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Subject: California grid emerges from solar eclipse unscathed

By Esther Whieldon

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The California grid survived today's total solar eclipse without a hitch, California Independent System Operator officials said.

About 3,000 megawatts to 3,500 megawatts of solar generation stopped producing power during the eclipse, and the grid operator was able to cover that loss with hydropower and natural gas power supplies, Eric Schmitt, ISO vice president of operations, told reporters.

The grid operator had expected to lose up to 4,600 megawatts of utility scale solar during the eclipse and about 1,300 megawatts of residential rooftop solar.

Schmitt said months of planning had enabled the grid operator to accommodate the solar event.

"We didn't have any major challenges on the system, even minor challenges," he said. "We're very pleased with how smooth it went. All the resources performed the way they were supposed to perform."

Electricity prices were normal, peaking in the low \$20s per megawatt-hour. But as the eclipse abated, they then went negative — meaning generators would need to pay to ship their power — as the solar power plants began to come online, Schmitt said.

WHAT'S NEXT: The ISO expects to release more details about how the grid performed during the solar eclipse, such as how much battery storage was used and how much rooftop solar went offline, at a later time.

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