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## Integrating High Levels of Variable Renewable Energy into Electric Power Systems

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# Errata

In December 2018, the following change was made to Slide 11: Alaska Village, 80%, has been corrected to state St. Paul Alaska, 55%. Additional data points have also been added.

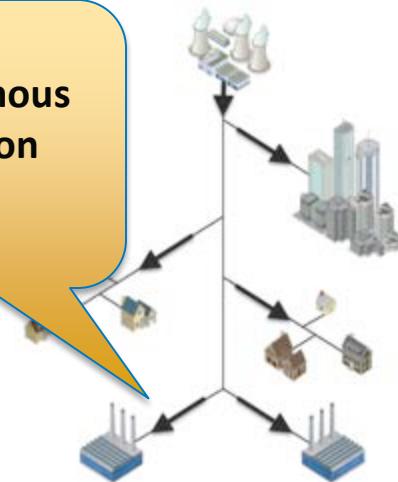
# Outline

- Understanding current and future power systems
- Current state of variable renewable energy (VRE): solar and wind
- Current power systems operating with VRE
- Challenges and solutions of operating power systems with very high levels of VRE
- Research needs

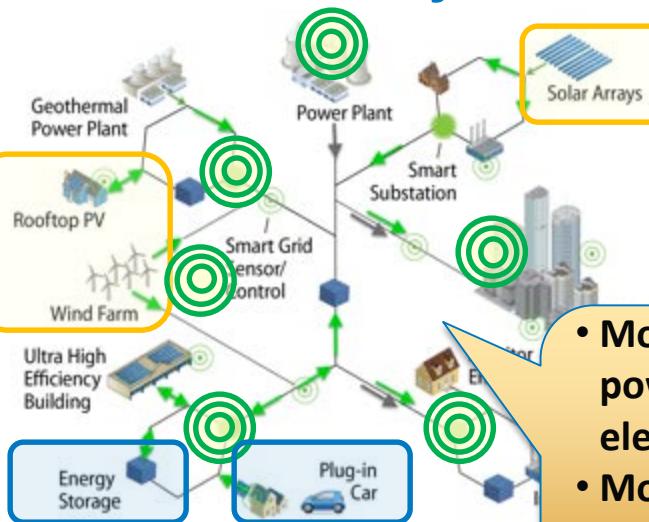
# Evolution of the Power System

## Current Power System

- Large synchronous generation
- Central control.



## Future Power Systems



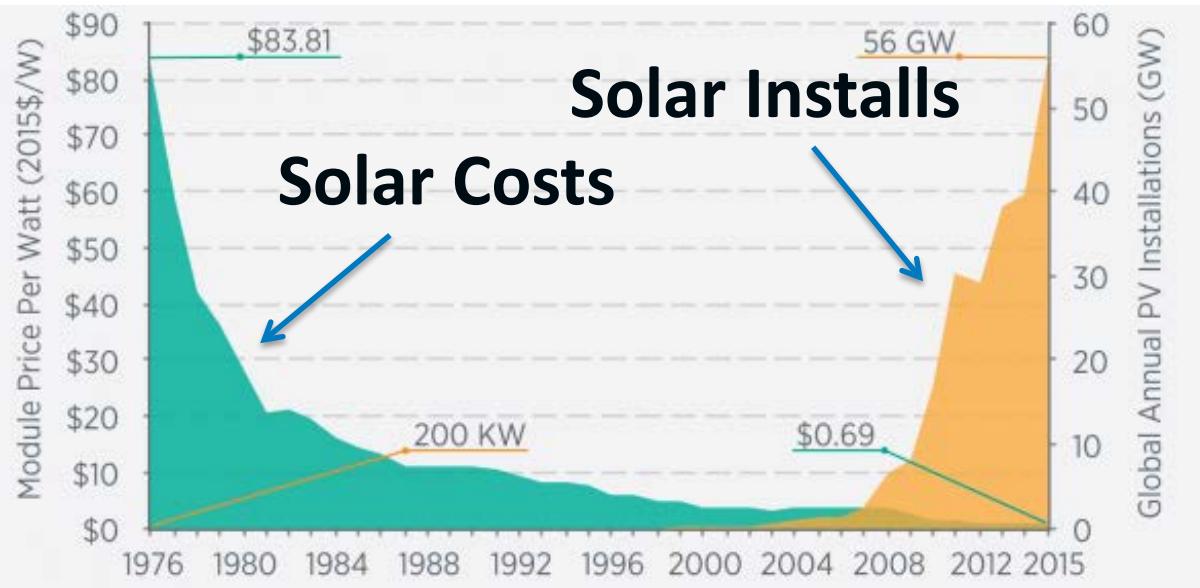
- More VRE—power electronics
- More data
- More distributed resources

## New challenges in a modern grid:

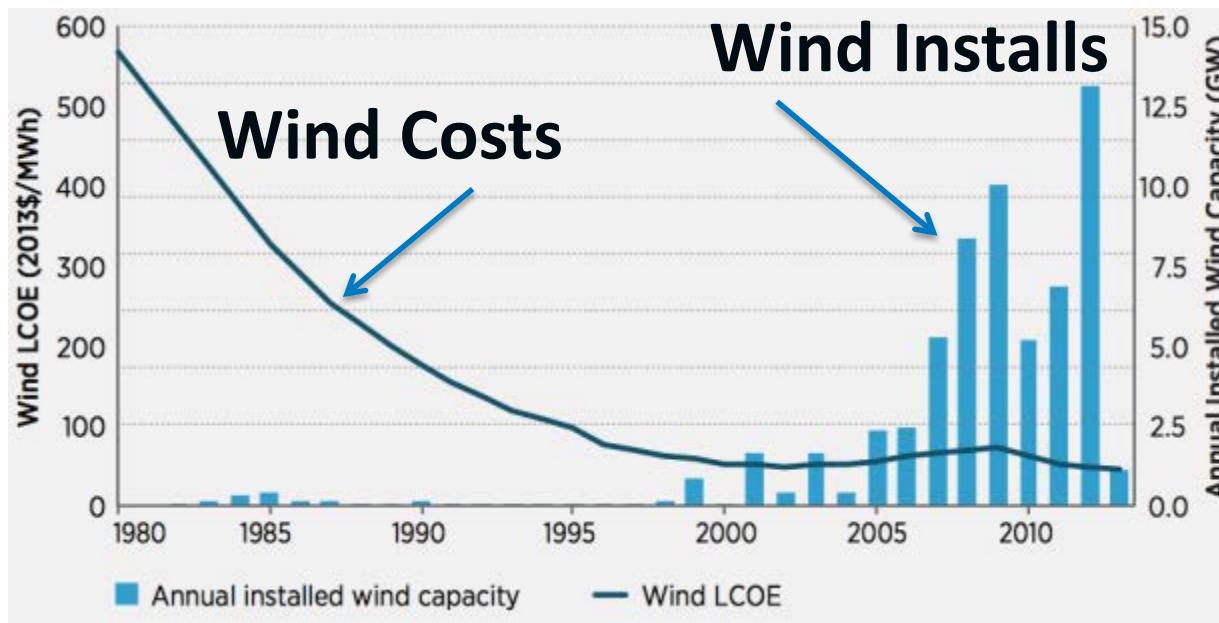
- Increasing levels of power electronics-based VRE: solar and wind
- More use of communications, controls, data, and information (e.g., smart grids)
- Other new technologies: electric vehicles (EVs), distributed storage, flexible loads
- Becoming highly distributed—more complex to control

# Current State of Variable Renewable Energy: Solar and Wind

# Significant Declines in Renewables Cost— Increase in Renewables Installations



Source: U.S. Department of Energy  
(DOE), *On the Path to SunShot*,  
<http://energy.gov/eere/sunshot/path-sunshot>



Source: DOE, *Wind Vision Report*,  
<http://energy.gov/eere/wind/downloads/wind-vision-new-era-wind-power-united-states>

# Photovoltaic Systems in the United States

## Solar Star

### QUICK FACTS

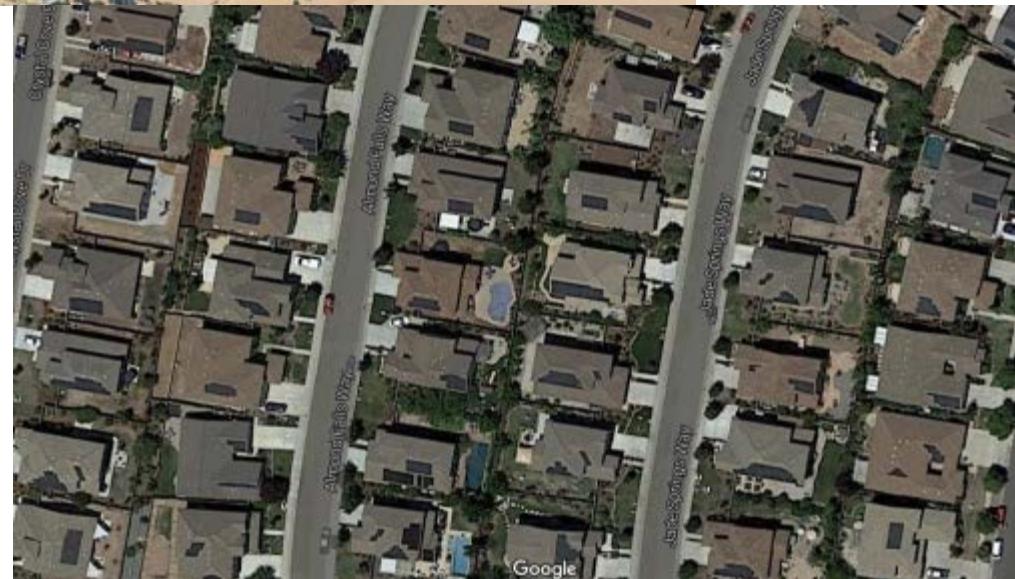
Location:	Rosamond, California
Capacity:	579 MW
Owner:	MidAmerican Solar, a subsidiary of MidAmerican Renewables
Design/Construction:	SunPower
Power Purchaser:	Southern California Edison
Technology:	SunPower™ Oasis™ Power Plant
No. of Modules:	Approx. 1,720,000
Equivalent No. of Homes Powered:	Approx. 255,000
Acres:	Approx. 3,200

Source: Sunpower,

<https://us.sunpower.com/sites/sunpower/files/media-library/fact-sheets/fs-solar-star-projects-factsheet.pdf>



## Solar Subdivisions



Anatolia Subdivision, Rancho Cordova, CA. Source: © 2015 Google, Map Data

# Wind Systems in the United States



**Shepard's Flats,  
Arlington, OR<sup>3</sup>**  
338 GE Turbines  
845 MW  
2,000 GWh/yr

Sources:

<sup>1</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alta\\_Wind\\_Energy\\_Center](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alta_Wind_Energy_Center)

<sup>2</sup>

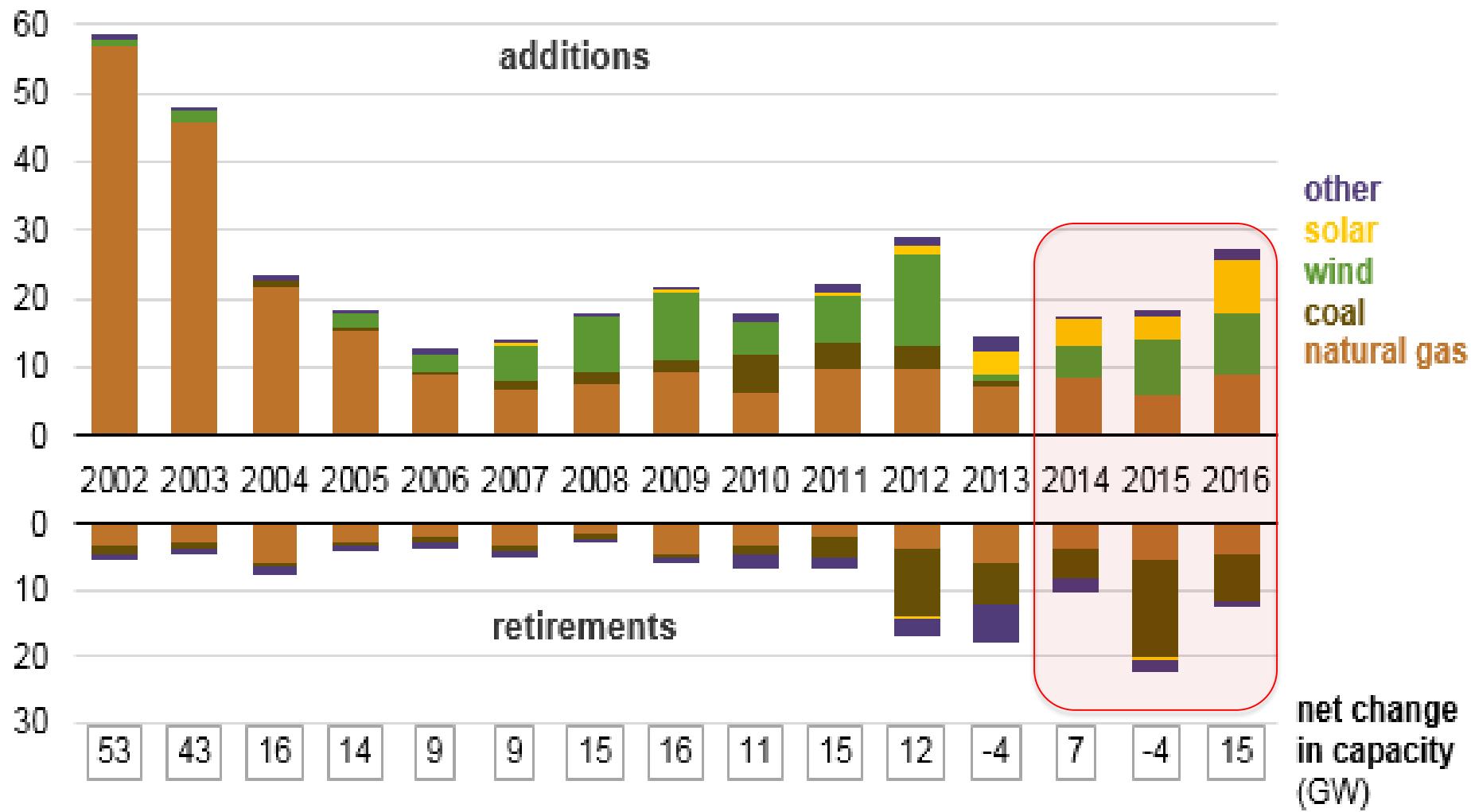
[http://www.nexteraeenergyresources.com/pdf\\_redesign/capricornridge.pdf](http://www.nexteraeenergyresources.com/pdf_redesign/capricornridge.pdf)

<sup>3</sup>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepherds\\_Flat\\_Wind\\_Farm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shepherds_Flat_Wind_Farm)

