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SENATE BILL NO. 139

Offered January 13, 2016

Prefiled December 29, 2015

A BILL to amend and reenact § 56-594 of the Code of Virginia, relating to electric utility regulation; agricultural net energy metering.

Patron—Edwards

Referred to Committee on Commerce and Labor

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**1. That § 56-594 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:****§ 56-594. Net energy metering provisions.**

A. The Commission shall establish by regulation a program that affords eligible customer-generators the opportunity to participate in net energy metering, and a program, to begin no later than July 1, 2014, for customers of investor-owned utilities and no later than July 1, 2015, for customers of electric cooperatives, to afford eligible agricultural customer-generators the opportunity to participate in net energy metering. The regulations may include, but need not be limited to, requirements for (i) retail sellers; (ii) owners or operators of distribution or transmission facilities; (iii) providers of default service; (iv) eligible customer-generators; (v) eligible agricultural customer-generators; or (vi) any combination of the foregoing, as the Commission determines will facilitate the provision of net energy metering, provided that the Commission determines that such requirements do not adversely affect the public interest.

B. For the purpose of this section:

"Eligible agricultural customer-generator" means a customer that operates a renewable energy generating facility as part of an agricultural business, which generating facility (i) uses as its sole energy source solar power, wind power, or aerobic or anaerobic digester gas, (ii) does not have an aggregate generation capacity of more than 500 kilowatts, (iii) is located on land owned or controlled by the agricultural business, (iv) is connected to the customer's wiring on the customer's side of its interconnection with the distributor; (v) is interconnected and operated in parallel with an electric company's transmission and distribution facilities, and (vi) is used primarily to provide energy to metered accounts of the agricultural business. An eligible agricultural customer-generator may be served by multiple meters that are located at ~~separate but contiguous sites on one parcel or on multiple adjacent parcels~~, such that the eligible agricultural customer-generator may aggregate in a single account the electricity consumption and generation measured by the meters, provided that the same utility serves all such meters. The aggregated load shall be served under the appropriate tariff.

"Eligible customer-generator" means a customer that owns and operates, or contracts with other persons to own, operate, or both, an electrical generating facility that (i) has a capacity of not more than 20 kilowatts for residential customers and not more than one megawatt for nonresidential customers on an electrical generating facility placed in service after July 1, 2015; (ii) uses as its total source of fuel renewable energy, as defined in § 56-576; (iii) is located on the customer's premises and is connected to the customer's wiring on the customer's side of its interconnection with the distributor; (iv) is interconnected and operated in parallel with an electric company's transmission and distribution facilities; and (v) is intended primarily to offset all or part of the customer's own electricity requirements. In addition to the electrical generating facility size limitations in clause (i), the capacity of any generating facility installed under this section after July 1, 2015, shall not exceed the expected annual energy consumption based on the previous 12 months of billing history or an annualized calculation of billing history if 12 months of billing history is not available.

"Net energy metering" means measuring the difference, over the net metering period, between (i) electricity supplied to an eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator from the electric grid and (ii) the electricity generated and fed back to the electric grid by the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator.

"Net metering period" means the 12-month period following the date of final interconnection of the eligible customer-generator's or eligible agricultural customer-generator's system with an electric service provider, and each 12-month period thereafter.

C. The Commission's regulations shall ensure that (i) the metering equipment installed for net metering shall be capable of measuring the flow of electricity in two directions and (ii) any eligible customer-generator seeking to participate in net energy metering shall notify its supplier and receive approval to interconnect prior to installation of an electrical generating facility. The electric distribution

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59 company shall have 30 days from the date of notification for residential facilities, and 60 days from the
60 date of notification for nonresidential facilities, to determine whether the interconnection requirements
61 have been met. Such regulations shall allocate fairly the cost of such equipment and any necessary
62 interconnection. An eligible customer-generator's electrical generating system, and each electrical
63 generating system of an eligible agricultural customer-generator, shall meet all applicable safety and
64 performance standards established by the National Electrical Code, the Institute of Electrical and
65 Electronics Engineers, and accredited testing laboratories such as Underwriters Laboratories. Beyond the
66 requirements set forth in this section and to ensure public safety, power quality, and reliability of the
67 supplier's electric distribution system, an eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural
68 customer-generator whose electrical generating system meets those standards and rules shall bear all
69 reasonable costs of equipment required for the interconnection to the supplier's electric distribution
70 system, including costs, if any, to (a) install additional controls, (b) perform or pay for additional tests,
71 and (c) purchase additional liability insurance.

