S-0091.2

SENATE BILL 5146

State of Washington 68th Legislature 2023 Regular Session

By Senators Short, Holy, Schoesler, Warnick, and L. Wilson

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AN ACT Relating to removing regulatory restrictions on hydropower; amending RCW 19.405.040 and 19.405.050; and creating a new section.

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

NEW SECTION. **Sec. 1.** The legislature finds that the Washington clean energy transformation act unnecessarily restricts the use of new or improved hydroelectric generation to meet Washington's energy goals. The legislature further finds that hydropower is a renewable resource that should be widely available for the benefit of Washington's electricity customers. Therefore, the legislature intends to remove certain regulatory restrictions on the use of new or improved hydroelectric generation to promote reliable and affordable power for Washington residents.

Sec. 2. RCW 19.405.040 and 2019 c 288 s 4 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) It is the policy of the state that all retail sales of electricity to Washington retail electric customers be greenhouse gas neutral by January 1, 2030.

(a) For the four-year compliance period beginning January 1, 2030, and for each multiyear compliance period thereafter through

December 31, 2044, an electric utility must demonstrate its compliance with this standard using a combination of nonemitting electric generation and electricity from renewable resources, or alternative compliance options, as provided in this section. To achieve compliance with this standard, an electric utility must: (i) Pursue all cost-effective, reliable, and feasible conservation and efficiency resources to reduce or manage retail electric load, using the methodology established in RCW 19.285.040, if applicable; and (ii) use electricity from renewable resources and nonemitting electric generation in an amount equal to ((~~one hundred~~)) 100 percent of the utility's retail electric loads over each multiyear compliance period. An electric utility must achieve compliance with this standard for the following compliance periods: January 1, 2030, through December 31, 2033; January 1, 2034, through December 31, 2037; January 1, 2038, through December 31, 2041; and January 1, 2042, through December 31, 2044.

(b) Through December 31, 2044, an electric utility may satisfy up to ((~~twenty~~)) 20 percent of its compliance obligation under (a) of this subsection with an alternative compliance option consistent with this section. An alternative compliance option may include any combination of the following:

(i) Making an alternative compliance payment under RCW 19.405.090(2);

(ii) Using unbundled renewable energy credits, provided that there is no double counting of any nonpower attributes associated with renewable energy credits within Washington or programs in other jurisdictions, as follows:

(A) Unbundled renewable energy credits produced from eligible renewable resources, as defined under RCW 19.285.030, which may be used by the electric utility for compliance with RCW 19.285.040 and this section as provided under RCW 19.285.040(2)(e); and

(B) Unbundled renewable energy credits, other than those included in (b)(ii)(A) of this subsection, that represent electricity generated within the compliance period;

(iii) Investing in energy transformation projects, including additional conservation and efficiency resources beyond what is otherwise required under this section, provided the projects meet the requirements of subsection (2) of this section and are not credited as resources used to meet the standard under (a) of this subsection; or

(iv) Using electricity from an energy recovery facility using municipal solid waste as the principal fuel source, where the facility was constructed prior to 1992, and the facility is operated in compliance with federal laws and regulations and meets state air quality standards. An electric utility may only use electricity from such an energy recovery facility if the department and the department of ecology determine that electricity generation at the facility provides a net reduction in greenhouse gas emissions compared to any other available waste management best practice. The determination must be based on a life-cycle analysis comparing the energy recovery facility to other technologies available in the jurisdiction in which the facility is located for the waste management best practices of waste reduction, recycling, composting, and minimizing the use of a landfill.

(c) Electricity from renewable resources used to meet the standard under (a) of this subsection must be verified by the retirement of renewable energy credits. Renewable energy credits must be tracked and retired in the tracking system selected by the department.