# New Generation Additions in the United States Are Mostly Gas, Wind, and Solar

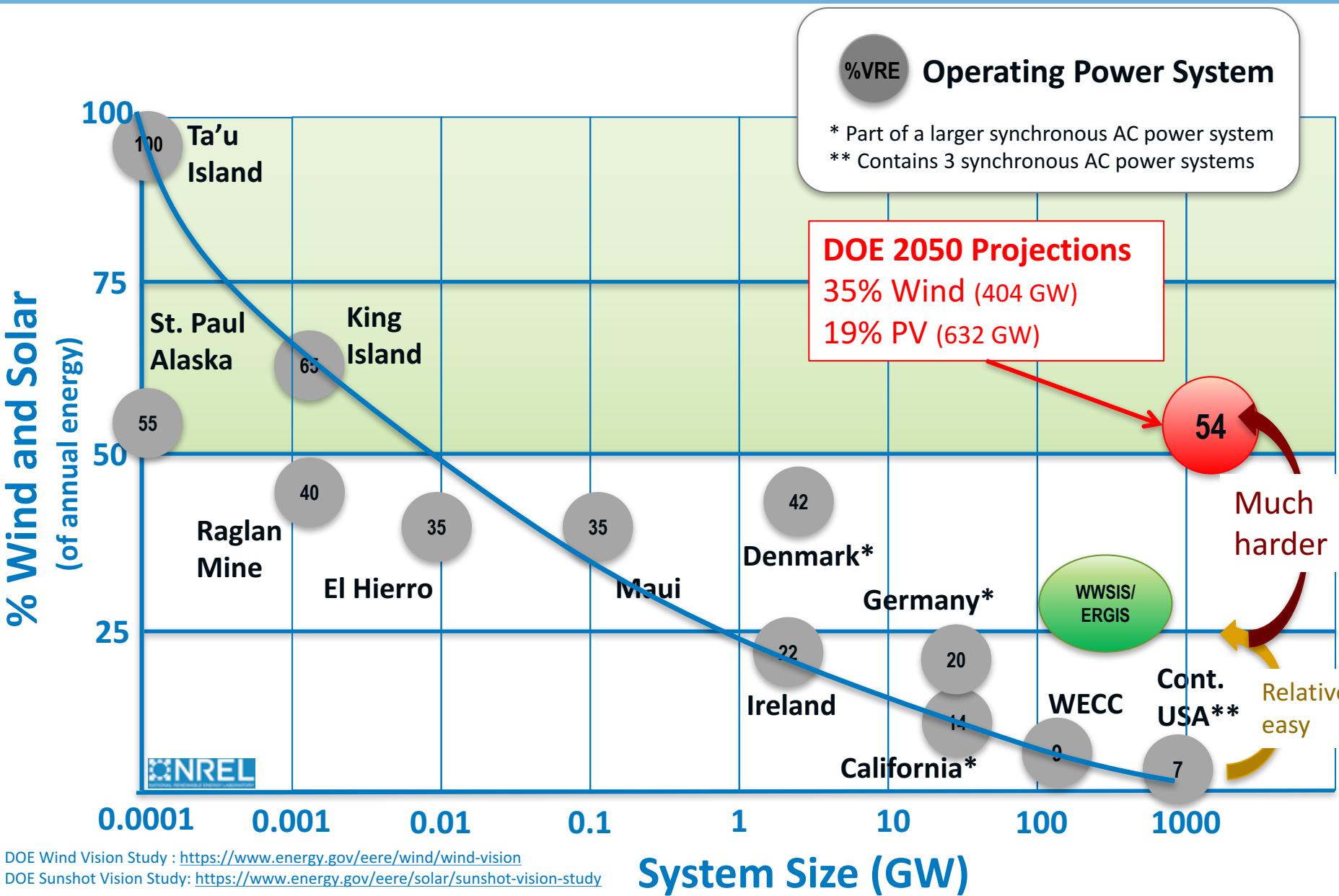
U.S. utility-scale electric capacity additions and retirements (2002-16)  
gigawatts



Source: EIA, <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=30112>

# Current Power Systems Operating with Variable Renewable Energy

# Moving toward Ultra-High Levels of Variable Renewable Energy



# Western Wind and Solar Integration Study

- **Goal:**

- To understand the costs and operating impacts due to the **variability** and **uncertainty** of wind, PV and concentrating solar power on the WestConnect grid.

- **Utilities:**

- Arizona Public Service
- El Paso Electric
- NV Energy
- Public Service Company of New Mexico
- Salt River Project
- Tri-State Generation & Transmission
- Tucson Electric Power
- Xcel Energy
- Western Area Power Administration.

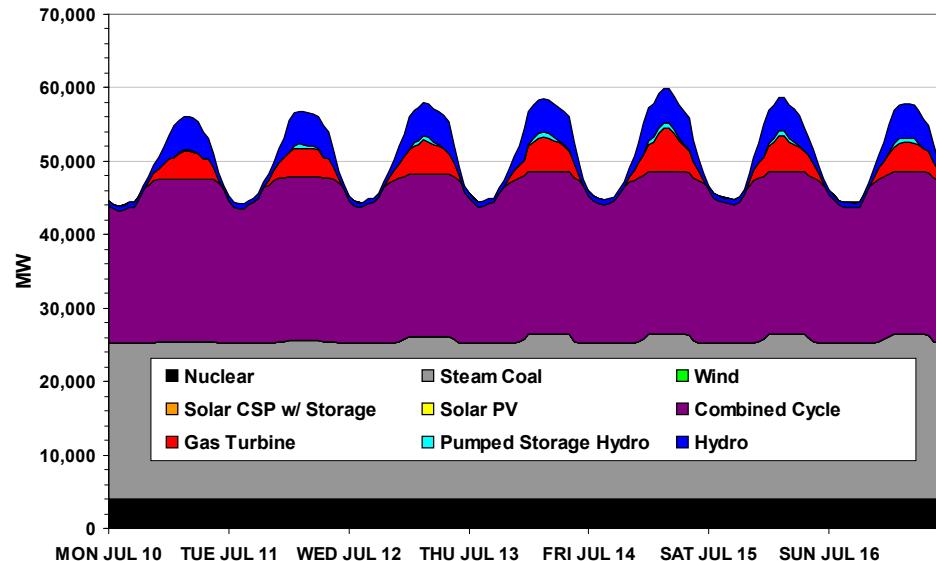


*Can we integrate 35% renewables in the West?*

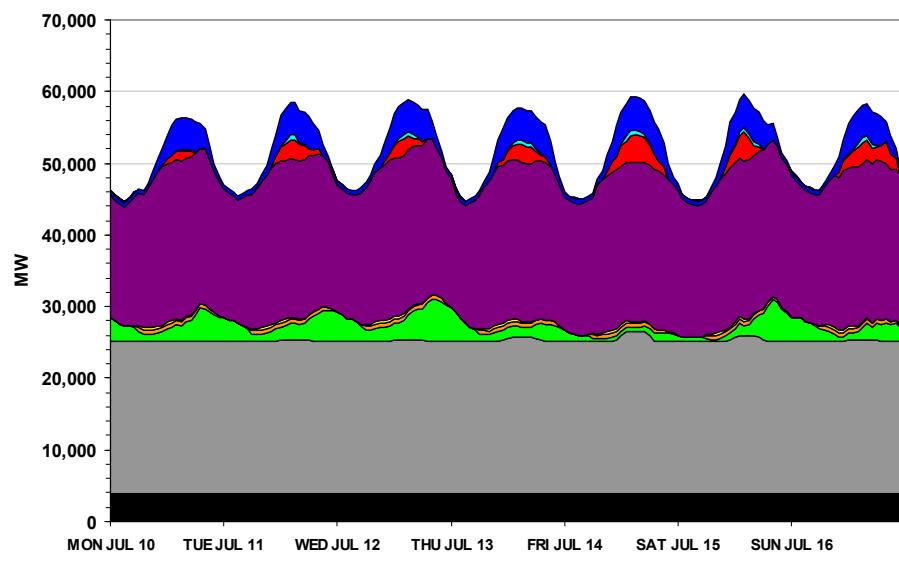
Source: NREL, Western Wind and Solar Integration Study (WWSIS) (2007–2015),  
<http://www.nrel.gov/grid/wwsis.html>

