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HOUSE BILL NO. 1060

Offered January 10, 2018

Prefiled January 10, 2018

A BILL to amend and reenact § 1 of the first enactment of Chapters 358 and 382 of the Acts of Assembly of 2013, as amended by the first enactment of Chapter 803 of the Acts of Assembly of 2017, and to amend and reenact § 56-594 of the Code of Virginia, relating to electric utility regulation; net energy metering cap.

Patron—Tran

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. On and after July 1, 2017, small agricultural generators or eligible agricultural customer-generators may elect to interconnect pursuant to the provisions of this section or as small agricultural generators pursuant to § 56-594.2, but not both. Existing eligible agricultural customer-generators may elect to become small agricultural generators, but may not revert to being eligible agricultural customer-generators after such election. On and after July 1, 2019, interconnection of eligible agricultural customer-generators shall cease for electric cooperatives only, and such facilities shall interconnect solely as small agricultural generators. For electric cooperatives, eligible agricultural customer-generators whose renewable energy generating facilities were interconnected before July 1, 2019, may continue to participate in net energy metering pursuant to this section for a period not to exceed 25 years from the date of their renewable energy generating facility's original interconnection.

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, 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.

"Small agricultural generator" has the same meaning that is ascribed to that term in § 56-594.2.

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

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

E. If electricity generated by an eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator over the net metering period exceeds the electricity consumed by the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator, the customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator shall be compensated for the excess electricity if the entity contracting to receive such electric energy and the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator enter into a power purchase agreement for such excess electricity. Upon the written request of the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator, the supplier that serves the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator shall enter into a power purchase agreement with the requesting eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator that is consistent with the minimum requirements for contracts established by the Commission pursuant to subsection D. The power purchase agreement shall obligate the supplier to purchase such excess electricity at the rate that is provided for such purchases in a net metering standard contract or tariff approved by the Commission, unless the parties agree to a higher rate. The eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator owns any renewable energy certificates associated with its electrical generating facility; however, at the time that the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator enters into a power purchase agreement with its supplier, the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator shall have a one-time option to sell the renewable energy certificates associated with such electrical generating facility to its supplier and be compensated at an amount that is established by the Commission to reflect the value of such renewable energy certificates. Nothing in this section shall prevent the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator and the supplier from voluntarily entering into an agreement for the sale and purchase of excess electricity or renewable energy certificates at mutually-agreed upon prices if the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator does not exercise its option to sell its renewable energy certificates to its supplier at Commission-approved prices at the time that the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator enters into a power purchase agreement with its supplier. All costs incurred by the supplier to purchase excess electricity and renewable energy certificates from eligible customer-generators or eligible agricultural customer-generators shall be recoverable through its Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS) rate

adjustment clause, if the supplier has a Commission-approved RPS plan. If not, then all costs shall be recoverable through the supplier's fuel adjustment clause. For purposes of this section, "all costs" shall be defined as the rates paid to the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural customer-generator for the purchase of excess electricity and renewable energy certificates and any administrative costs incurred to manage the eligible customer-generator's or eligible agricultural customer-generator's power purchase arrangements. The net metering standard contract or tariff shall be available to eligible customer-generators or eligible agricultural customer-generators on a first-come, first-served basis in each electric distribution company's Virginia service area ~~until the rated generating capacity owned and operated by eligible customer-generators, eligible agricultural customer-generators, and small agricultural generators in the state reaches one percent of each electric distribution company's adjusted Virginia peak-load forecast for the previous year~~, and shall require the supplier to pay the eligible customer-generator or eligible agricultural 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.

