of the second subplant currently being commanded (i.e., the interim devices of the second subplant) and/or the capacity of the second subplant. Similarly, stage-down events may include, for example, decreasing the capacity of the equipment of the second subplant, deactivating equipment of the second subplant, turning off equipment of the second subplant, and/or decreasing a load setpoint for the second subplant. In some embodiments, stage-down events include a decrease in the number of devices of the second subplant currently being commanded (i.e., the interim devices of the second subplant) and/or the capacity of the second subplant.

(165) Process **800** is shown to include determining whether a stage-up event is detected (step **810**) and determining whether a stage-down event is detected (step **812**). Steps **810** and **812** may be performed concurrently with each other while monitoring the equipment of the second subplant. If a stage up event is detected (i.e., the result of step **810** is “yes”), process **800** may reset a stage-up

timer (step **814**) and return to step **808**. Similarly, if a stage down event is detected (i.e., the result of step **812** is “yes”), process **800** may reset a stage-down timer (step **816**) and return to step **808**. (166) If neither a stage-up event is detected nor a stage down event is detected (i.e., the results of steps **810-812** are “no”), process **800** may proceed to determining whether both timers are expired (step **818**). If one or both of the timers are not yet expired (i.e., the result of step **818** is “no”), process **800** may return to step **808**. Steps **808-818** may be repeated iteratively until it is determined that both timers have expired (i.e., the result of step **818** is “yes”). Once both timers have expired, process **800** may proceed to step **820**.

(167) Still referring to FIG. **8**, process **800** is shown to include determining whether the first subplant is at steady state (step **820**). In some embodiments, step **820** is performed by HRC subplant steady state detector **610** or chiller subplant steady state detector **620**, as described with reference to FIG. **6**. Step **820** may include determining whether the set of interim devices for the first subplant and the set of desired devices for the first subplant are equal. If so, step **820** may conclude that the first subplant is at steady state. In some embodiments, step **820** includes determining whether the set of desired devices for the first subplant has recently changed. If so, step **820** may conclude that the first subplant is not at steady state. If the first subplant is not at steady state (i.e., the result of step **820** is “no”), process **800** may proceed to allowing the first subplant to stage its equipment (step **826**) and process **800** may end. However, if the first subplant is at steady state (i.e., the result of step **820** is “yes”), process **800** may proceed to step **822**.

(168) Process **800** is shown to include determining whether the second subplant is at steady state (step **822**). Step **822** may be performed in response to a determination in step **820** that the first subplant is at steady state. In some embodiments, step **822** includes determining whether the set of desired devices for the second subplant has recently changed. If so, step **822** may conclude that the second subplant is not at steady state. In other embodiments, step **822** may include determining whether the set of interim devices for the second subplant and the set of desired devices for the second subplant are equal. If so, step **822** may conclude that the second subplant is at steady state. If the second subplant is not at steady state (i.e., the result of step **822** is “no”), process **800** may proceed to preventing the first subplant from staging its equipment (step **824**). However, if the second subplant is at steady state (i.e., the result of step **822** is “yes”), process **800** may proceed to allowing the first subplant to stage its equipment (step **826**) and process **800** may end.

(169) Configuration of Exemplary Embodiments

(170) The construction and arrangement of the systems and methods as shown in the various exemplary embodiments are illustrative only. Although only a few embodiments have been described in detail in this disclosure, many modifications are possible (e.g., variations in sizes, dimensions, structures, shapes and proportions of the various elements, values of parameters, mounting arrangements, use of materials, colors, orientations, etc.). For example, the position of elements may be reversed or otherwise varied and the nature or number of discrete elements or positions may be altered or varied. Accordingly, all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the present disclosure. The order or sequence of any process or method steps may be varied or re-sequenced according to alternative embodiments. Other substitutions, modifications, changes, and omissions may be made in the design, operating conditions and arrangement of the exemplary embodiments without departing from the scope of the present disclosure.

(171) The present disclosure contemplates methods, systems and program products on any machine-readable media for accomplishing various operations. The embodiments of the present disclosure may be implemented using existing computer processors, or by a special purpose computer processor for an appropriate system, incorporated for this or another purpose, or by a hardwired system. Embodiments within the scope of the present disclosure include program products comprising machine-readable media for carrying or having machine-executable instructions or data structures stored thereon. Such machine-readable media can be any available

media that can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer or other machine with a processor. By way of example, such machine-readable media can comprise RAM, ROM, EPROM, EEPROM, CD-ROM or other optical disk storage, magnetic disk storage or other magnetic storage devices, or any other medium which can be used to carry or store desired program code in the form of machine-executable instructions or data structures and which can be accessed by a general purpose or special purpose computer or other machine with a processor.

(172) When information is transferred or provided over a network or another communications connection (either hardwired, wireless, or a combination of hardwired or wireless) to a machine, the machine properly views the connection as a machine-readable medium. Thus, any such connection is properly termed a machine-readable medium. Combinations of the above are also included within the scope of machine-readable media. Machine-executable instructions include, for example, instructions and data which cause a general purpose computer, special purpose computer, or special purpose processing machines to perform a certain function or group of functions.