# Dispatch During a Tame Week (July)

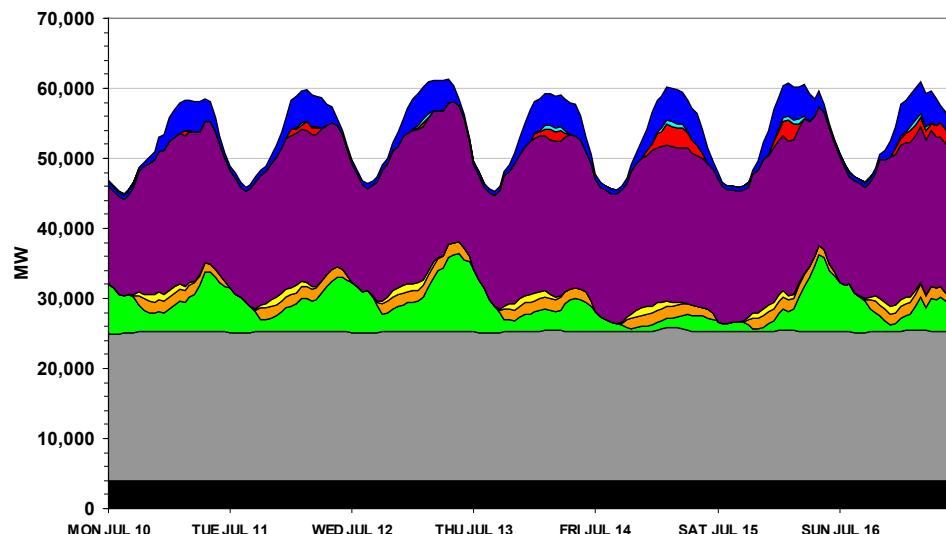
No wind



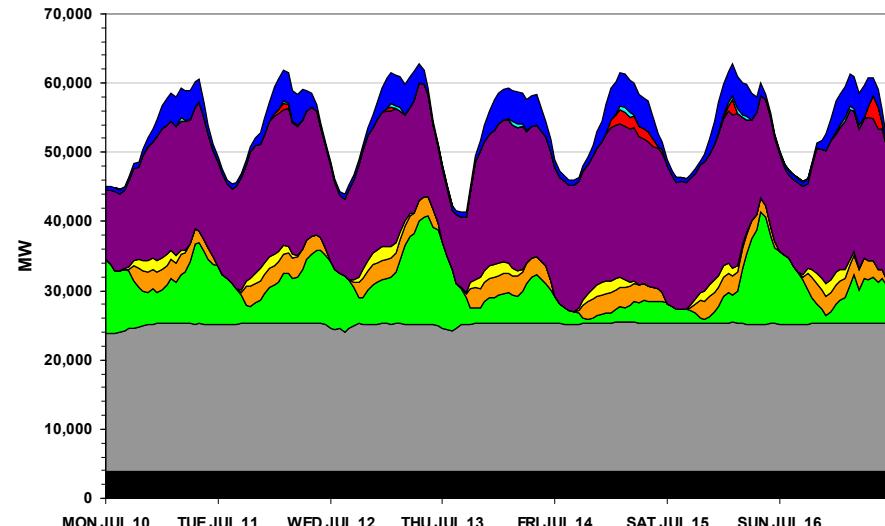
10% wind



20% wind

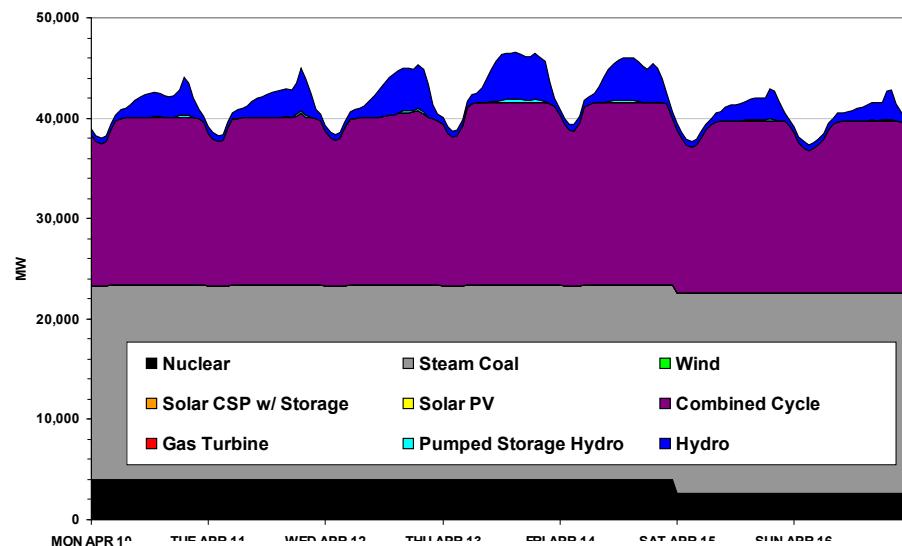


30% wind

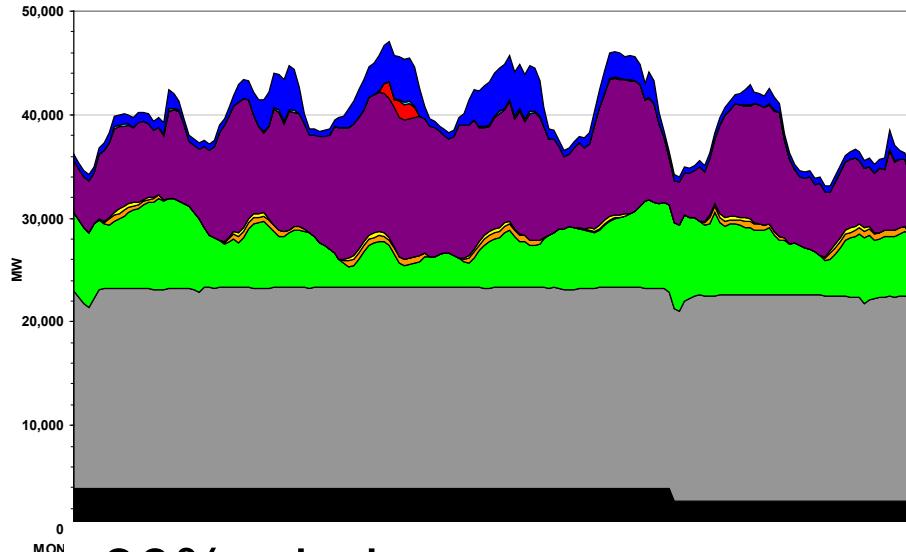


# Dispatch During the Worst Week (April)

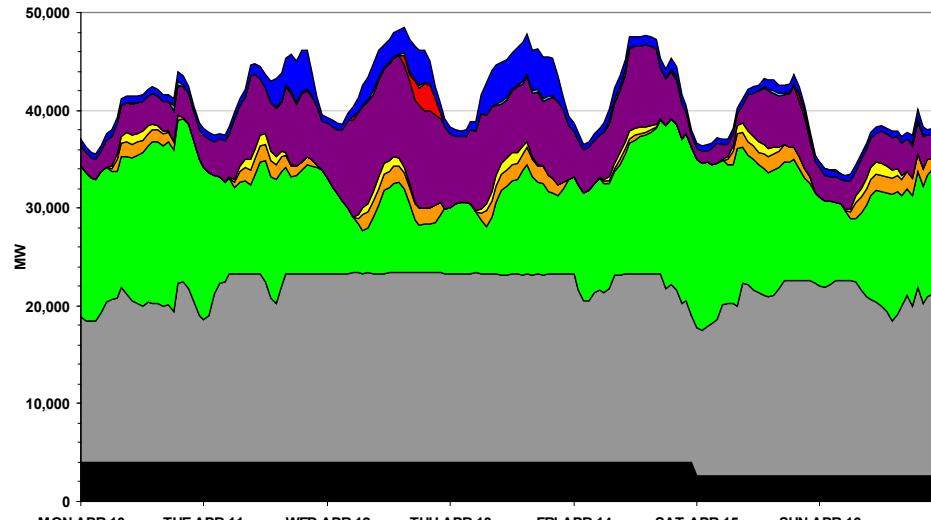
No wind



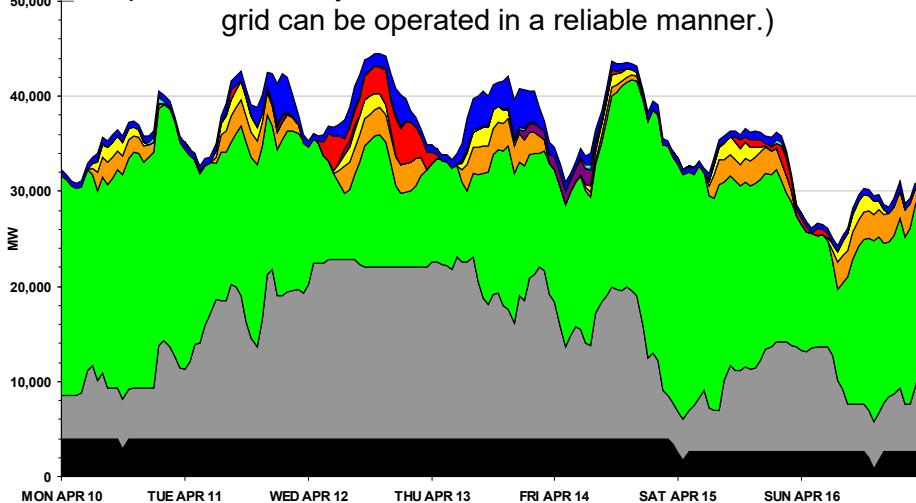
10% wind



20% wind



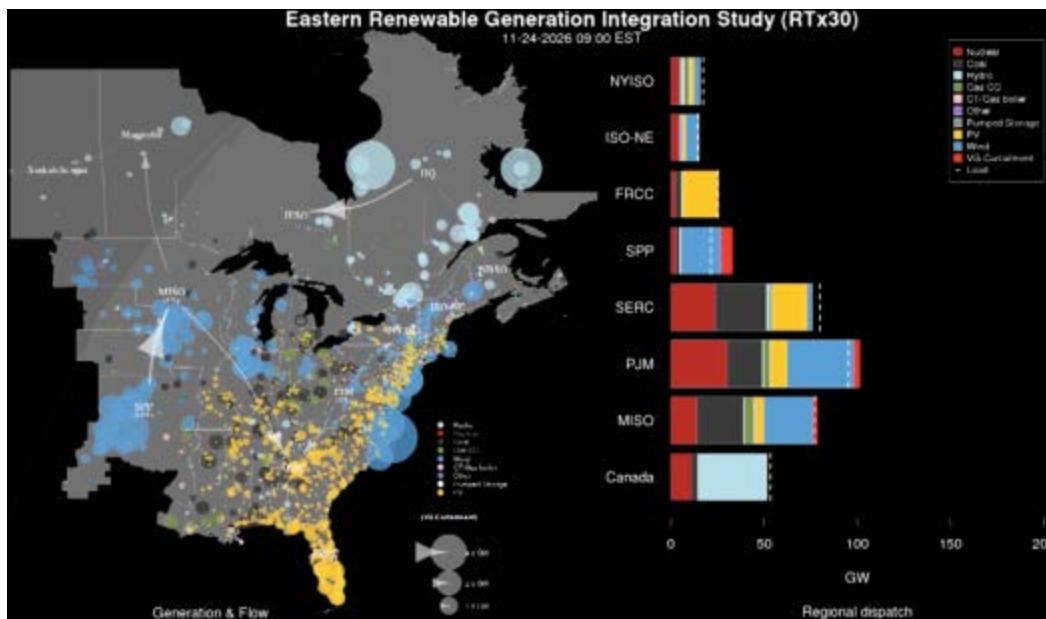
30% wind (Coal is cycling, and nuclear is being impacted; it is likely that wind will need to be curtailed. But the grid can be operated in a reliable manner.)



# Eastern Renewable Generation Integration Study

- **Goals:**

- Operational impact of 30% wind and solar penetration on the Eastern Interconnection at a 5-minute resolution
- Efficacy of mitigation options in managing variability and uncertainty in the system.



- **Operational areas of interest:**

- Reserves
  - Types
  - Quantities
  - Sharing.
- Commitment and dispatch:
  - Day-ahead
  - Four-hour-ahead
  - Real-time.
- Inter-regional transactions:
  - 1-hour
  - 15-minute
  - 5-minute.

## Impact

Demonstrated that very large power systems can operate at a 5-min dispatch with 30% VRE.

Source: NREL, Eastern Renewable Energy Integration Study (ERGIS) (2016),  
<http://www.nrel.gov/grid/ergis.html>

We have done the research and demonstrated that achieving 30% VRE is possible with minimal system changes.

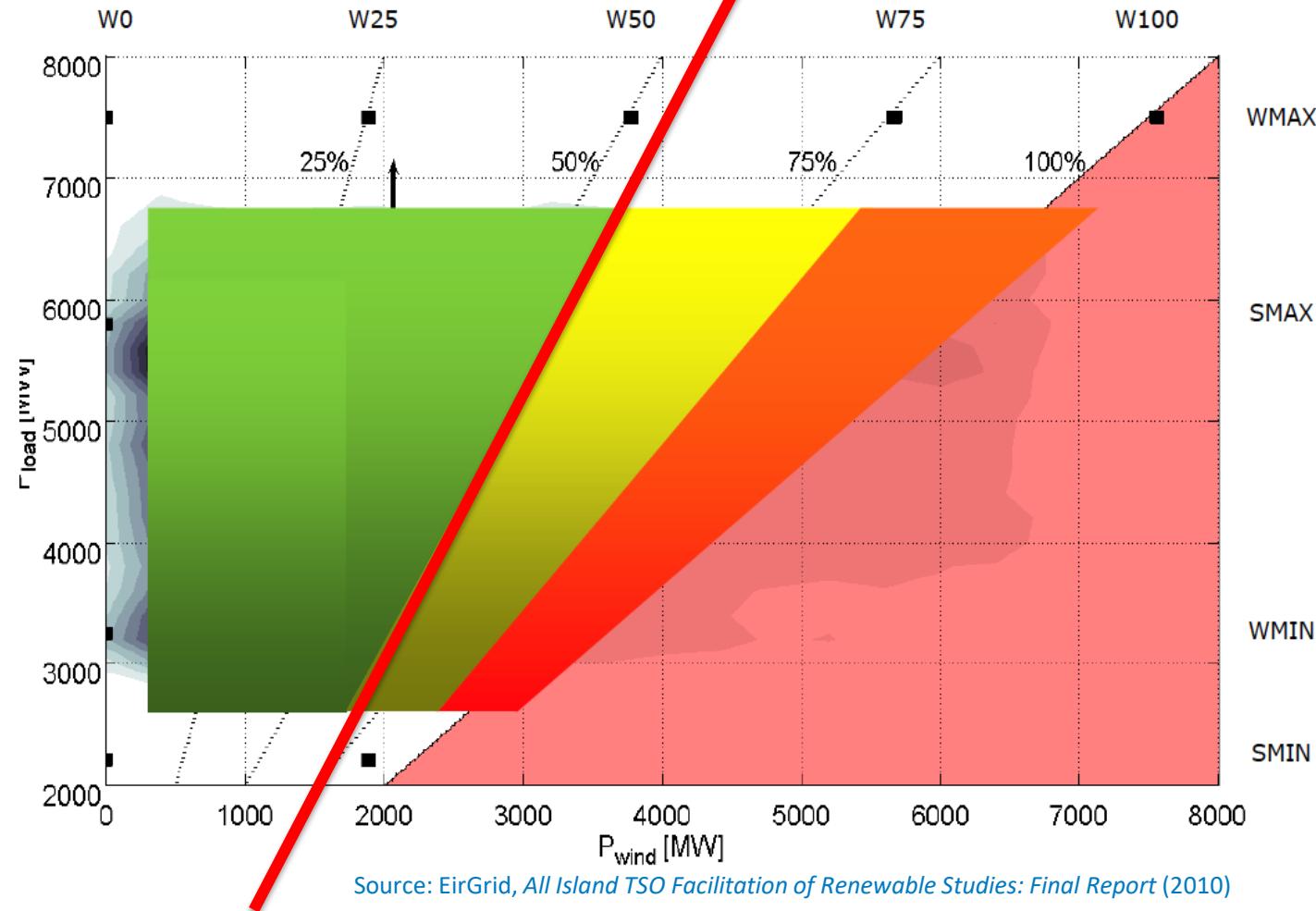
What do we need to do to achieve very high levels (more than 50%) of wind and solar integration?

# Examples of High Levels of VRE: Case Study—Ireland

## Ireland:

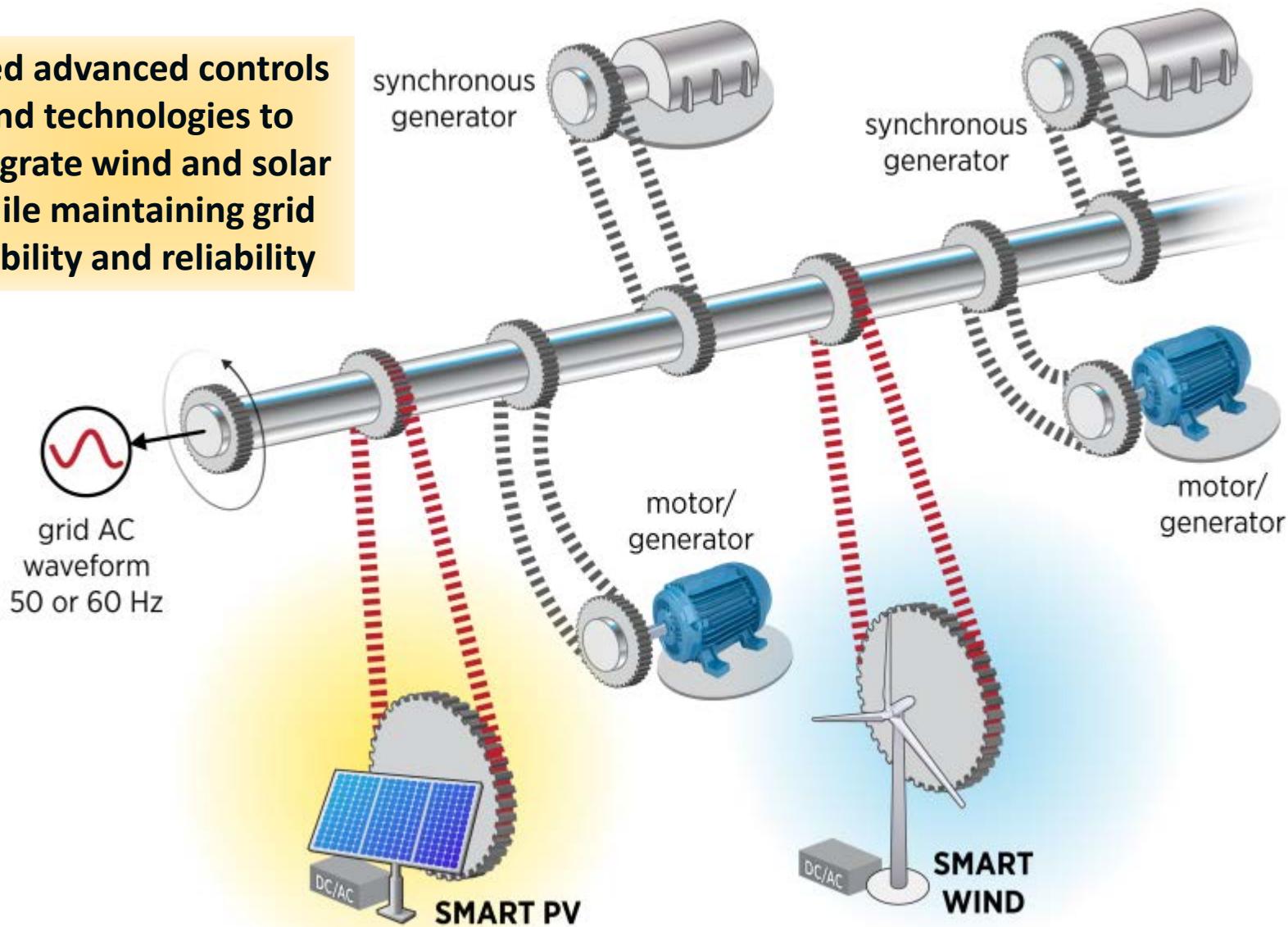
- **23% wind on annual energy basis (2015)**
- Island power system (6.5-GW peak).

