
HOUSE BILL 1527

State of Washington

67th Legislature

2021 Regular Session

By Representatives Mosbrucker, Dye, Schmick, Dent, Boehnke, Jacobsen, Eslick, and Goehner

Read first time 02/11/21. Referred to Committee on Environment & Energy.

1 AN ACT Relating to addressing the extent to which Washington
2 residents are at risk of rolling blackouts and inadequacy events like
3 those experienced in California in 2020; amending RCW 19.280.065;
4 creating a new section; and providing an expiration date.

5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF WASHINGTON:

6 NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that California
7 experienced decreased reliability and rolling blackouts in the summer
8 of 2020 due to heat events, inadequate dispatchable generating
9 resources, and other factors. Several studies have shown that the
10 Northwest will experience a large energy capacity shortfall by 2030.

11 The legislature finds that the electric grid is undergoing
12 profound changes. The grid is changing from one built to deliver to
13 the customer electricity from centralized electric generation plants
14 to one with intermittent energy resources like windmills and solar
15 panels dispersed geographically across a broad landscape. The
16 generating resources on the old grid could be turned up or down, on
17 or off as required. The new grid cannot, without extensive energy
18 storage, be turned up or down in response to customer demand.

19 The transmission and distribution infrastructure, the sticks and
20 wires of the grid, are being asked to meet increasingly complex
21 service requirements and loads. The changing demand includes, but is

1 not limited to, vehicle charging, serving other specialized
2 technology that requires high power quality, electrification of
3 natural gas utility services, electricity deployed on the customer
4 side of the meter through net metering, community solar programs, and
5 the growth of demand response programs.

6 Further, the clean energy transformation act requires that
7 utilities making investments in new resources after May of 2019, rely
8 on renewable resources and energy storage to the maximum extent
9 feasible, while transitioning away from dispatchable coals and
10 natural gas fired generation. Current law provides no policy guidance
11 or value propositions for replacing thermal generation like coal and
12 natural gas fired plants with storage resources that can store and
13 redispatch renewable energy. The region needs to maintain and
14 increase firm dispatchable capacity and related ancillary services to
15 address the energy adequacy challenges created by a deeply
16 decarbonized grid.

17 **Sec. 2.** RCW 19.280.065 and 2020 c 63 s 2 are each amended to
18 read as follows:

19 (1) At least once every twelve months, the department and the
20 commission shall jointly convene a meeting of representatives of the
21 investor-owned utilities and consumer-owned utilities, regional
22 planning organizations, transmission operators, and other
23 stakeholders to discuss the current, short-term, and long-term
24 adequacy of energy resources to serve the state's electric needs, and
25 address specific steps the utilities can take to coordinate planning
26 in light of the significant changes to the Northwest's power system
27 including, but not limited to, technological developments,
28 retirements of legacy baseload power generation resources, and
29 changes in laws and regulations affecting power supply options. The
30 department and commission shall provide a summary of these meetings,
31 including any specific action items, to the governor and legislature
32 within sixty days of the meeting.

33 (2) In 2021, the meeting convened by the department and the
34 commission pursuant to subsection (1) of this section must
35 specifically address the extent to which Washington residents are at
36 risk of rolling blackouts and inadequacy events like those
37 experienced in California in 2020. Stakeholders must be surveyed for
38 recommendations on policy options to prevent California-style
39 blackouts. The meeting must also focus discussion on the extent to

1 which proposed laws and regulations seeking an aggressive timeline
2 for building electrification and transportation system
3 electrification may require new state policy for resource adequacy.
4 The stakeholder meeting should seek to identify regulatory and
5 statutory incentives to enhance and ensure resource adequacy and
6 reliability as the clean energy transition evolves.

7 (3) This section expires January 1, ((2025)) 2030.

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