
Environment Committee

HB 1415

Brief Description: Allowing hydroelectric energy generation on irrigation district facilities to qualify for renewable energy credit.

Sponsors: Representatives Haler, Warnick and Hayes.

<p style="text-align: center;">Brief Summary of Bill</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provides that the generation of electricity from various types of irrigation district facilities is considered an eligible renewable resource under the Energy Independence Act.
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Hearing Date: 2/19/13

Staff: Scott Richards (786-7156).

Background:

Energy Independence Act.

Approved by voters in 2006, the Energy Independence Act (EIA), also known as Initiative 937 (I-937), requires electric utilities with 25,000 or more customers to meet targets for energy conservation and for using eligible renewable resources. Utilities that must comply with the EIA are called qualifying utilities.

Eligible Renewable Resource Targets and Compliance Dates.

Each qualifying utility must use eligible renewable resources or acquire equivalent renewable energy credits, or a combination of both, to meet the following annual targets:

- at least 3 percent of its load by January 1, 2012, and each year thereafter through December 31, 2015;
- at least 9 percent of its load by January 1, 2016, and each year thereafter through December 31, 2019; and
- at least 15 percent of its load by January 1, 2020, and each year thereafter.

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Eligible Renewable Resource.

The term eligible renewable resource means electricity generated from a resource such as wind, solar, geothermal energy, landfill and sewage gas, wave and tidal power, and certain biodiesel fuels. In addition, an eligible renewable resource must be generated in a facility that started operating after March 31, 1999, and the facility must either be located in the Pacific Northwest or the electricity from the facility must be delivered into the state on a real-time basis.

Incremental Hydroelectricity as an Eligible Renewable Resource.

Incremental electricity produced as a result of efficiency improvements to the following hydroelectric generation facilities may also count as an eligible renewable resource if the improvements do not result in new water diversions or impoundments, and the improvements are completed after March 31, 1999:

- hydroelectric generation projects owned by a qualifying utility and located in the Pacific Northwest; and
- hydroelectric generation in irrigation pipes and canals located in the Pacific Northwest.

Renewable Energy Credit (REC).

A REC is a tradable certificate of proof of at least one megawatt hour of an eligible renewable resource where the generation facility is not powered by fresh water. Under the EIA, a REC represents all the nonpower attributes associated with the power. RECs can be bought and sold in the marketplace, and they may be used during the year they are acquired, the previous year, or the subsequent year.

Irrigation Districts.

Irrigation districts are special purpose districts that, among other things, are authorized to provide for the irrigation of land, the generation of hydroelectricity, and the sale of hydroelectricity to other utilities in the state.

Summary of Bill:

The law concerning irrigation districts is amended to require the following hydroelectricity to be considered an eligible renewable resource that qualifies for renewable energy credits under the Energy Independence Act: the generation of electricity by an irrigation district from water power made available by and as a part of irrigation district water conveyance and distribution facilities, waste ways, and drainage water facilities.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.