Currently limiting grid to  
**55% instantaneous**  
nonsynchronous penetration



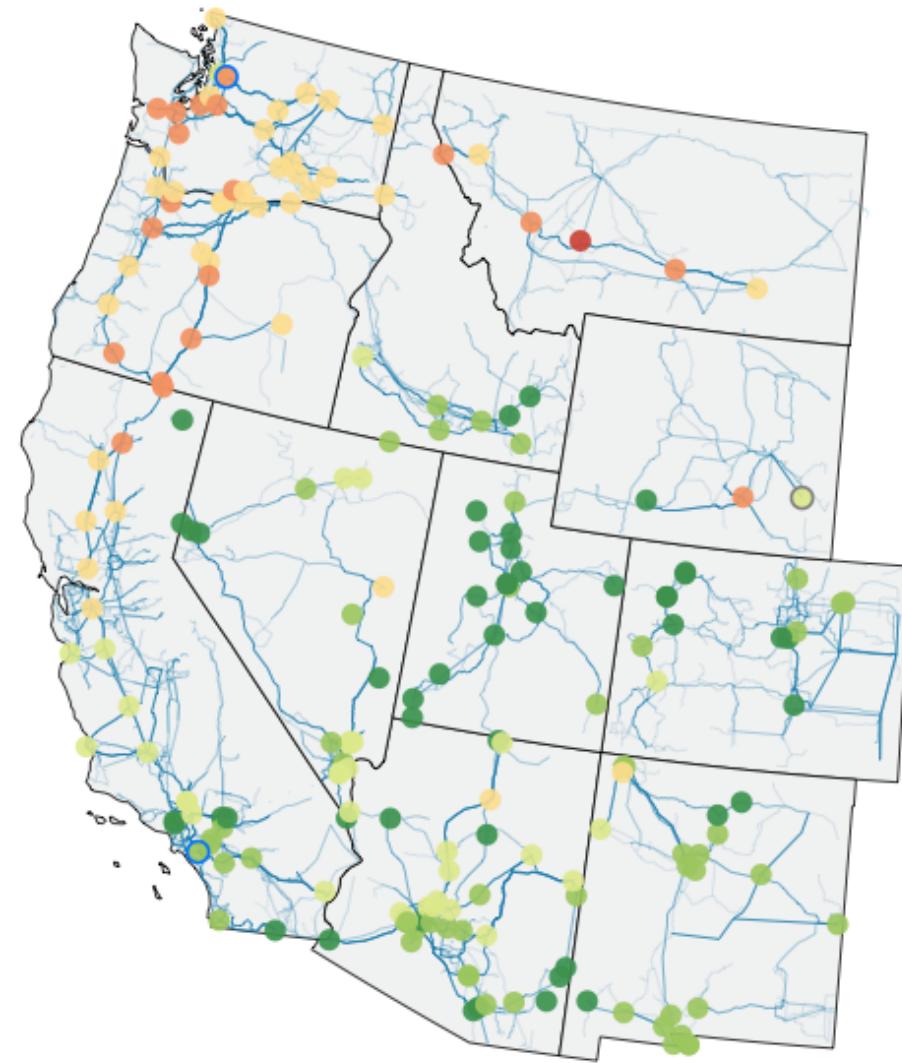
# High Renewable Penetrations Require Paradigm Change in Power System Operation

**Need advanced controls and technologies to integrate wind and solar while maintaining grid stability and reliability**

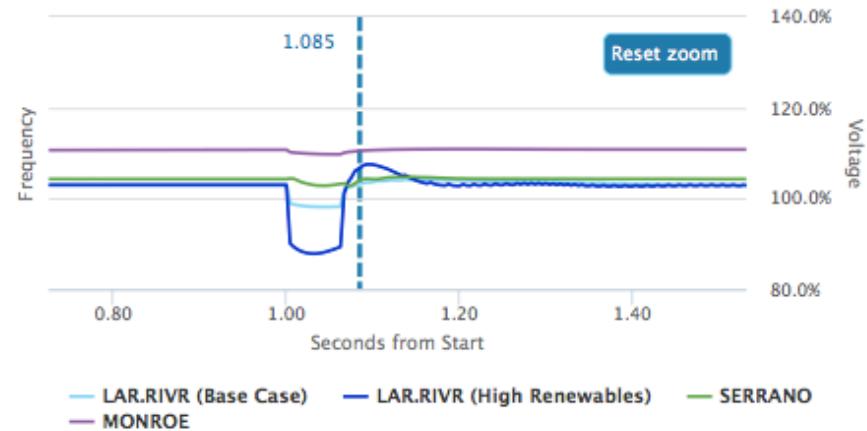


# Western Wind and Solar Integration Study: Phase 3– Frequency Response

## Western Wind and Solar Integration Study



- **Wind power plants:** voltage regulation and ride-through
- **Utility-scale PV:** voltage regulation and ride-through
- **Rooftop PV:** embedded in composite load model, no controls.



### Impact:

Western Interconnection can survive a major contingency outage with 30% variable generation (inverter-based).

Source: N.W. Miller et al., WWSIS: Phase 3A, <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy16osti/64822.pdf>

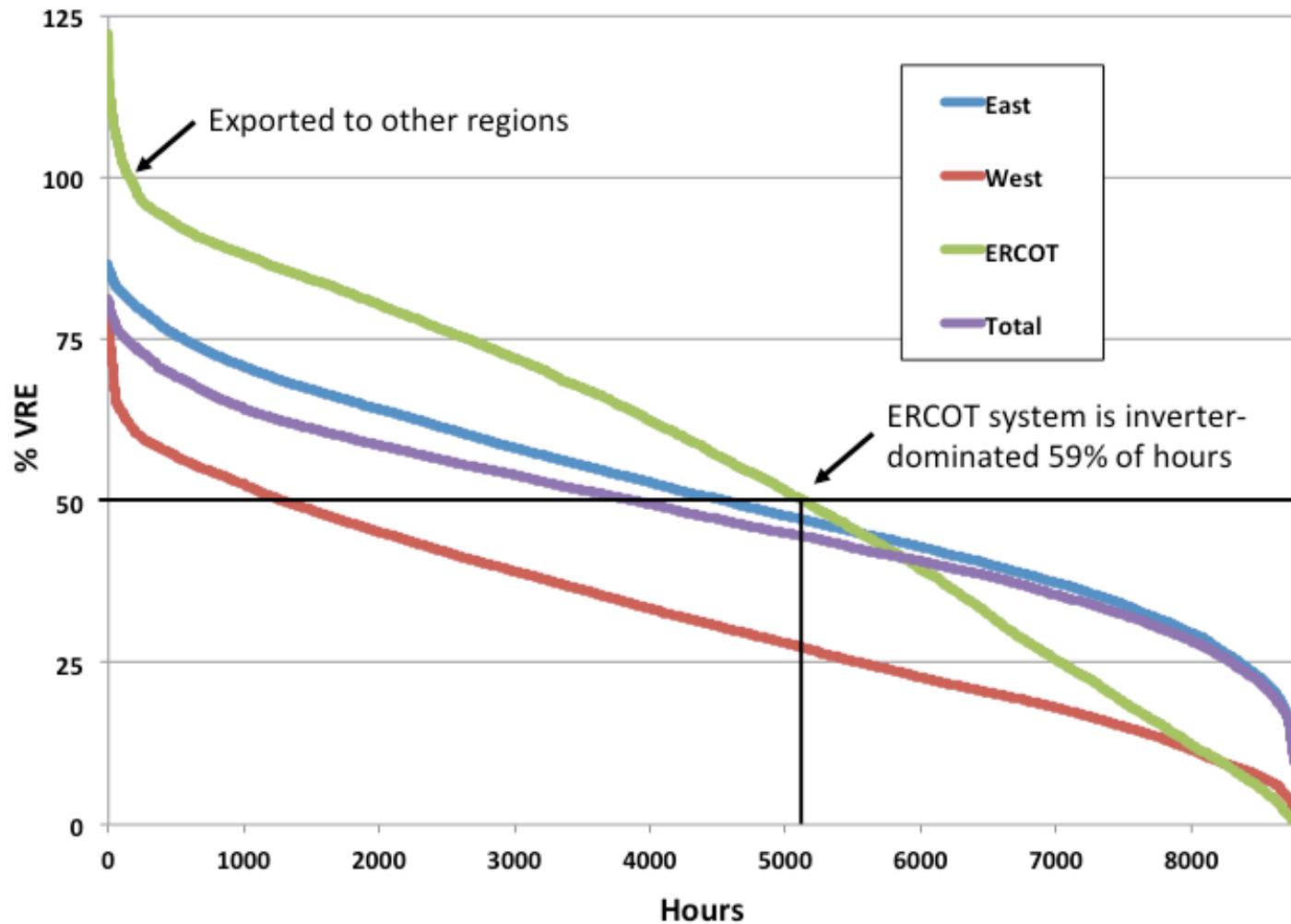
# Let's Look at Really High Levels of VRE

## Renewable Electricity Futures (REF) Study

REF examined renewable penetrations from 30%–90% across entire United States.

All renewables were considered.

Various transmission scenarios were explored.

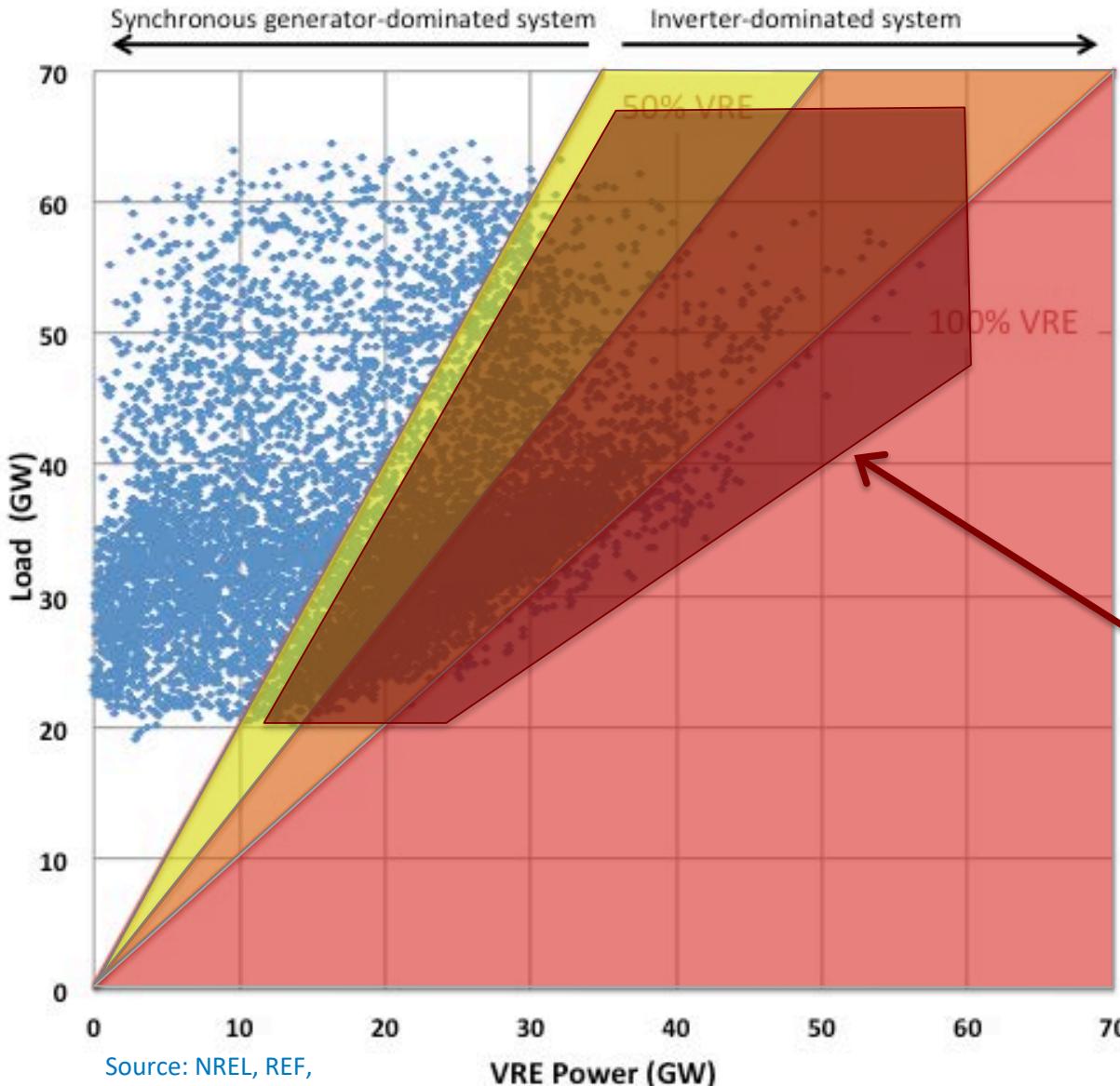


Source: NREL, REF,

[http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/re\\_futures/](http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/re_futures/)

VRE penetration curve for three interconnects and total REF study  
at 80% VRE transmission constrained scenario

# Renewable Electricity Futures Study: 80%—ERCOT



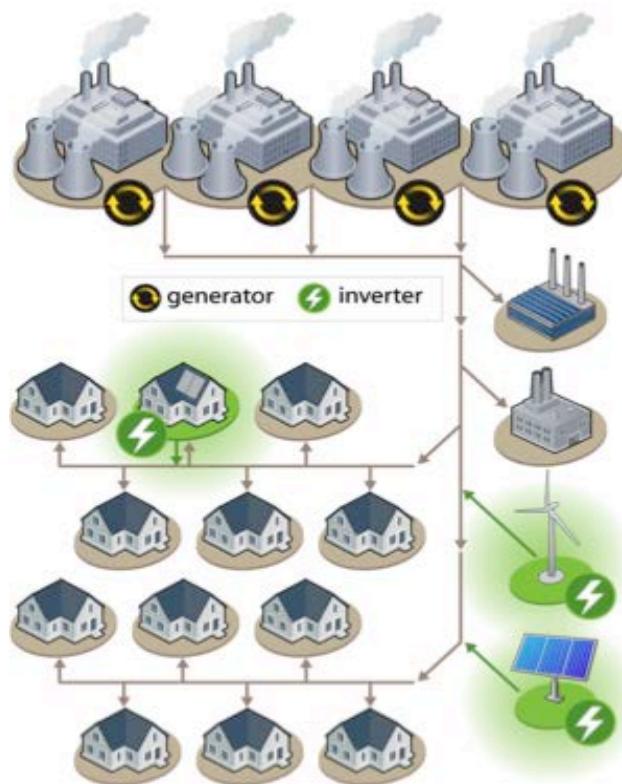
VRE vs. load for only the Electric Reliability Council of Texas (ERCOT) system at the 80% VRE transmission constrained scenario

To operate AC power grids in this region, the dependence on the physical characteristics of synchronous generator grid operation needs to change: smart inverters need to provide grid services.

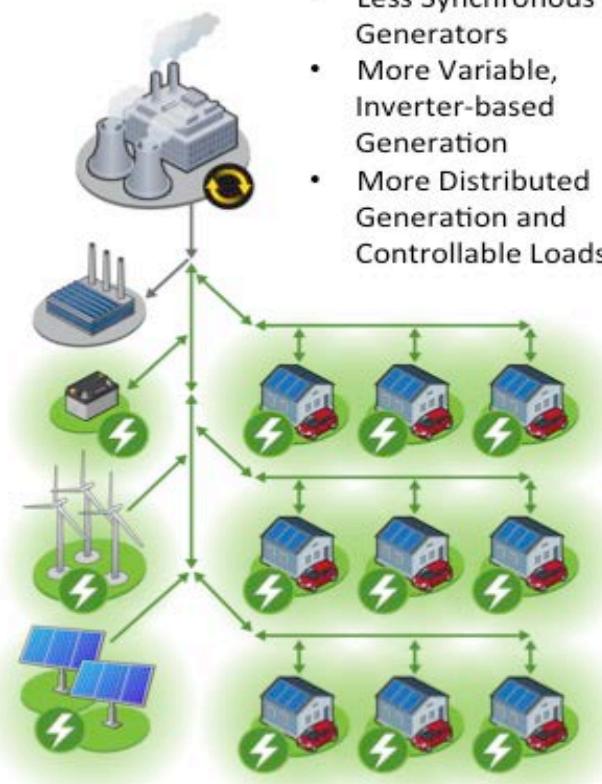
# Challenges and Solutions of Operating Power Systems with Very High Levels of Variable Renewable Energy

# Technical Challenges with High Levels of VRE

## Present Grid



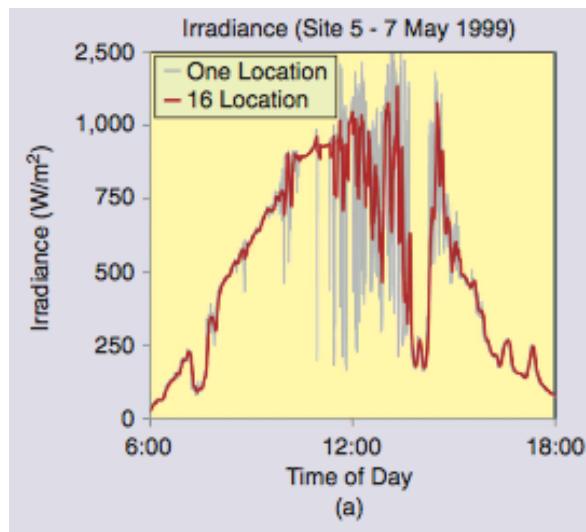
## Future Grid



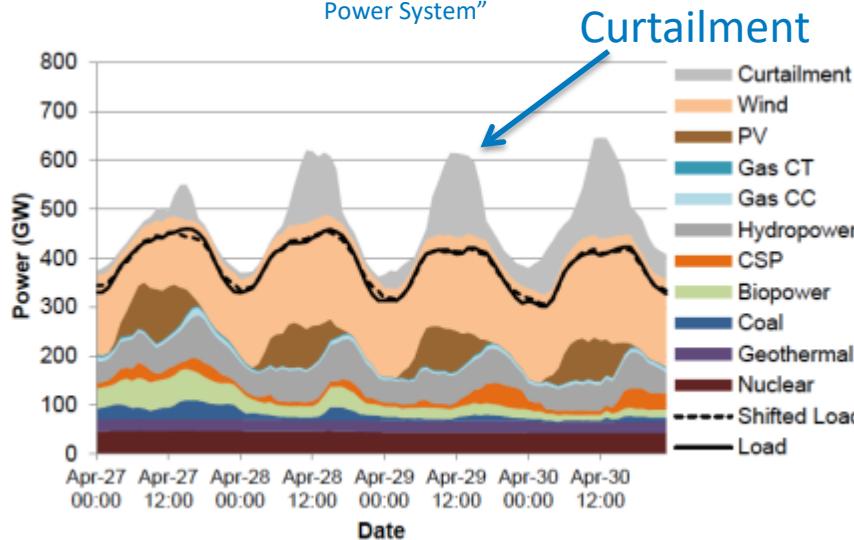
- Variability and uncertainty of VRE
- Power system stability.

