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SB-479 Local Government Renewable Energy Self-Generation Program. (2021-2022)

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Senate Bill No. 479

CHAPTER 141

An act to amend Section 2830 of the Public Utilities Code, relating to electricity.

[Approved by Governor July 23, 2021. Filed with Secretary of State July 23, 2021.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 479, Laird. Local Government Renewable Energy Self-Generation Program.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities, including electrical corporations. Existing law authorizes the commission to fix the rates and charges for every public utility and requires that those rates and charges be just and reasonable. The local government renewable energy self-generation program authorizes a local government to elect to have a bill credit applied to a designated benefiting account, as defined, for electricity exported to the electrical grid by an eligible renewable generating facility, as defined, and requires the commission to adopt a rate tariff for the benefiting account. The local government renewable energy self-generation program does not apply to an electrical corporation with 60,000 or fewer customer accounts in California.

This bill would expand the local government renewable energy self-generation program definition of benefiting account to include accounts meeting specified requirements located within the geographical boundaries of a California Native American tribe.

Under existing law, a violation of the Public Utilities Act or any order, decision, rule, direction, demand, or requirement of the commission is a crime.

Because violation of an order, decision, rule, direction, demand, or requirement of the commission implementing the bill's requirements would be a crime, the bill would impose a state-mandated local program by expanding the scope of a crime.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

Vote: majority Appropriation: no Fiscal Committee: yes Local Program: yes

THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA DO ENACT AS FOLLOWS:

SECTION 1. Section 2830 of the Public Utilities Code is amended to read:

2830. (a) As used in this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) "Benefiting account" means an electricity account, or more than one account, that satisfies any of the following:

(A) The account or accounts are located within the geographical boundaries of a local government or, for a campus, within the geographical boundary of the city, county, or city and county in which the campus is located, with the account or accounts being mutually agreed upon by the local government or campus and an electrical corporation.

(B) The account or accounts belong to members of a joint powers authority and are located within the geographical boundaries of the group of public agencies that formed the joint powers authority, if the eligible renewable generating facility and electricity account or accounts are wholly located within a single county within which the joint powers authority is located and electric service is provided by a single electrical corporation, with the account or accounts being mutually agreed upon by the joint powers authority and the electrical corporation.

(C) The account or accounts belong to a tribe and are located on land owned by or under the jurisdiction of the tribe, if the eligible renewable generating facility and electricity account or accounts are wholly located within a single county within which the tribe is located and electrical service is provided by a single electrical corporation, with the account or accounts being mutually agreed upon by the tribe and the electrical corporation.

(2) "Bill credit" means an amount of money credited to a benefiting account that is calculated based upon the time-of-use electricity generation component of the electricity usage charge of the generating account, multiplied by the quantities of electricity generated by an eligible renewable generating facility that are exported to the grid during the corresponding time period. Electricity is exported to the grid if it is generated by an eligible renewable generating facility, is not utilized onsite by the local government, and the electricity flows through the meter site and on to the electrical corporation's distribution or transmission infrastructure.

(3) "Campus" means an individual community college campus, individual California State University campus, or individual University of California campus.

(4) "Eligible renewable generating facility" means a generation facility that meets all of the following requirements:

(A) Has a generating capacity of no more than five megawatts.

(B) Is an eligible renewable energy resource, as defined in Article 16 (commencing with Section 399.11) of Part 1.

(C) Is located within the geographical boundary of the local government or, for a campus, within the geographical boundary of the city or city and county, if the campus is located in an incorporated area, or county, if the campus is located in an unincorporated area or, for a tribe, on land owned by or under the jurisdiction of the tribe.

(D) Is owned by, operated by, or on property under the control of the local government, campus, or tribe.

(E) Is sized to offset all or part of the electrical load of the benefiting account. For these purposes, premises that are leased by a local government, campus, or tribe are under the control of the local government, campus, or tribe.

(5) "Generating account" means the time-of-use electric service account of the local government or campus where the eligible renewable generating facility is located.

(6) "Local government" means a city, county, whether general law or chartered, city and county, special district, school district, political subdivision, other local public agency, or a joint powers authority formed pursuant to the Joint Exercise of Powers Act (Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 6500) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code) that has as members public agencies located within the same county and same electrical corporation service territory, but shall not mean the state, any agency or department of the state, other than an individual campus of the University of California or the California State University, or any joint powers authority that has as members public agencies located in different counties or different electrical corporation service territories, or that has as a member the federal government, any federal department or agency, this or another state, or any department or agency of this state or another state.

(7) "Tribe" means a California Native American tribe, as defined in Section 21073 of the Public Resources Code.

(b) Subject to the limitation in subdivision (h), a local government or tribe may elect to receive electric service pursuant to this section if all of the following conditions are met:

(1) The local government or tribe designates one or more benefiting accounts to receive a bill credit.

(2) A benefiting account receives service under a time-of-use rate schedule.

(3) The benefiting account is the responsibility of, and serves property that is owned, operated, or on property under the control of the same local government or tribe that owns, operates, or controls the eligible renewable generating facility.