2. That § 1 of the first enactment of Chapters 358 and 382 of the Acts of Assembly of 2013, as amended by the first enactment of Chapter 803 of the Acts of Assembly of 2017, is amended and reenacted as follows:

§ 1. That the State Corporation Commission (Commission) shall conduct pilot programs under which a person that owns or operates a solar-powered or wind-powered electricity generation facility located on premises owned or leased by an eligible customer-generator, as defined in § 56-594 of the Code of Virginia, shall be permitted to sell the electricity generated from such facility exclusively to such eligible customer-generator under a power purchase agreement used to provide third party financing of the costs of such a renewable generation facility (third party power purchase agreement), subject to the following terms, conditions, and restrictions:

a. A pilot program shall be conducted within the certificated service territory of each investor-owned electric utility other than a utility described in subsection G of § 56-580 of the Code of Virginia ("Pilot Utility"), provided that within the certificated service territory of an investor-owned utility that was not bound by a rate case settlement adopted by the Commission that extended in its application beyond January 1, 2002, nonprofit, private institutions of higher education as defined in § 23.1-100 of the Code of Virginia that are not being served by generation provided under subdivision A 5 of § 56-577 of the Code of Virginia shall be deemed to be customer-generators eligible to participate in the pilot program;

b. The aggregated capacity of all generation facilities that are subject to such third party power purchase agreements at any time during the pilot program shall not exceed 50 megawatts for an investor-owned utility that was bound by a rate case settlement adopted by the Commission that extended in its application beyond January 1, 2002, or seven megawatts for an investor-owned utility that was not bound by a rate case settlement adopted by the Commission that extended in its application beyond January 1, 2002. ~~Such limitation on the aggregated capacity of such facilities shall constitute a portion of the existing limit of one percent of each Pilot Utility's adjusted Virginia peak-load forecast for the previous year that is available to eligible customer-generators pursuant to subsection E of § 56-594 of the Code of Virginia.~~ Notwithstanding any provision of this act that incorporates provisions of § 56-594, the seller and the customer shall elect either to (i) enter into their third party power purchase agreement subject to the conditions and provisions of the Pilot Utility's net energy metering program under § 56-594 or (ii) provide that electricity generated from the generation facilities subject to the third party power purchase agreement will not be net metered under § 56-594, provided that an election not to net meter under § 56-594 shall not exempt the third party power purchase agreement and the parties thereto from the requirements of this act that incorporate provisions of § 56-594;

c. A solar-powered or wind-powered generation facility with a capacity of no less than 50 kilowatts and no more than one megawatt shall be eligible for a third party power purchase agreement under the pilot program; however, if the customer under such agreement is an entity with tax-exempt status in accordance with § 501(c) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1954, as amended, then such facility is

eligible for the pilot program even if it does not meet the 50 kilowatts minimum size requirement. The maximum generation capacity of one megawatt shall not affect the limits on the capacity of electrical generating capacities of 20 kilowatts for residential customers and 500 kilowatts for nonresidential customers set forth in subsection B of § 56-594 of the Code of Virginia, which limitations shall continue to apply to net energy metering generation facilities regardless of whether they are the subject of a third party power purchase agreement under the pilot program;

d. A generation facility that is the subject of a third party power purchase agreement under the pilot program shall serve only one customer, and a third party power purchase agreement shall not serve multiple customers;

e. The customer under a third party power purchase agreement under the pilot program shall be subject to the interconnection and other requirements imposed on eligible customer-generators pursuant to subsection C of § 56-594 of the Code of Virginia, including the requirement that the customer bear the reasonable costs, as determined by the Commission, of the items described in clauses (i), (ii), and (iii) of such subsection;

f. A third party power purchase agreement under the pilot program shall not be valid unless it conforms in all respects to the requirements of the pilot program conducted under the provisions of this act and unless the Commission and the Pilot Utility are provided written notice of the parties' intent to enter into a third party power purchase agreement not less than 30 days prior to the agreement's proposed effective date; and

g. An affiliate of the Pilot Utility shall be permitted to offer and enter into third party power purchase arrangements on the same basis as may any other person that satisfies the requirements of being a seller under a third party power purchase agreement under the pilot program.