(173) Although the figures show a specific order of method steps, the order of the steps may differ from what is depicted. Also two or more steps may be performed concurrently or with partial concurrence. Such variation will depend on the software and hardware systems chosen and on designer choice. All such variations are within the scope of the disclosure. Likewise, software implementations could be accomplished with standard programming techniques with rule based logic and other logic to accomplish the various connection steps, processing steps, comparison steps and decision steps.

## Claims

1. A controller for use with a plurality of chillers, the controller comprising: a processing circuit configured to: select a first chiller for operation in response to a command; determine whether a lag time has elapsed since the first chiller was started; start a second chiller at least in part in response to a determination that the lag time has elapsed; determine if more capacity is needed to satisfy a HVAC load; determine whether another lag time has elapsed since the second chiller was started; and start a third chiller in response to a determination that the another lag time has elapsed.
2. The controller of claim 1, wherein: the first chiller comprises a first pump; and the second chiller comprises a second pump.
3. The controller of claim 1, wherein counting of the lag time begins after the first chiller has achieved a first state.
4. The controller of claim 1, wherein the processing circuit is configured to determine a staging event comprising at least one of activating or deactivating the first chiller, changing a load setpoint for the first chiller, and changing a capacity of first chiller.
5. The controller of claim 1, wherein the processing circuit is configured to: determine whether the first chiller is operating at steady state during a time period after the first chiller is started; allow the second chiller to stage in response to determining that the first chiller is operating at the steady state over the lag time; and prevent the second chiller from staging in response to determining that the first chiller is not operating at the steady state.
6. The controller of claim 1, wherein the processing circuit is configured to: initialize a lag timer for the lag time; start the lag timer in response to starting the first chiller; and determine whether the lag time has elapsed by determining whether the lag timer has expired.
7. A controller for equipment that includes at least first HVAC equipment and second HVAC equipment, the controller programmed to: select first HVAC equipment for operation in response to a command; determine whether a lag time has elapsed since the first HVAC equipment achieved a state associated with completion of staging the first HVAC equipment; and start the second HVAC equipment at least in part in response to a determination that the lag time has elapsed.
8. The controller of claim 1, wherein the lag time is a predetermined value stored in a memory.

9. The controller of claim 1, wherein the processing circuit comprises a remote server.
  10. A method for heating, ventilation, or air conditioning (HVAC) equipment comprising at least first HVAC equipment and second HVAC equipment, the method comprising: detecting a staging event for the first HVAC equipment and starting the first HVAC equipment for operation in response to a command; determine whether a lag time has elapsed since the first HVAC equipment was started; and start a second first HVAC equipment at least in part in response to a determination that the lag time has elapsed detecting another staging event for third equipment occurring at a second time; determining whether a second delay time has elapsed since the staging event for the second HVAC equipment has occurred; and preventing third HVAC equipment from staging in response to a determination that the second delay time has not elapsed.
  11. The method of claim 10, wherein the first HVAC equipment comprises a first chiller circuit, and the second HVAC equipment comprises a second chiller circuit.
  12. The method of claim 10, wherein: the first HVAC equipment comprises at least one of a first boiler, a first heater, a first pump, a first chiller, a first heat recovery chiller, a first cooling tower, or a first thermal energy storage tank; and the second HVAC equipment comprises at least one of a second boiler, a second heater, a second pump, a second chiller, a second heat recovery chiller, a second cooling tower, or a second thermal energy storage tank.
  13. The method of claim 10, wherein the staging event comprises at least one of activating or deactivating the first HVAC equipment, changing a load setpoint for the first HVAC equipment, and changing a capacity of first HVAC equipment.
  14. The method of claim 10, further comprising: determining whether the first HVAC equipment is operating at steady state during a time period after the staging event for the first HVAC equipment occurs; and allowing the second HVAC equipment to stage in response to determining that the first HVAC equipment is operating at the steady state.
  15. The method of claim 10, further comprising: initializing a lag timer; starting the lag timer in response to detecting the staging event for the first HVAC equipment; and determining whether a first delay time has elapsed by determining whether the lag time has expired.
  16. The method of claim 10, further comprising: determining whether the first HVAC equipment is operating at steady state during a time period after the staging event for the first HVAC equipment occurs; and preventing the second HVAC equipment from staging in response to determining that the first HVAC equipment is not operating at the steady state.
  17. The controller of claim 7, wherein the controller is programmed to: determine if more capacity is needed to satisfy a HVAC load; determine whether another lag time has elapsed since the second chiller was started achieved the state; and start a third chiller in response to a determination that the another lag time has elapsed.
  18. The controller of claim 7, wherein the controller comprises a plurality of servers or computers at distributed locations.
  19. The controller of claim 7, wherein the state is a steady state and the controller is programmed to: determine whether the first HVAC equipment is operating at the steady state during a time period after the staging the first HVAC equipment; and prevent the second HVAC equipment from staging in response to determining that the first HVAC equipment is not operating at the steady state.
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