(4) The electrical output of the eligible renewable generating facility is metered for time of use to allow calculation of the bill credit based upon when the electricity is exported to the grid.

(5) All costs associated with the metering requirements of paragraphs (2) and (4) are the responsibility of the local government or tribe, or its members.

(6) All costs associated with interconnection are the responsibility of the local government or tribe, or its members. For purposes of this paragraph, "interconnection" has the same meaning as defined in Section 2803, except that it applies to the interconnection of an eligible renewable generating facility rather than the energy source of a private energy producer.

(7) The local government or tribe does not sell electricity exported to the electrical grid to a third party.

(8) All electricity exported to the grid by the local government or tribe that is generated by the eligible renewable generating facility becomes the property of the electrical corporation to which the facility is interconnected, but shall not be counted toward the electrical corporation's total retail sales for purposes of Article 16 (commencing with Section 399.11) of Chapter 2.3 of Part 1. Ownership of the renewable energy credits, as defined in Section 399.12, shall be the same as the ownership of the renewable energy credits associated with electricity that is net metered pursuant to Section 2827.

(9) An electrical corporation shall not be required to compensate a local government or tribe for electricity generated from an eligible renewable facility pursuant to this section in excess of the bill credits applied to the designated benefiting account. A local government renewable generation facility participating pursuant to this section shall not be eligible for any other tariff or program that requires an electrical corporation to purchase generation from that facility while participating in the local government renewable energy self-generation program pursuant to this section.

(c) The following billing and crediting procedures will apply to a local government or tribe electing to receive electric service pursuant to this chapter:

(1) A benefiting account shall be billed for all electricity usage, and for each bill component, at the rate schedule applicable to the benefiting account, including any cost-responsibility surcharge or other cost recovery mechanism, as determined by the commission, to reimburse the Department of Water Resources for purchases of electricity, pursuant to Division 27 (commencing with Section 80000) of the Water Code.

(2) The bill shall then subtract the bill credit applicable to the benefiting account. The generation component credited to the benefiting account shall not include the cost-responsibility surcharge or other cost recovery mechanism, as determined by the commission, to reimburse the Department of Water Resources for purchases of electricity, pursuant to Division 27 (commencing with Section 80000) of the Water Code. The electrical corporation shall ensure that the local government receives the full bill credit.

(3) If, during the billing cycle, the generation component of the electricity usage charges exceeds the bill credit, the benefiting account shall be billed for the difference.

(4) If, during the billing cycle, the bill credit applied pursuant to paragraph (2) exceeds the generation component of the electricity usage charges, the difference shall be carried forward as a financial credit to the next billing cycle.

(5) After the electricity usage charge pursuant to paragraph (1) and the credit pursuant to paragraph (2) are determined for the last billing cycle of a 12-month period, any remaining credit resulting from the application of this section shall be reset to zero.

(d) The commission shall ensure that the transfer of a bill credit to a benefiting account does not result in a shifting of costs to bundled service subscribers. The costs associated with the transfer of a bill credit shall include all billing-related expenses.

(e) Not more frequently than once per year, and upon providing the electrical corporation with a minimum of 60 days' notice, the participating local government or tribe may elect to change a benefiting account. Any credit resulting from the application of this section earned prior to the change in a benefiting account that has not been used as of the date of the change in the benefiting account shall be applied, and may only be applied, to a benefiting account as changed.

(f) A participating local government or tribe shall provide the electrical corporation to which the eligible renewable generating facility will be interconnected with not less than 60 days' notice prior to the eligible renewable generating facility becoming operational. The electrical corporation shall file an advice letter with the commission that complies with this section not later than 30 days after receipt of the notice proposing a rate tariff for a benefiting account. The commission, within 30 days of the date of filing, shall approve the proposed tariff or specify conforming changes to be made by the electrical corporation to be filed in a new advice letter.

(g) The local government or tribe may terminate its election pursuant to subdivision (b), upon providing the electrical corporation with a minimum of 60 days' notice. If the local government or tribe sells its interest in the eligible renewable generating facility, or

sells the electricity generated by the eligible renewable generating facility, in a manner other than required by this section, upon the date of either event, and the earliest date if both events occur, no further bill credit pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (b) may be earned. Only credit earned prior to that date shall be made to a benefiting account.

(h) An electrical corporation is not obligated to provide a bill credit to a benefiting account that is not designated by a local government prior to the point in time that the combined statewide cumulative rated generating capacity of all eligible renewable generating facilities within the service territories of the state's three largest electrical corporations reaches 250 megawatts. Only those eligible renewable generating facilities that are providing bill credits to benefiting accounts pursuant to this section shall count toward reaching this 250-megawatt limitation. Each electrical corporation shall only be required to offer service or contracts under this section until that electrical corporation reaches its proportionate share of the 250-megawatt limitation based on the ratio of its peak demand to the total statewide peak demand of all electrical corporations.

(i) This chapter does not apply to an electrical corporation with 60,000 or fewer customer accounts.

SEC. 2. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.