



A. 237-A (HEVESI, ET AL.) S.1660-A (PERKINS)

Summary

This bill would amend New York State Public Service Law by adding a new section to require utilities to compile and submit annual reports to the state regarding distributed generation/energy metering. For the report, utility corporations would submit detailed information regarding the customer-generators in their service area, type of generating equipment, type of fuel used, amount of energy produced, as well as information on back-up fuel systems. Copies of the report would be sent to the Legislature, Public Service Commission and the State Energy Planning Board.

Explanation

Distributed generation (DG) technologies could play a critical role in improving the reliability, affordability and efficiency of the state's energy supply. However, all DG is not created equal. While technologies such as solar, fuel cells and wind should be expanded, dirty diesel generators should be phased out as soon as possible.

The cumulative air quality impacts of dirty DG installations such as diesel generators are substantial, particularly in New York City. According to a 2003 Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management study, dirty DG installations account for the release of more than 8,000 tons of nitrogen oxides into NYC's air annually. In contrast, clean renewable installations reduce stress on the power grid and the global warming pollution generated by fossil fuels.

A major barrier to determining the full extent of DG's impacts on public health and the environment—both positive and negative—is the lack of comprehensive data available to state officials and the general public. The annual reports required under this bill would provide a valuable tool to inform state energy planning and allow consumers to better understand the performance of their utilities. This information would also help community groups better understand air pollution sources in their neighborhoods. Furthermore, by expanding the state's DG inventory, New York will be positioned to maximize cost-effective and clean DG, while eliminating to the maximum extent practicable DG from dirty, fossil-fueled sources.

Such action would help protect New Yorkers from the harmful effects of air pollution created by burning fossil fuels, including asthma attacks and premature deaths in seniors.

Environmental Advocates of New York supports this bill.

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