- Protection coordination
- Unintentional islanding
- Black-start capability.

# Variability and Uncertainty of VRE



Source: A Mills et al., "Dark Shadows: Understanding Variability and Uncertainty of Photovoltaics for Integration with the Electric Power System"



Source: NREL, REF:

80% Renewables Case, [http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/re\\_futures/](http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/re_futures/)

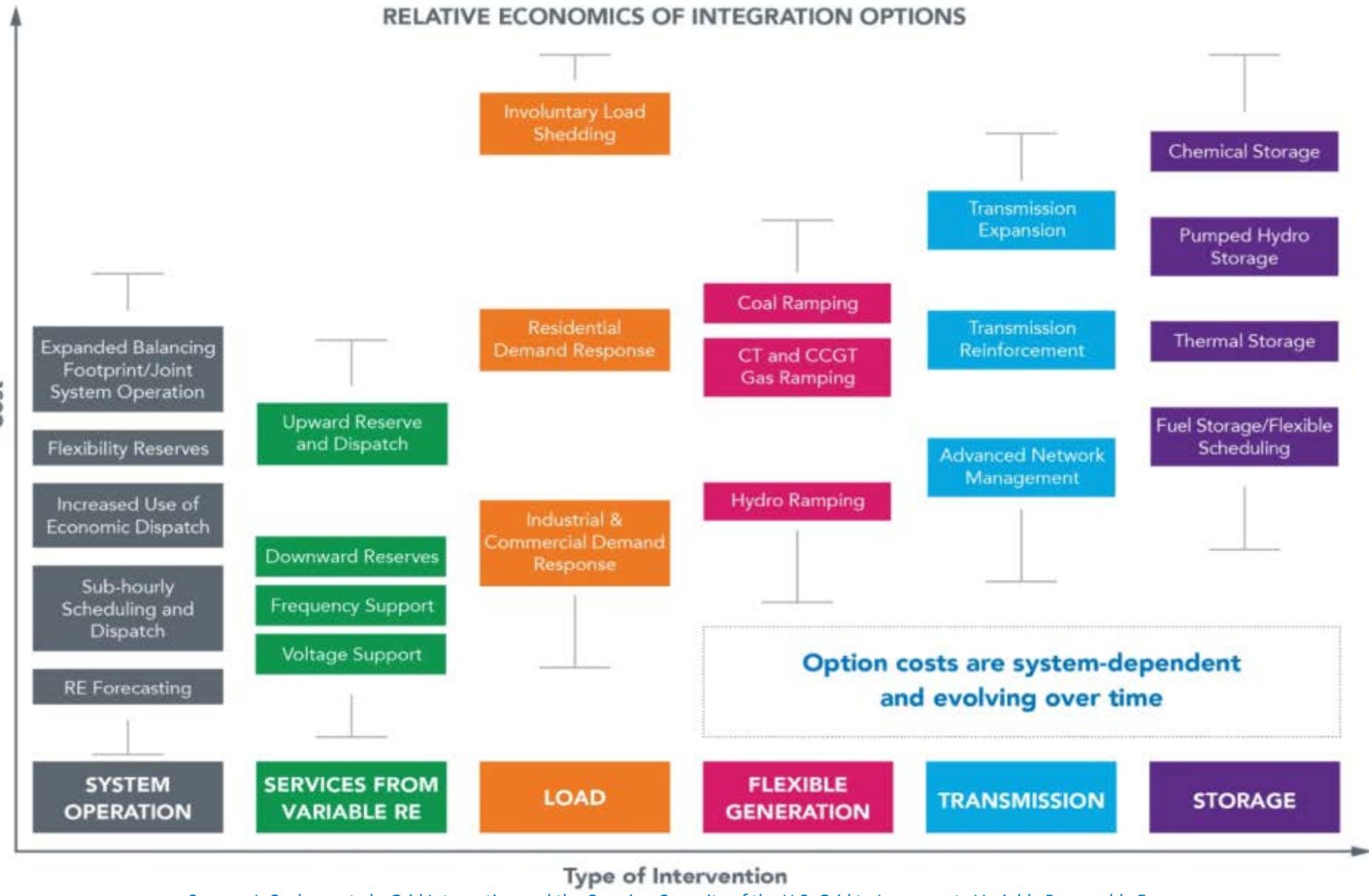
## Challenges:

- **Energy shifting** (VRE produces energy when resources are available—variable and uncertain)
- **Forecasting** (renewable resources and load).

## Solutions:

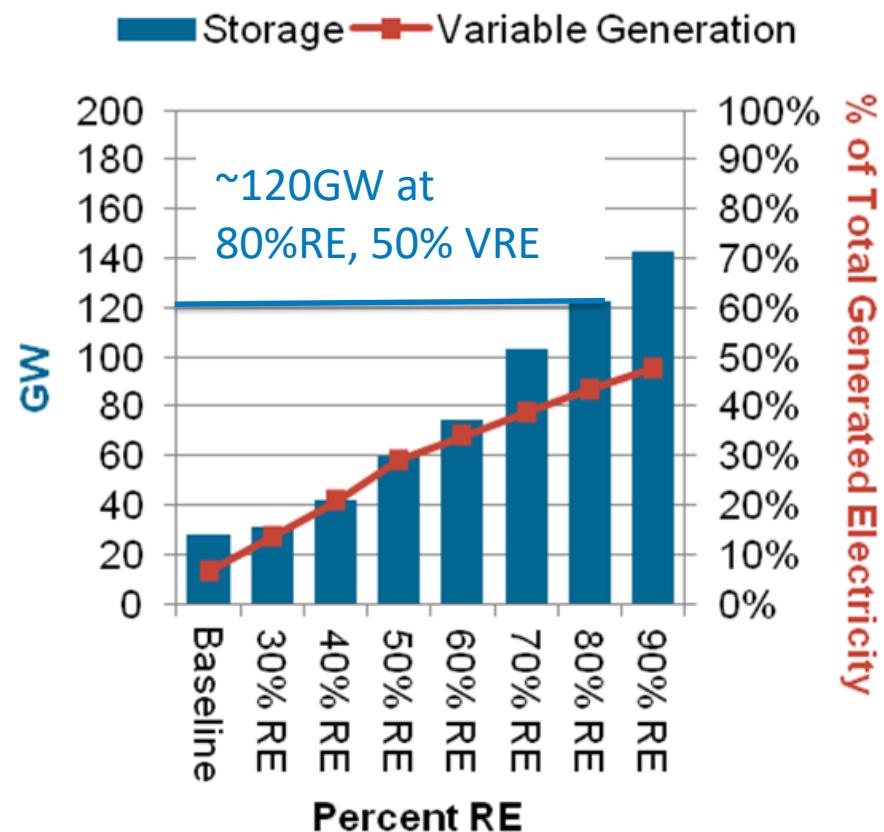
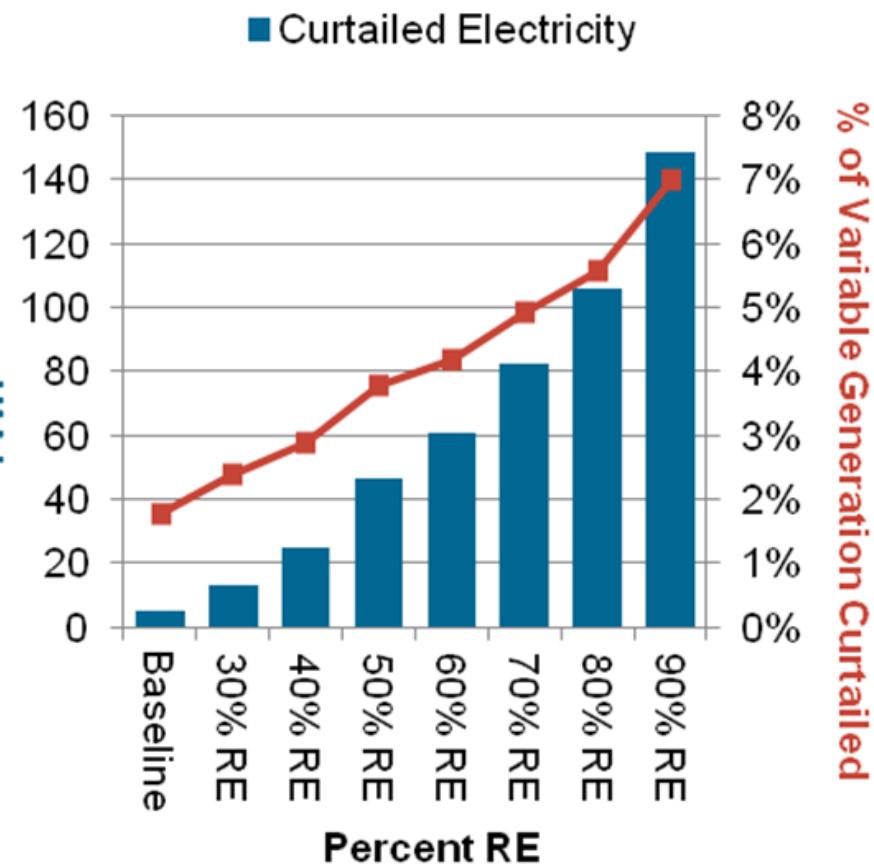
- Utilize geographic diversity.
- Utilize flexible conventional generation.
- Increase sharing among balancing authority areas.
- Expand the transmission system.
- Curtail excess VRE production.
- Coordinate flexible loads (active demand response).
- Enhance VRE and load forecasting.
- Add electrical storage.
- Interact with other energy carriers.

# Grid Flexibility Options



Source: J. Cochran et al., *Grid Integration and the Carrying Capacity of the U.S. Grid to Incorporate Variable Renewable Energy*,  
<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy15osti/62607.pdf>

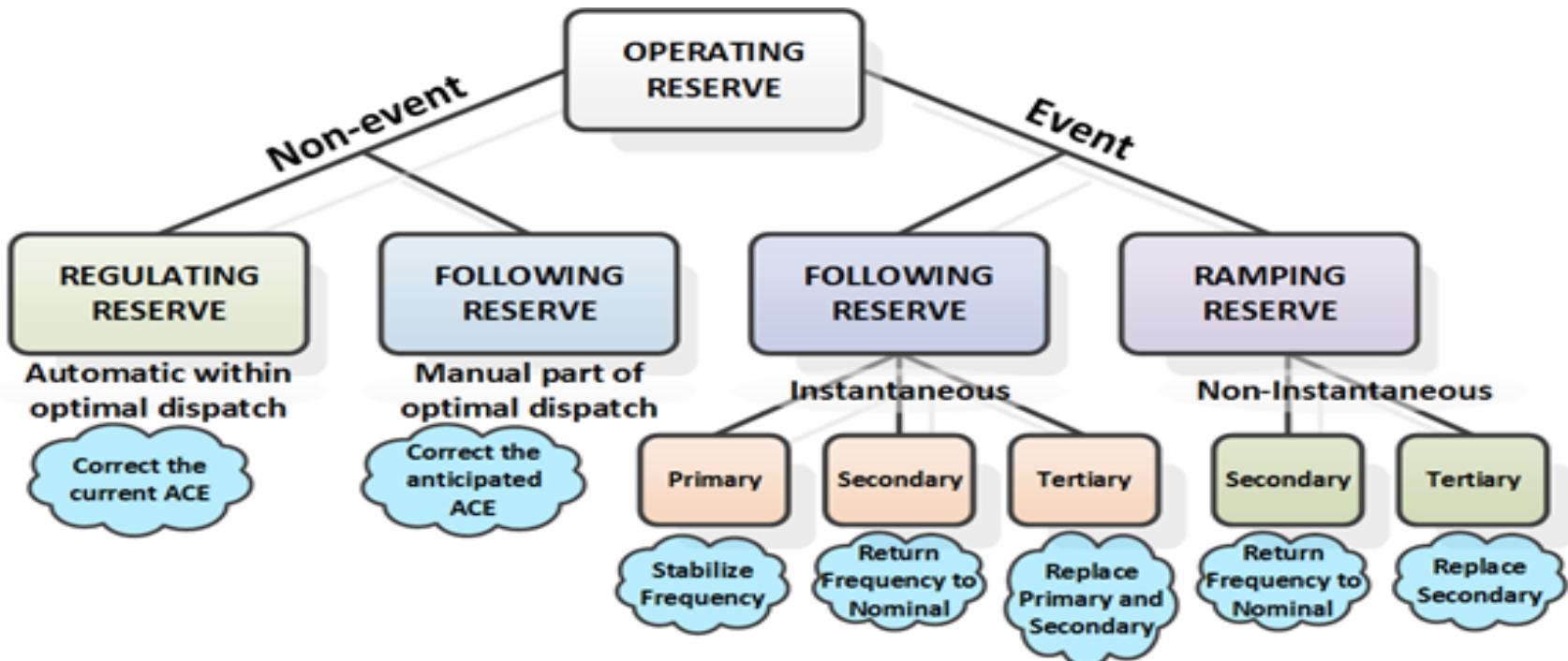
# VRE Curtailment and Energy Storage: Renewable Electricity Futures Study



By 2050, storage capacity was estimated at 28 GW in the Low-Demand Baseline scenario, 31 GW in the 30% RE scenario, 74 GW in the 60% RE scenario, **and 142 GW in the 90% RE scenario.** Currently, there is 21 GW of pumped hydro in the United States.

