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**HOUSE BILL 1527**

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**State of Washington 67th Legislature 2021 Regular Session**

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

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

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

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

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

The transmission and distribution infrastructure, the sticks and wires of the grid, are being asked to meet increasingly complex service requirements and loads. The changing demand includes, but is not limited to, vehicle charging, serving other specialized technology that requires high power quality, electrification of natural gas utility services, electricity deployed on the customer side of the meter through net metering, community solar programs, and the growth of demand response programs.

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

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

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

(2) In 2021, the meeting convened by the department and the commission pursuant to subsection (1) of this section must specifically address the extent to which Washington residents are at risk of rolling blackouts and inadequacy events like those experienced in California in 2020. Stakeholders must be surveyed for recommendations on policy options to prevent California-style blackouts. The meeting must also focus discussion on the extent to which proposed laws and regulations seeking an aggressive timeline for building electrification and transportation system electrification may require new state policy for resource adequacy. The stakeholder meeting should seek to identify regulatory and statutory incentives to enhance and ensure resource adequacy and reliability as the clean energy transition evolves.

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

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