

Canada Power Report 2011

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Abstracts

The newly published Canada Power Report from BMI forecasts that the country's power consumption will increase from an estimated 548TWh in 2010 to 632TWh by the end of the forecast period, assuming 1.4% average annual growth. After power industry usage and system losses, we see surplus supply rising from the theoretical 72TWh level seen in 2010 to 87TWh by 2020, assuming 1.5% average annual growth in power generation during the period.

Canada's power generation in 2010 is put by BMI at 620TWh, having risen 2.6% from the depressed 2009 level. BMI is forecasting an average 1.4% annual increase to 664TWh between 2011 and 2015. Thermal generation, comprising coal, gas and oil, is expected to grow by 0.8% per annum during the period to 2015, with growth accelerating slightly later in the decade.

Gas-fired generation is expected to rise from an estimated 37.4TWh to 36.2TWh over the period to 2015 and, by 2020, is likely to have reached 57.0TWh, representing 7.9% of total generation. There is likely to be a threefold increase in gas power generation over the next decade, according to the Canadian Energy Research Institute. Gas export capability is therefore declining at a time when the US is demanding more gas. Much of the gas use in power applications is the result of rising energy usage at the oil sands facilities.

The 89.4TWh of Canadian nuclear demand in 2010 is forecast to reach 98.5TWh by 2015, with its share of total generation rising from 14.4% to 14.8% over the period. The Pickering B reactors in Ontario are licensed to mid-2013. In February 2010, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) decided against full refurbishment, but will spend CAD300mn on keeping them going for another 10 years before finally closing and decommissioning them. There are proposals to build several nuclear reactors to enter service in the next decade. Four reactors are planned in Ontario, one is proposed in New Brunswick and

one (or possibly four smaller reactors) in Alberta. Total capacity of the new reactors may amount to as much as 9GW. However, there remain some doubts over Canada's nuclear commitment.

Canada is now targeting a 20% reduction in its CO₂ levels by 2020 and 60-70% reduction by 2050. Consequently, electricity producers will be forced to phase out their ageing, high-emitting coal-fired plants to meet the country's new standards. Although costly, and yet to be proved on a commercial scale, Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is thus increasingly seen as a crucial technology.

Contents

Executive Summary

SWOT Analysis

Canada Power SWOT

Global Overview

Global Table: Total Generation Data (TWh)

Global Table: Total Consumption Data (TWh)

Global Table: Total Electricity Generating Capacity Data (MW)

Regional Overview

Developed Markets

Table: Total Generation Data, TWh

Table: Total Consumption Data, TWh

Table: Electricity Generating Capacity Data, MW

Market Overview – Canada

Regulation And Competition

Table: Canadian Power Industry – Structural Models

Table: Canadian Power Industry – Regulation

Power Transmission

Industry Forecast Scenario

Table: Canada Total Generation Data And Forecasts, 2007-2015 (TWh)

Table: Canada Total Generation Long-Term Forecasts, 2012-2020 (TWh)

Table: Canada Electric Power Transmission And Distribution Losses Data And Forecasts, 2007-2015 (TWh)

Table: Canada Electric Power Transmission And Distribution Losses Long-Term Forecasts, 2012-2020 (TWh)

Table: Canada Trade Data And Forecasts, 2007-2015 (TWh)

Table: Canada Trade Long-Term Forecasts, 2012-2020 (TWh)

Table: Canada Total Consumption Data And Forecasts, 2007-2015 (TWh)

Table: Canada Total Consumption Long-Term Forecasts, 2012-2020 (TWh)

Table: Canada Consumption by Energy Sector Data And Forecasts, 2007-2015 (TWh)

Table: Canada Consumption by Energy Sector Data

Table: Canada Electricity Generation Capacity Data And Forecasts, 2007-2015 (MW)

Table: Canada Electricity Generation Capacity Long-Term Forecasts, 2012-2020 (MW)

Canada Power Outlook

Generation

Gas-Fired

Oil-Fired

Coal-Fired

Nuclear Energy
Hydro-Electric
Renewable Energy
Transmission
Key Risks To BMI's Forecast Scenario
Competitive Landscape
 Table: Canadian Power Industry – Structural Models
 Table: Canadian Power Industry – Regulation
BC Hydro
EPCOR
Hydro One
Maritime Electric
Ontario Power
Newfoundland Power
Nova Scotia Power
SaskPower
Enmax
Energie NB Power
ATCO
Glossary Of Terms
Glossary Of Terms
BMI Methodology
How We Generate Our Industry Forecasts
Power Industry
Cross Checks
Sources

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