Source: NREL, REF,  
[http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/re\\_futures/](http://www.nrel.gov/analysis/re_futures/)

# Power System Stability



## Challenges:

- **Transient and dynamic stability** (loss of system inertia could reduce ability to respond to disturbances—need ride-through capabilities in VRE)
- **Frequency regulation** (need primary, secondary, and tertiary response from VRE)
- **Volt/VAR regulation** (need ability to locally change voltage to stay within nominal limits)

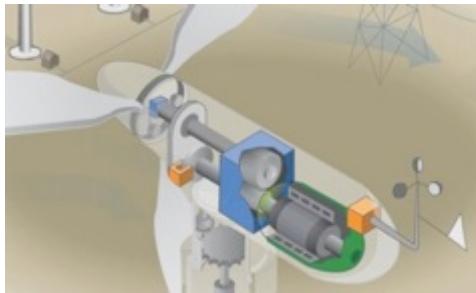
## Solutions:

- Use smart inverters with advanced functionality.
- Mimic synchronous generator characteristics.
- Provide active power, reactive power, voltage, and frequency control.

# Active Power Control from Wind and Solar Inverters

## Technology addressed:

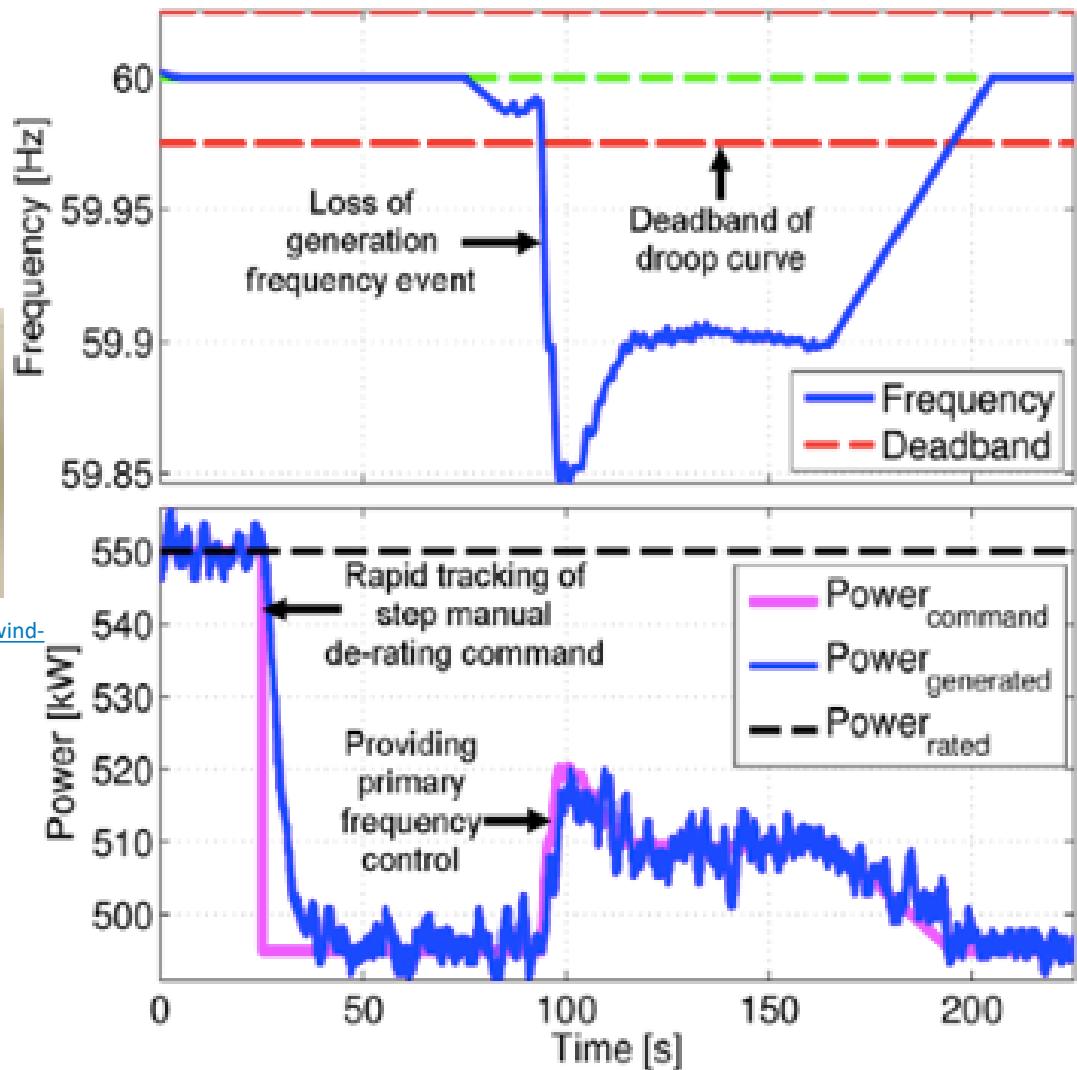
- Understanding how variable generation (wind and solar) can provide primary and secondary reserves



Source: DOE, How Do Wind Turbines Work?, <https://energy.gov/eere/wind/how-do-wind-turbines-work>

## Impact:

- Inertial control, primary frequency control, and automatic generation control (AGC) from wind and solar are feasible with negligible impacts on loading.



Source: E. Ela et al., *Active Power Controls from Wind Power: Bridging the Gaps*, <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy14osti/60574.pdf>

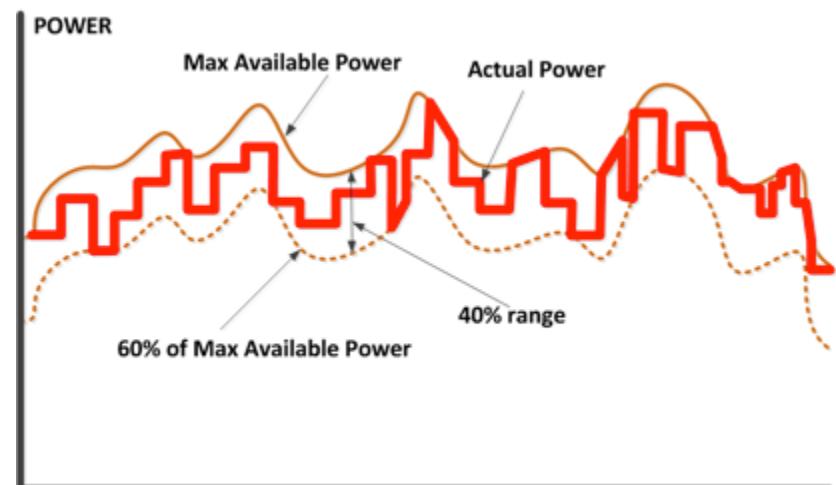
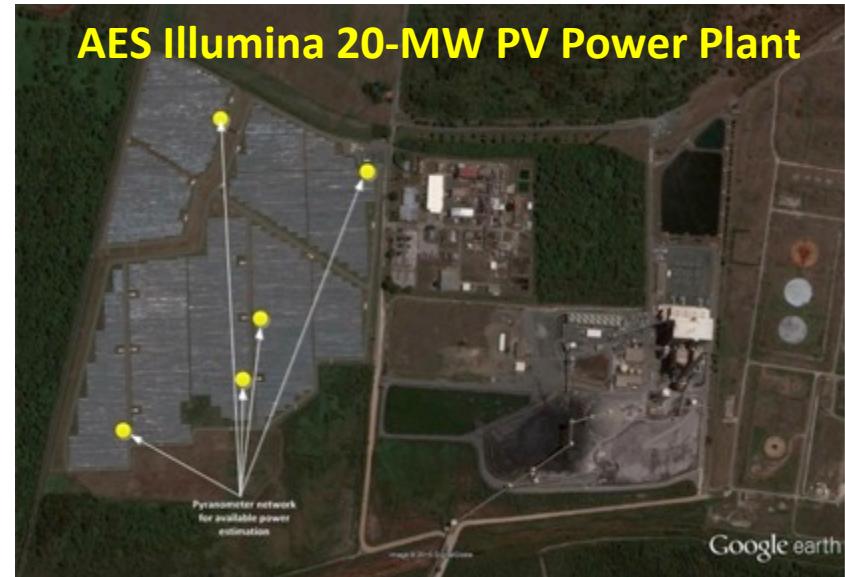
# Photovoltaic Solar Provides Grid Services for Puerto Rico

## Technology addressed:

- **PV participated in AGC.**
  - Followed AGC signal within 40% of available power.
- **PV provided frequency droop response.**
  - Both up and down-regulation
  - 5% and 3% symmetric droop.
- **PV provided fast frequency response.**
  - Evaluated plant's ability to deploy all reserves within 500 ms
  - Three new controls were implemented and validated.

### Impact:

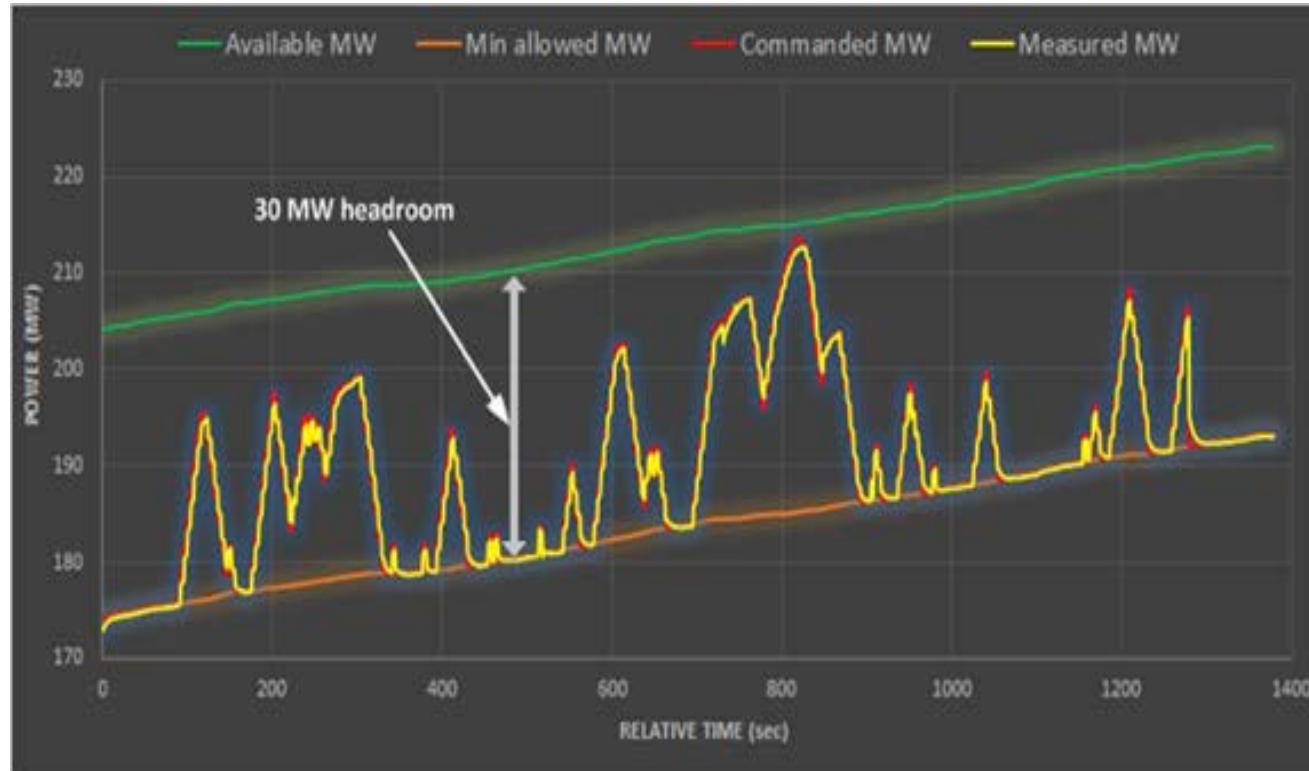
First-of-a-kind real-world experiment using PV systems to maintain large grid stability.



Source: V. Gevorgian and B. O'Neill, *Advanced Grid-Friendly Controls Demonstration Project for Utility-Scale PV Power Plants*, <http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy16osti/65368.pdf>

# Large-Scale Photovoltaic Plant Regulation

NREL/FirstSolar/CAISO experiment: 300-MW plant following AGC signal



300-MW PV Plant in California

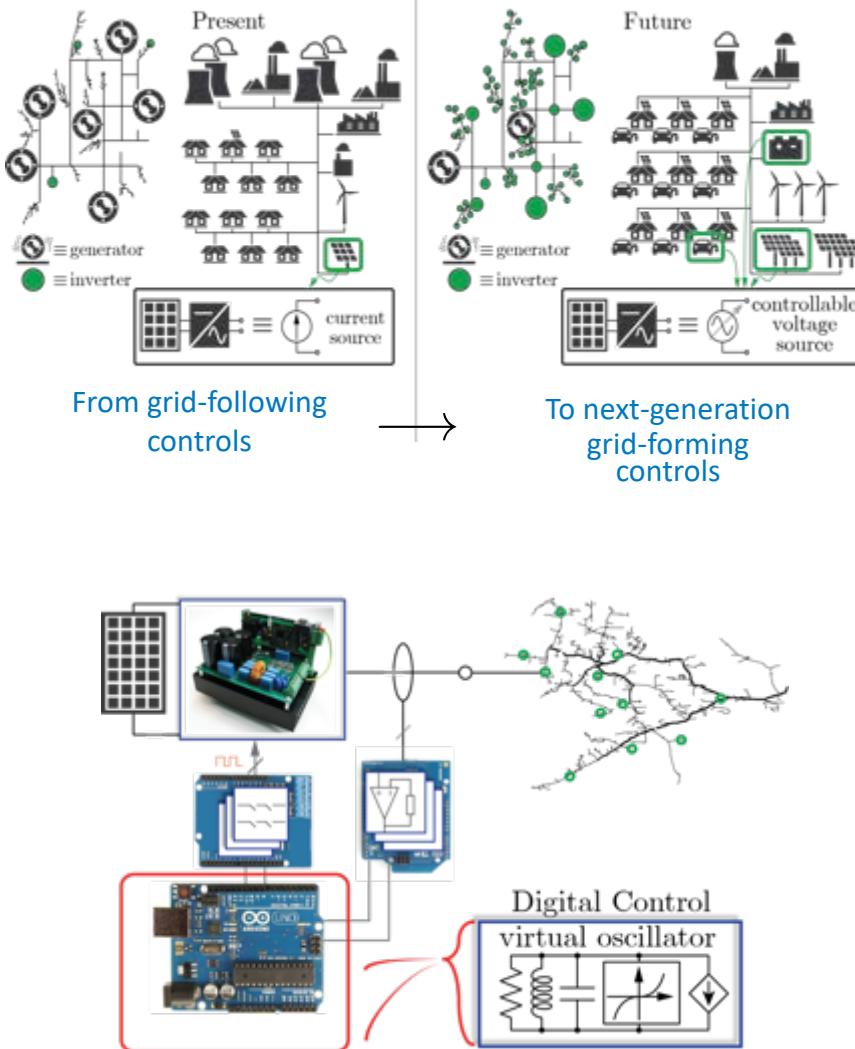


We demonstrated that PV plants (and wind power plants) can deliver essential grid services.

Photo from First Solar

Source: C. Loutan et al., *Demonstration of Essential Reliability Services by a 300-MW Solar Photovoltaic Power Plant*,  
<http://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy17osti/67799.pdf>

# SunShot: Stabilizing the Grid in 2035 and Beyond



## Project objective:

Develop distributed inverter controllers that provide a low-resistance path from the current inertia-dominated grid paradigm to a future grid paradigm dominated by low-inertia power systems with hundreds of GWs of PV integration.

