

Make way for ducklings i.e., distributed energy resources

In Robert McCloskey's children's book "Make Way for Ducklings," Mr. and Mrs. Mallard, the parents must find a spot to establish their family. If we think of our electric industry as the Mallards and their young family members are different distributed energy technologies. We in the industry must find a spot to raise the family in our ecosystem for our young ones i.e., distributed energy resources.

In the story, the ducklings are called Jack, Kack, Lack, Mack, Nack, Ouack, Pack, and Quack. There is a total of eight ducklings. Let's go with naming our distributed energy resources in the following manner:

1. Jack is electric storage less than or equal to 250 kW
2. Kack is electric storage greater than 250 kW but less than 5 MW
3. Lack is distributed-solar less than or equal to 250 kW
4. Mack is distributed-solar greater than 250 kW but less than 5 MW
5. Nack is thermal storage less than or equal to 250 kW
6. Ouack is thermal storage greater than 250 kW but less than 5 MW
7. Pack is electric vehicle aggregated less than or equal to 250 kW
8. Quack is electric vehicles aggregated greater than 250 kW but less than 5 MW

Jack, Lack, Nack, and Pack are all less than 250 kW. I picked this size somewhat arbitrarily. To show metering and other monitoring requirements being imposed on them by the industry to learn if these resources are selling back to the grid. Kack, Mack, Ouack, and Quack are big guys, but not that big to generate much interest in their network access requests. Resources like Jack, Lack, Nack, and Pack are grouped at a single node on the network. This grouping i.e., aggregation, leads to these small guys treated like big guys.

In the McCloskey story, the Mallards make friends with a policeman Michael who feeds them peanuts every day after a harrowing experience with a swan boat that they mistake for a bird. In our electric industry setting, the policeman Michael is the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) regulator. FERC has fed peanuts to our Mallards i.e., the industry, by putting out a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking (NOPR) on distributed energy resources. Just like in the story, the policeman Michael i.e., FERC, has identified a pathway for the ducklings i.e., distributed energy resources to cross the road to reach their destination.

The destination in the story is the Public Garden in Boston. When the mother, Mrs. Mallard, starts to bring her eight ducklings across the road, the cars do not yield to her. Who are the cars in our industry? The policeman Michael in the story, calls the police station and brings additional reinforcements to help Mrs. Mallard. FERC needs all the help they can get for these distributed energy resources to reach their destination i.e., wholesale energy markets.

What do you think? We should be able to find the rightful place for distributed energy resources i.e., Jack, Kack, Lack, Mack, Nack, Ouack, Pack, and Quack. Then only will the family be together i.e., the Mallards. We should let the policeman Michael – FERC do his job. After all, keeping traffic flowing is a policeman's job. And we should support FERC to bring value to the grid from distributed energy resources when FERC calls for reinforcements.