(d) ((~~Hydroelectric generation used by an electric utility in meeting the standard under (a) of this subsection may not include new diversions, new impoundments, new bypass reaches, or expansion of existing reservoirs constructed after May 7, 2019, unless the diversions, bypass reaches, or reservoir expansions are necessary for the operation of a pumped storage facility that: (i) Does not conflict with existing state or federal fish recovery plans; and (ii) complies with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.~~

~~(e) Nothing in (d) of this subsection precludes an electric utility that owns and operates hydroelectric generating facilities, or the owner of a hydroelectric generating facility whose energy output is marketed by the Bonneville power administration, from making efficiency or other improvements to its hydroelectric generating facilities existing as of May 7, 2019, or from installing hydroelectric generation in pipes, culverts, irrigation canals, and other man-made waterways, as long as those changes do not create conflicts with existing state or federal fish recovery plans and comply with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.~~

~~(f)~~)) Nonemitting electric generation used to meet the standard under (a) of this subsection must be generated during the compliance period and must be verified by documentation that the electric

utility owns the nonpower attributes of the electricity generated by the nonemitting electric generation resource.

((~~(g)~~)) (e) Nothing in this section prohibits an electric utility from purchasing or exchanging power from the Bonneville power administration.

(2) Investments in energy transformation projects used to satisfy an alternative compliance option provided under subsection (1)(b) of this section must use criteria developed by the department of ecology, in consultation with the department and the commission. For the purpose of crediting an energy transformation project toward the standard in subsection (1)(a) of this section, the department of ecology must establish a conversion factor of emissions reductions resulting from energy transformation projects to megawatt-hours of electricity from nonemitting electric generation that is consistent with the emission factors for unspecified electricity, or for energy transformation projects in the transportation sector, consistent with default emissions or conversion factors established by other jurisdictions for clean alternative fuels. Emissions reductions from energy transformation projects must be:

(a) Real, specific, identifiable, and quantifiable;

(b) Permanent: The department of ecology must look to other jurisdictions in setting this standard and make a reasonable determination on length of time;

(c) Enforceable by the state of Washington;

(d) Verifiable;

(e) Not required by another statute, rule, or other legal requirement; and

(f) Not reasonably assumed to occur absent investment, or if an investment has already been made, not reasonably assumed to occur absent additional funding in the near future.

(3) Energy transformation projects must be associated with the consumption of energy in Washington and must not create a new use of fossil fuels that results in a net increase of fossil fuel usage.

(4) The compliance eligibility of energy transformation projects may be scaled or prorated by an approved protocol in order to distinguish effects related to reductions in electricity usage from reductions in fossil fuel usage.

(5) Any compliance obligation fulfilled through an investment in an energy transformation project is eligible for use only: (a) By the electric utility that makes the investment; (b) if the investment is

made by the Bonneville power administration, by electric utilities that are preference customers of the Bonneville power administration; or (c) if the investment is made by a joint operating agency organized under chapter 43.52 RCW, by a member of the joint operating agency. An electric utility making an investment in partnership with another electric utility or entity may claim credit proportional to its share invested in the total project cost.

(6)(a) In meeting the standard under subsection (1) of this section, an electric utility must, consistent with the requirements of RCW 19.285.040, if applicable, pursue all cost-effective, reliable, and feasible conservation and efficiency resources, and demand response. In making new investments, an electric utility must, to the maximum extent feasible:

(i) Achieve targets at the lowest reasonable cost, considering risk;

(ii) Consider acquisition of existing renewable resources; and

(iii) In the acquisition of new resources constructed after May 7, 2019, rely on renewable resources and energy storage, insofar as doing so is consistent with (a)(i) of this subsection.

(b) Electric utilities subject to RCW 19.285.040 must demonstrate pursuit of all conservation and efficiency resources through compliance with the requirements in RCW 19.285.040.

(7) An electric utility that fails to meet the requirements of this section must pay the administrative penalty established under RCW 19.405.090(1), except as otherwise provided in this chapter.

(8) In complying with this section, an electric utility must, consistent with the requirements of RCW 19.280.030 and 19.405.140, ensure that all customers are benefiting from the transition to clean energy: Through the equitable distribution of energy and nonenergy benefits and reduction of burdens to vulnerable populations and highly impacted communities; long-term and short-term public health and environmental benefits and reduction of costs and risks; and energy security and resiliency.

(9) Affected market customers must comply with the standard established under subsection (1) of this section.

(10) A market customer that purchases electricity exclusively from carbon-free resources and eligible renewable resources, as defined in RCW 19.285.030 as of January 1, 2019, pursuant to a special contract with an investor-owned utility approved, prior to May 7, 2019, by order of the commission is subject to the

requirements of such an order and not to the standard established in this section. For purposes of interpreting any such special contract, chapter 19.285 RCW, as in effect on January 1, 2019, is not, either directly or indirectly, amended or supplemented.