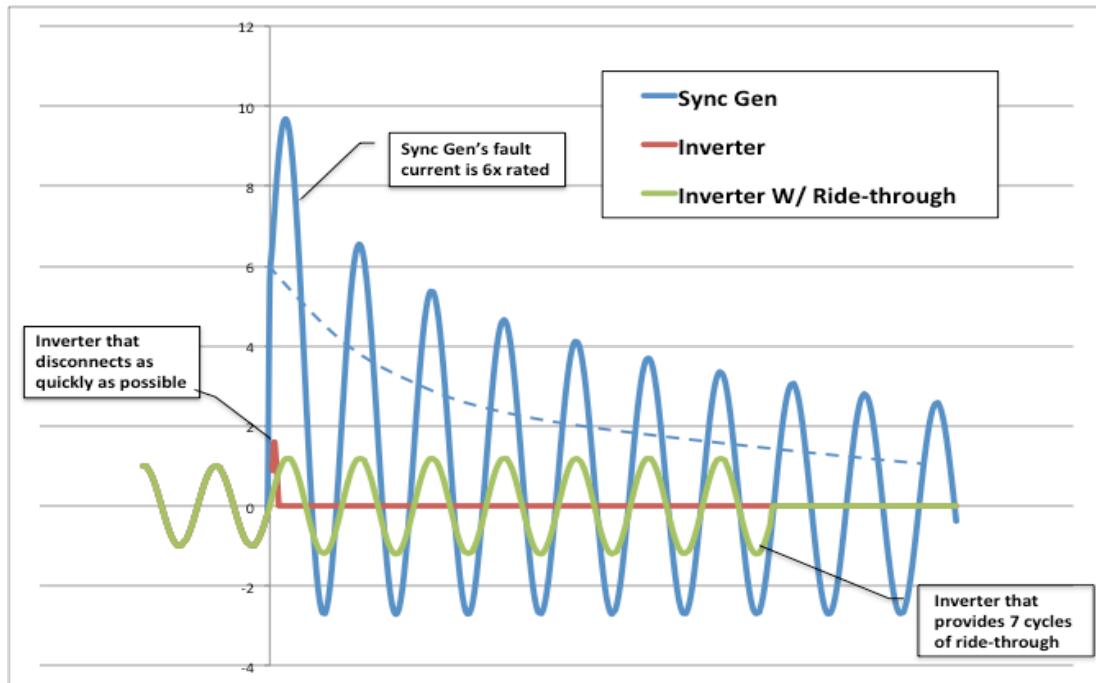
## Technical approach:

- Model, analyze, and design framework for grid-stabilizing PV inverter controllers.
- Design, build, and prototype digital microcontrollers to implement proposed PV inverter controllers.

## Project outcomes:

- Enable low-inertia and distributed infrastructures with massive PV and storage utilization.
- Perform demonstration on commercial microinverters.

# Additional Technical Challenges



Source: B. Kroposki et al., "Achieving a 100% Renewable Grid – Operating Electric Power Systems with Extremely High Levels of Variable Renewable Energy," <http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/7866938/>

## Challenges:

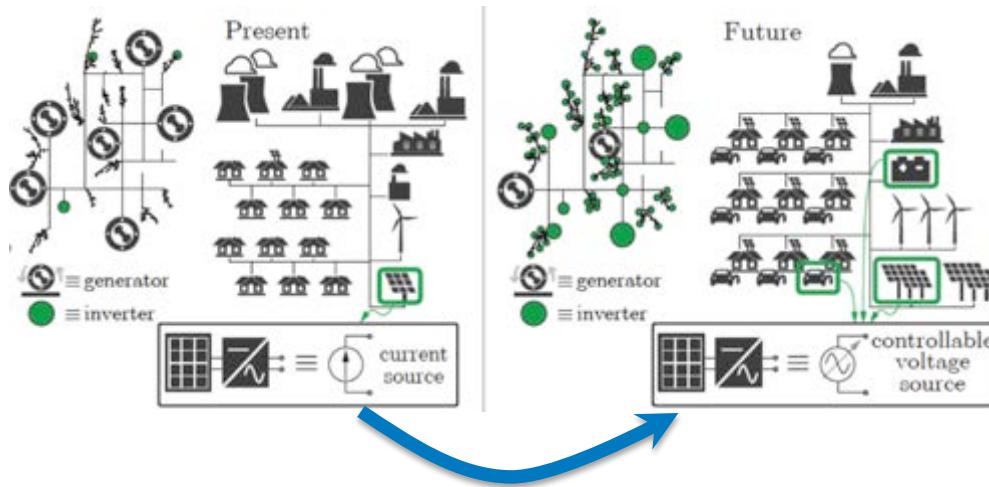
- **Protection coordination** (loss of high short-circuit current may effect protection schemes)
- **Unintentional islanding** (need methods to protect against unintentional islanding)
- **Black-start**—ability to restore system from outage
- **Distributed controls.**

## Solutions:

- **Protection coordination**—synchronous condensers, new protection schemes
- **Unintentional islanding**—New artificial intelligence options
- **Black-start**—New system restoration methods
- **Distributed controls**—new control architectures and management systems.

# Challenge: Control and Optimization of Millions of Devices

As we migrate from a centrally controlled, synchronous generator-based grid to a highly distributed, inverter-based system...

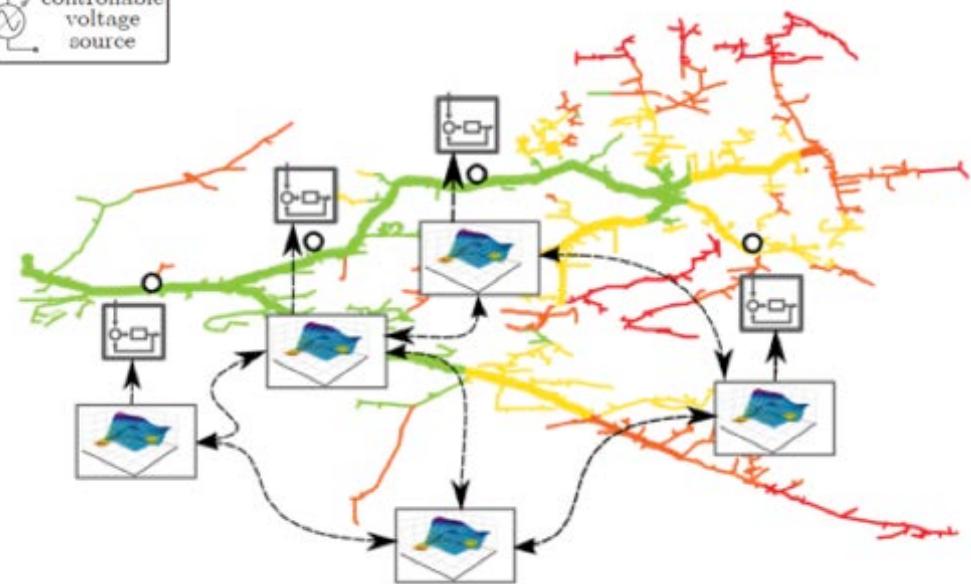


We need smart inverters with advanced functionality to maintain grid stability and...

Improved optimization for millions of controllable devices in the grid.

## Research Needs

- Control theory
- Advanced control and optimization algorithms
- Imbedded controllers in devices
- Linkage to advanced distribution management systems (ADMS)
- Validation of concepts and deployment.

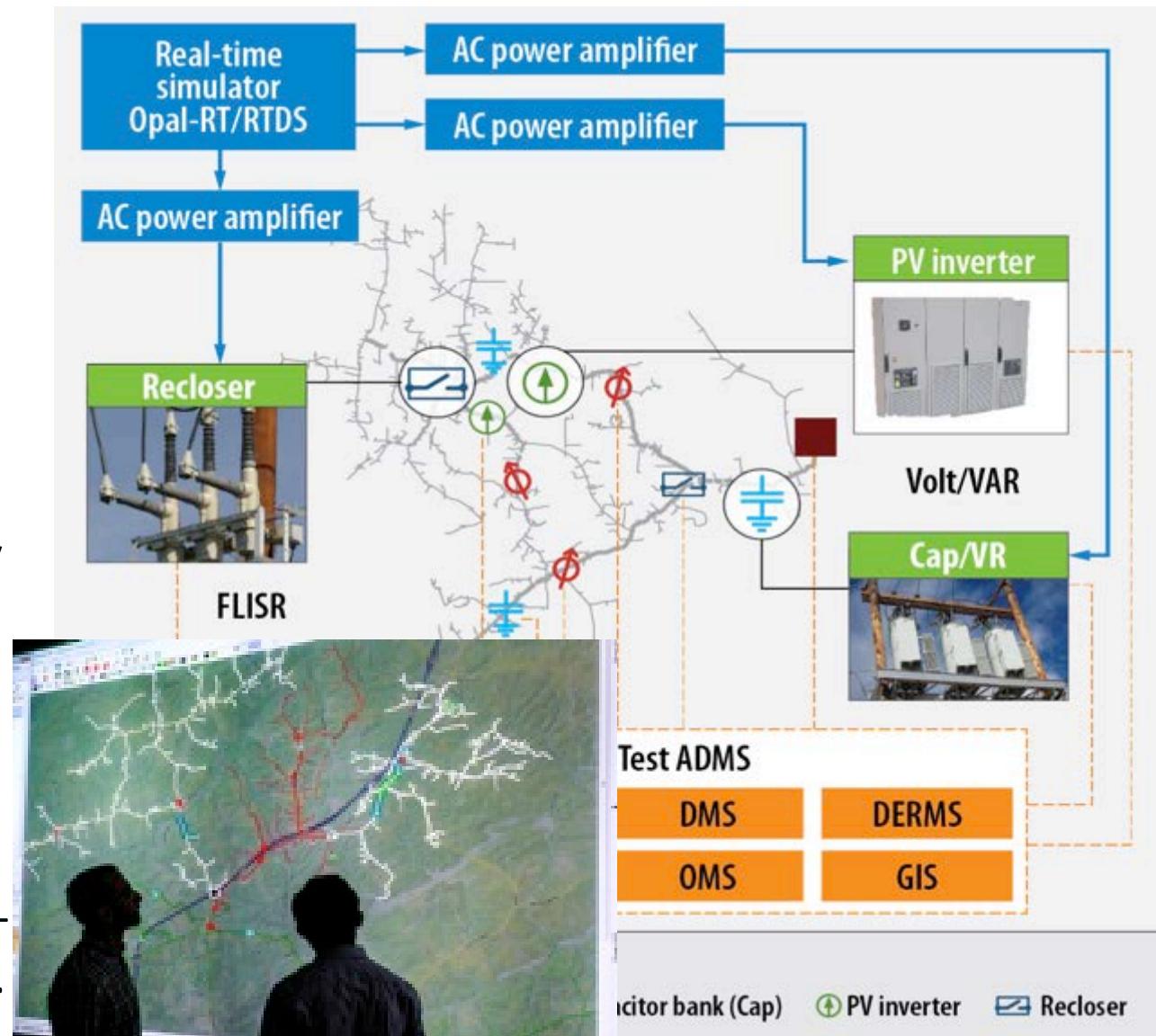


Source: ARPA-E,  
<http://www.arpa-e.energy.gov/?q=arpa-e-programs/nodes>

Source: E. Dall'Anese et al.,  
<http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpl/articleDetails.jsp?arnumber=6920041>

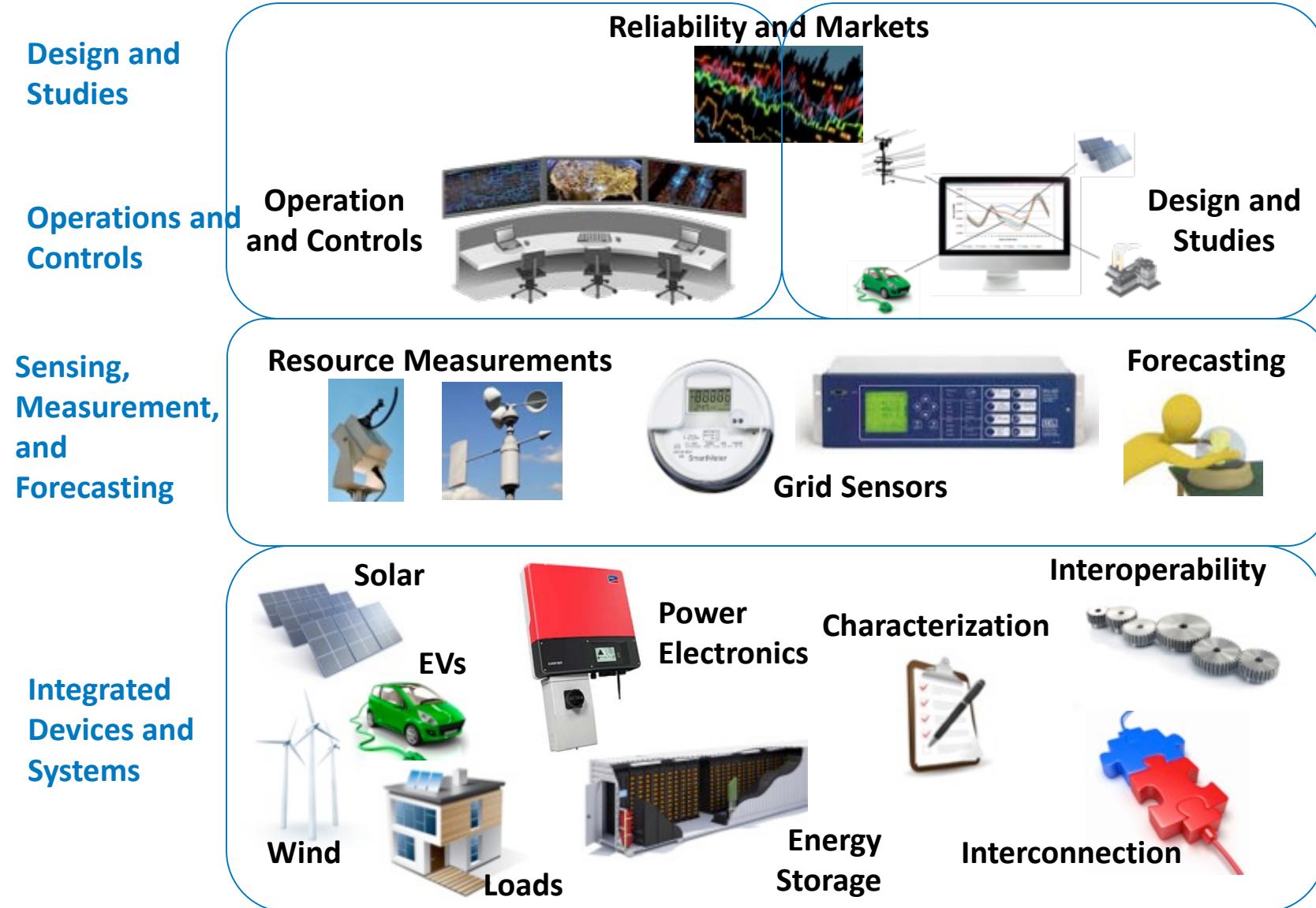
# Advanced Distribution Management System Test Bed

- NREL is establishing a **national, vendor-neutral** ADMS test bed to **accelerate industry development and adoption of ADMS capabilities.**
- This will enable utility partners, vendors, and researchers to evaluate existing and future ADMS use cases and integrate with hardware-in-the-loop (HIL) equipment.



