

216B.2422 RESOURCE PLANNING; RENEWABLE ENERGY.

Subdivision 1. **Definitions.** (a) For purposes of this section, the terms defined in this subdivision have the meanings given them.

(b) "Utility" means an entity with the capability of generating 100,000 kilowatts or more of electric power and serving, either directly or indirectly, the needs of 10,000 retail customers in Minnesota. Utility does not include federal power agencies.

(c) "Renewable energy" means electricity generated through use of any of the following resources:

- (1) wind;
- (2) solar;
- (3) geothermal;
- (4) hydro;
- (5) trees or other vegetation;
- (6) landfill gas; or

(7) predominantly organic components of wastewater effluent, sludge, or related by-products from publicly owned treatment works, but not including incineration of wastewater sludge.

(d) "Resource plan" means a set of resource options that a utility could use to meet the service needs of its customers over a forecast period, including an explanation of the supply and demand circumstances under which, and the extent to which, each resource option would be used to meet those service needs. These resource options include using, refurbishing, and constructing utility plant and equipment, buying power generated by other entities, controlling customer loads, and implementing customer energy conservation.

(e) "Refurbish" means to rebuild or substantially modify an existing electricity generating resource of 30 megawatts or greater.

Subd. 2. Resource plan filing and approval. A utility shall file a resource plan with the commission periodically in accordance with rules adopted by the commission. The commission shall approve, reject, or modify the plan of a public utility, as defined in section 216B.02, subdivision 4, consistent with the public interest. In the resource plan proceedings of all other utilities, the commission's order shall be advisory and the order's findings and conclusions shall constitute prima facie evidence which may be rebutted by substantial evidence in all other proceedings. With respect to utilities other than those defined in section 216B.02, subdivision 4, the commission shall consider the filing requirements and decisions in any comparable proceedings in another jurisdiction. As a part of its resource plan filing, a utility shall include the least cost plan for meeting 50 and 75 percent of all new and refurbished capacity needs through a combination of conservation and renewable energy resources.

Subd. 2a. Historical data and advance forecast. Each utility required to file a resource plan under this section shall include in the filing all applicable annual information required by section 216C.17, subdivision 2, and the rules adopted under that section. To the extent that a utility complies with this subdivision, it is not required to file annual advance forecasts with the department under section 216C.17, subdivision 2.

Subd. 2b. **Optional integrated resource plan compliance for certain cooperatives.** For the purposes of this subdivision, a "cooperative" means a generating and transmission cooperative electric association that has at least 80 percent of its member distribution cooperatives located outside of Minnesota and that provides less than four percent of the electricity annually sold at retail in the state of Minnesota. A cooperative may, in lieu of filing a resource plan under subdivision 2, elect to file a report to the commission under this subdivision. The report must include projected demand levels for the next 15 years and generation resources to meet any projected generation deficiencies. To supply the information required in a report under this subdivision, a cooperative may use reports submitted under section 216C.17, subdivision 2, reports to regional reliability organizations, or similar reports submitted to other state utility commissions. A report must be submitted annually by July 1, but the commission may extend the time if it finds the extension in the public interest. Presentation of the annual report shall be done in accordance with procedures established by the commission. Data in a report under this subdivision may be aggregate data and need not be separately reported for individual distribution cooperative members of the cooperative. The commission may take whatever action in response to a report under this subdivision that it could take with respect to a report by a cooperative under subdivision 2.

[See Note.]

Subd. 3. **Environmental costs.** (a) The commission shall, to the extent practicable, quantify and establish a range of environmental costs associated with each method of electricity generation. A utility shall use the values established by the commission in conjunction with other external factors, including socioeconomic costs, when evaluating and selecting resource options in all proceedings before the commission, including resource plan and certificate of need proceedings.

(b) The commission shall establish interim environmental cost values associated with each method of electricity generation by March 1, 1994. These values expire on the date the commission establishes environmental cost values under paragraph (a).

Subd. 4. **Preference for renewable energy facility.** The commission shall not approve a new or refurbished nonrenewable energy facility in an integrated resource plan or a certificate of need, pursuant to section 216B.243, nor shall the commission allow rate recovery pursuant to section 216B.16 for such a nonrenewable energy facility, unless the utility has demonstrated that a renewable energy facility is not in the public interest.

Subd. 5. **Bidding; exemption from certificate of need proceeding.** (a) A utility may select resources to meet its projected energy demand through a bidding process approved or established by the commission. A utility shall use the environmental cost estimates determined under subdivision 3 in evaluating bids submitted in a process established under this subdivision.

(b) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, if an electric power generating plant, as described in section 216B.2421, subdivision 2, clause (1), is selected in a bidding process approved or established by the commission, a certificate of need proceeding under section 216B.243 is not required.

(c) A certificate of need proceeding is also not required for an electric power generating plant that has been selected in a bidding process approved or established by the commission, or such other selection process approved by the commission, to satisfy, in whole or in part, the wind power mandate of section 216B.2423 or the biomass mandate of section 216B.2424.

Subd. 6. **Consolidation of resource planning and certificate of need.** A utility shall indicate in its resource plan whether it intends to site or construct a large energy facility. If the utility's resource plan includes a proposed large energy facility and construction of that facility is likely to begin before the utility files its next resource plan, the commission shall conduct the resource plan proceeding consistent with the requirements of section 216B.243 with respect to the proposed facility. If the commission approves the proposed facility in the resource plan, a separate certificate of need proceeding is not required.

History: 1993 c 356 s 3; 1994 c 644 s 4; 1997 c 176 s 2; 1997 c 198 s 1; 2008 c 258 s 3; 2012 c 268 s 1

NOTE: A cooperative must complete an integrated resource plan pending on May 3, 2012, under subdivision 2 before it may make an election under subdivision 2b, as added by Laws 2012, chapter 268, section 1. Laws 2012, chapter 268, section 1, the effective date.