72 D. The Commission shall establish minimum requirements for contracts to be entered into by the
73 parties to net metering arrangements. Such requirements shall protect the eligible customer-generator or
74 eligible agricultural customer-generator against discrimination by virtue of its status as an eligible
75 customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator, and permit customers that are served on
76 time-of-use tariffs that have electricity supply demand charges contained within the electricity supply
77 portion of the time-of-use tariffs to participate as an eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural
78 customer-generator. Notwithstanding the cost allocation provisions of subsection C, eligible
79 customer-generators or eligible agricultural customer-generators served on demand charge-based
80 time-of-use tariffs shall bear the incremental metering costs required to net meter such customers.

81 E. If electricity generated by an eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator
82 over the net metering period exceeds the electricity consumed by the eligible customer-generator or
83 eligible agricultural customer-generator, the customer-generator or eligible agricultural
84 customer-generator shall be compensated for the excess electricity if the entity contracting to receive
85 such electric energy and the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator enter
86 into a power purchase agreement for such excess electricity. Upon the written request of the eligible
87 customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator, the supplier that serves the eligible
88 customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator shall enter into a power purchase
89 agreement with the requesting eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator that
90 is consistent with the minimum requirements for contracts established by the Commission pursuant to
91 subsection D. The power purchase agreement shall obligate the supplier to purchase such excess
92 electricity at the rate that is provided for such purchases in a net metering standard contract or tariff
93 approved by the Commission, unless the parties agree to a higher rate. The eligible customer-generator
94 or eligible agricultural customer-generator owns any renewable energy certificates associated with its
95 electrical generating facility; however, at the time that the eligible customer-generator or eligible
96 agricultural customer-generator enters into a power purchase agreement with its supplier, the eligible
97 customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator shall have a one-time option to sell the
98 renewable energy certificates associated with such electrical generating facility to its supplier and be
99 compensated at an amount that is established by the Commission to reflect the value of such renewable
100 energy certificates. Nothing in this section shall prevent the eligible customer-generator or eligible
101 agricultural customer-generator and the supplier from voluntarily entering into an agreement for the sale
102 and purchase of excess electricity or renewable energy certificates at mutually-agreed upon prices if the
103 eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator does not exercise its option to sell
104 its renewable energy certificates to its supplier at Commission-approved prices at the time that the
105 eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator enters into a power purchase
106 agreement with its supplier. All costs incurred by the supplier to purchase excess electricity and
107 renewable energy certificates from eligible customer-generators or eligible agricultural
108 customer-generators shall be recoverable through its Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) rate
109 adjustment clause, if the supplier has a Commission-approved RPS plan. If not, then all costs shall be
110 recoverable through the supplier's fuel adjustment clause. For purposes of this section, "all costs" shall
111 be defined as the rates paid to the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator
112 for the purchase of excess electricity and renewable energy certificates and any administrative costs
113 incurred to manage the eligible customer-generator's or eligible agricultural customer-generator's power
114 purchase arrangements. The net metering standard contract or tariff shall be available to eligible
115 customer-generators or eligible agricultural customer-generators on a first-come, first-served basis in
116 each electric distribution company's Virginia service area until the rated generating capacity owned and
117 operated by eligible customer-generators or eligible agricultural customer-generators in the state reaches
118 one percent of each electric distribution company's adjusted Virginia peak-load forecast for the previous
119 year, and shall require the supplier to pay the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural
120 customer-generator for such excess electricity in a timely manner at a rate to be established by the

Commission.

F. Any residential eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator who owns and operates, or contracts with other persons to own, operate, or both, an electrical generating facility with a capacity that exceeds 10 kilowatts shall pay to its supplier, in addition to any other charges authorized by law, a monthly standby charge. The amount of the standby charge and the terms and conditions under which it is assessed shall be in accordance with a methodology developed by the supplier and approved by the Commission. The Commission shall approve a supplier's proposed standby charge methodology if it finds that the standby charges collected from all such eligible customer-generators and eligible agricultural customer-generators allow the supplier to recover only the portion of the supplier's infrastructure costs that are properly associated with serving such eligible customer-generators or eligible agricultural customer-generators. Such an eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator shall not be liable for a standby charge until the date specified in an order of the Commission approving its supplier's methodology.