

Calif. considers sharing control of power grid

By David R. Baker, San Francisco Chronicle

A web of power lines stretching from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific weaves all the western states and Canadian provinces into one vast electric grid.

But control of that grid is anything but unified.

Thirty-eight separate organizations, known as balancing authorities, run their own portions, some as big as states, others as small as counties. The California Independent System Operator, a nonprofit corporation, controls the grid throughout most of the Golden State, its experts monitoring the flow of electricity from a darkened room in Folsom lit by a wall of data screens.

A bill facing debate Tuesday in a California Senate committee – AB 813 – would make a revolutionary change to that decades-old system.

Read the whole story