Credit: NREL

# NREL Power Systems Research



# Energy Systems Integration Facility

<http://www.nrel.gov/esif>



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

Unique capabilities:

- Multiple parallel AC and DC experimental busses (MW power level) with grid simulation and loads
- Flexible interconnection points for electricity, thermal, and fuels
- Medium-voltage (15-kV) microgrid area
- Virtual utility operations center and visualization rooms
- Smart grid lab for advanced communications and control
- Interconnectivity to external field sites for data feeds and model validation
- Petascale high-performance computing (HPC) and data management system in showcase energy-efficient data center
- MW-scale power hardware-in-the-loop simulation capability to evaluate grid scenarios with high penetrations of clean energy technologies.



Credit: NREL

Shortening the time  
between innovation  
and practice



Credit: NREL

# Energy Systems Integration Facility Cont.

Rooftop PV



Energy Storage

Residential,  
community  
and grid-scale storage

Smart buildings and  
controllable loads



HPC and Data Center



Energy Systems  
Integration  
Fuel cells, electrolyzers



Outdoor Areas  
EVs, transformers,  
capacitor banks,  
voltage regulators



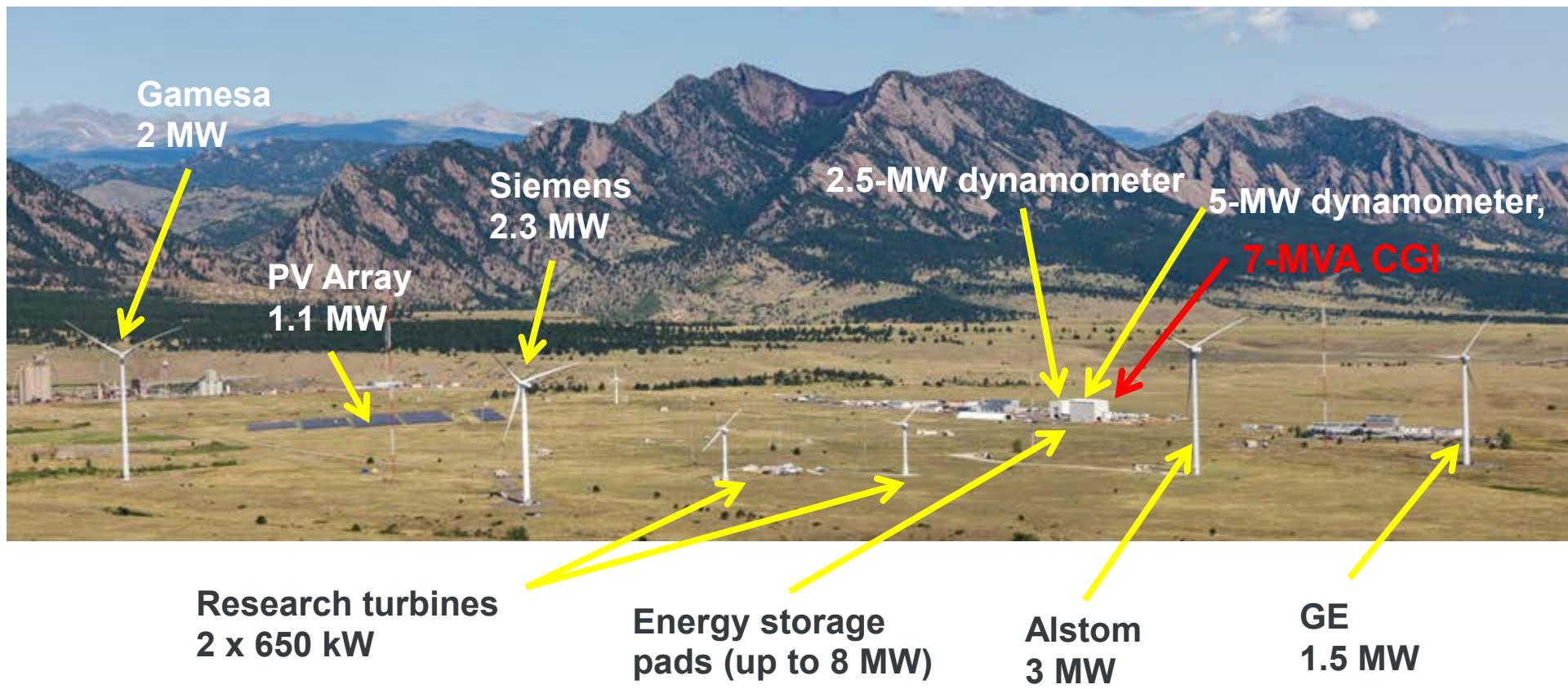
Power Systems Integration  
Grid simulators—microgrids

ADMS



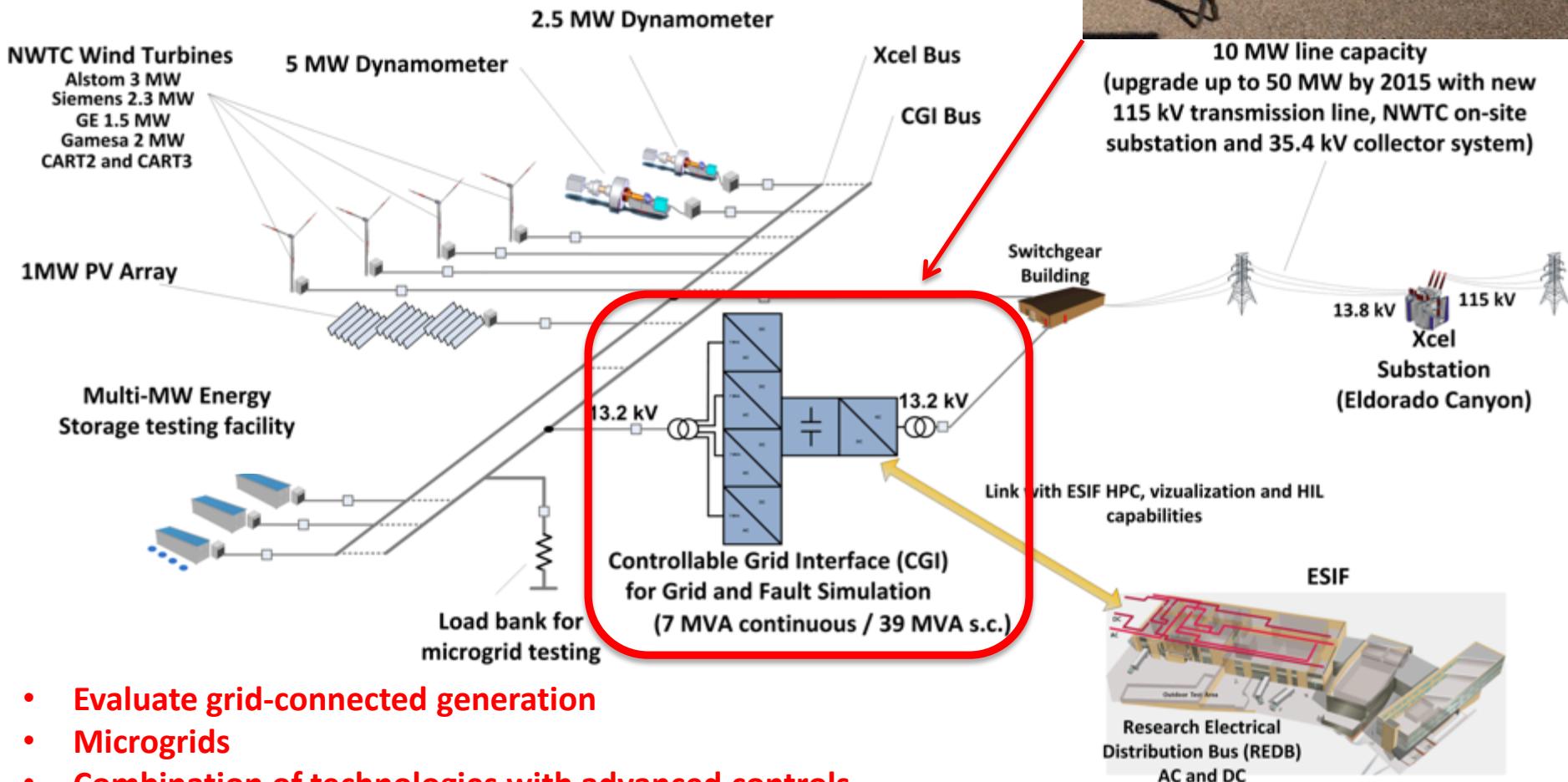
# National Wind Technology Center: Large-Scale Grid Research

- Total of 11 MW of variable renewable generation currently installed at the National Wind Technology Center (NWTC)
- Many small wind turbines (less than 100 kW) are installed as well
- 2.5-MW and 5-MW dynamometers
- 7-MVA controllable grid interface (CGI) for grid integration experiments
- Multi-megawatt energy storage evaluation capability ready for use.

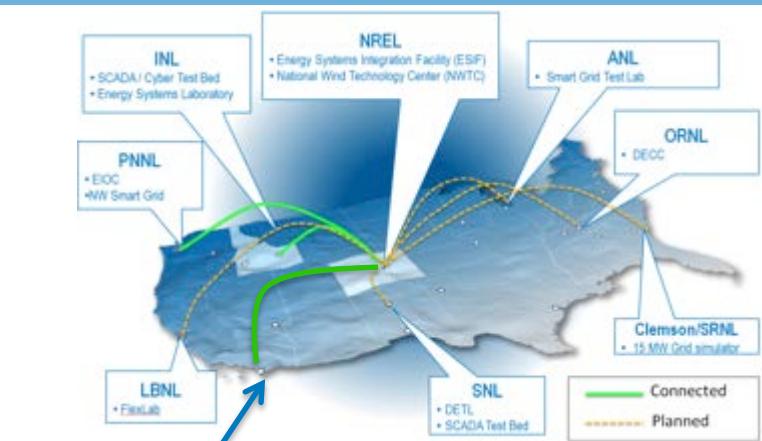


# Controllable Grid Interface

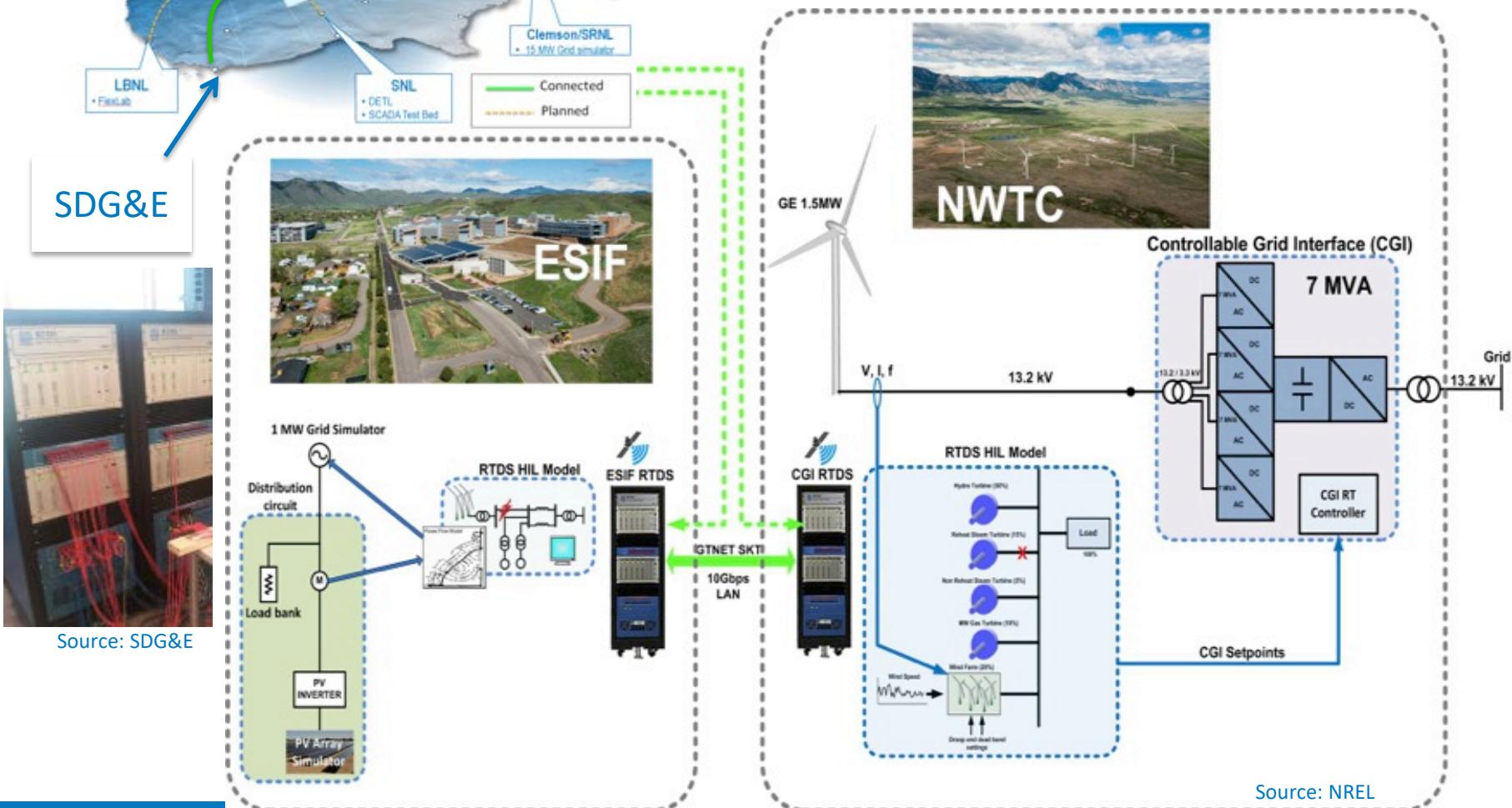
**Highly flexible and configurable  
system-level multi-megawatt  
evaluation platform**



# Remote Hardware-in-the-Loop Capability



**IMPACT:** First-of-a-kind remote HIL experiments increase capability without large investments in physical equipment at multiple sites.



# Research Needs in Power Systems to Achieve 100% VRE

## **Technology:**

- Advanced functionality embedded in wind and PV inverters needs to **provide all grid services** and maintain stable grid operations (act like synchronous generators).
- Grid codes and standards are needed that enforce grid stability (updates to standards from the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers and North American Electric Reliability Corporation)
- Need cost-effective energy storage methods (storage, flexible demand, power-to-gas).

## **Sensing, measurement, and forecasting:**

- Improved solar, wind, and load forecasting
- Improved communications from measurements and data analytics to derive grid forecasts.

## **Power system operations and controls:**

- Better algorithms and use of grid data to make decisions for power system operations and control
- Transmission and distribution energy management systems need to be able to control millions of distributed devices.

## **Power system design and studies:**

- Need integrated transmission and distribution models to understand complexities and simulate both steady-state and dynamic conditions
- Need models that link electric power grid to other energy infrastructures
- Need models need to incorporate uncertainty and various market designs.



NREL Power Systems Engineering Center  
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# NREL: Providing Solutions to Grid Integration Challenges

Thank You!



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