(11) To reduce costs for utility customers or avoid exceeding the cost impact limit in RCW 19.405.060(3)(a), a multistate electric utility with fewer than ((~~two hundred fifty thousand~~)) 250,000 customers in Washington may apply the total amount of megawatt-hours of coal-fired resources eliminated from the utility's allocation of electricity before December 31, 2025, as an equivalent amount of megawatt-hours of nonemitting electric generation or electricity from renewable resources required to comply with subsection (1)(a) of this section. The utility must demonstrate that for every megawatt-hour of early action compliance credit there is a real, permanent reduction in greenhouse gas emissions in the western interconnection directly associated with that credit. A multistate electric utility must request to use early action compliance credit in its clean energy implementation plan that is submitted under RCW 19.405.060. The multistate electric utility must specify in its clean energy implementation plan the compliance years to which the early action compliance credit will apply, but in no event may the multistate electric utility use the early action compliance credits beyond 2035. The commission must establish conditions for use of early action compliance credits, including a determination of whether action constitutes early action, before the multistate electric utility's use of early action compliance credits in a clean energy implementation plan.

Sec. 3. RCW 19.405.050 and 2019 c 288 s 5 are each amended to read as follows:

(1) It is the policy of the state that nonemitting electric generation and electricity from renewable resources supply ((~~one hundred~~)) 100 percent of all sales of electricity to Washington retail electric customers by January 1, 2045. By January 1, 2045, and each year thereafter, each electric utility must demonstrate its compliance with this standard using a combination of nonemitting electric generation and electricity from renewable resources.

(2) Each electric utility must incorporate subsection (1) of this section into all relevant planning and resource acquisition practices including, but not limited to: Resource planning under chapter 19.280

RCW; the construction or acquisition of property, including electric generating facilities; and the provision of electricity service to retail electric customers.

(3) In planning to meet projected demand consistent with the requirements of subsection (2) of this section and RCW 19.285.040, if applicable, an electric utility must pursue all cost-effective, reliable, and feasible conservation and efficiency resources, and demand response. In making new investments, an electric utility must, to the maximum extent feasible:

(a) Achieve targets at the lowest reasonable cost, considering risk;

(b) Consider acquisition of existing renewable resources; and

(c) In the acquisition of new resources constructed after May 7, 2019, rely on renewable resources and energy storage, insofar as doing so is consistent with (a) of this subsection.

(4) The commission, department, energy facility site evaluation council, department of ecology, and all other state agencies must incorporate this section into all relevant planning and utilize all programs authorized by statute to achieve subsection (1) of this section.

(5)((~~(a) Hydroelectric generation used by an electric utility to satisfy the requirements of this section may not include new diversions, new impoundments, new bypass reaches, or expansion of existing reservoirs constructed after May 7, 2019, unless the diversions, bypass reaches, or reservoir expansions are necessary for the operation of a pumped storage facility that: (i) Does not conflict with existing state or federal fish recovery plans; and (ii) complies with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.~~

~~(b) Nothing in (a) of this subsection precludes an electric utility that owns and operates hydroelectric generating facilities, or the owner of a hydroelectric generating facility whose energy output is marketed by the Bonneville power administration, from making efficiency or other improvements to its hydroelectric generating facilities existing as of May 7, 2019, or from installing hydroelectric generation in pipes, culverts, irrigation canals, and other man-made waterways as long as those changes do not create conflicts with existing state or federal fish recovery plans and comply with all local, state, and federal laws and regulations.~~

~~(6)~~)) Nothing in this section prohibits an electric utility from purchasing or exchanging power from the Bonneville power administration.

((~~(7)~~)) (6) Affected market customers must comply with the obligations of this section.

((~~(8)~~)) (7) Any market customer that purchases electricity exclusively from carbon-free resources and eligible renewable resources, as defined in RCW 19.285.030 as of January 1, 2019, pursuant to a special contract with an investor-owned utility approved, prior to May 7, 2019, by order of the commission is subject to the requirements of such an order and not to the standards established in this section. For the purposes of interpreting such a special contract, chapter 19.285 RCW, as in effect on January 1, 2019, is not, either directly or indirectly, amended or supplemented.

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