SENATE BILL No. 1575

Introduced by Senator Soto

February 19, 2004

An act to amend Sections 218, 366, and 366.2 of the Public Utilities Code, relating to public utilities.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1575, as introduced, Soto. Direct transactions: community choice aggregation.

The Public Utilities Act requires the Public Utilities Commission to take actions as needed to facilitate direct transactions between electricity suppliers and end-use customers, and authorizes the voluntary aggregation of customers' electrical loads. The act specifically authorizes customers to aggregate their electrical loads as members of their local community with community choice aggregators, and authorizes a community choice aggregator to aggregate the electrical load of interested electricity consumers within its boundaries. The act defines terms for its purposes.

This bill would make technical, nonsubstantive changes to those provisions.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 218 of the Public Utilities Code is amended to read:

218. (a) ''Electrical corporation'' includes every corporation or person owning, controlling, operating, or managing any electric plant for compensation within this state, except where electricity

is generated on or distributed by the producer through private property solely for its own use or the use of its tenants and not for sale or transmission to others.

(b) "Electrical corporation" does not include a corporation or person employing cogeneration technology or producing power from other than a conventional power source for the generation of electricity solely for any one or more of the following purposes:

(1) Its own use or the use of its tenants.

(2) The use of or sale to not more than two other corporations or persons solely for use on the real property ~~on~~ *at* which the electricity is generated or on real property immediately adjacent thereto, unless there is an intervening public street constituting the boundary between the real property on which the electricity is generated and the immediately adjacent property and one or more of the following applies:

(A) The real property on which the electricity is generated and the immediately adjacent real property is not under common ownership or control, or that common ownership or control was gained solely for purposes of sale of the electricity so generated and not for other business purposes.

(B) The useful thermal output of the facility generating the electricity is not used on the immediately adjacent property for petroleum production or refining.

(C) The electricity furnished to the immediately adjacent property is not utilized by a subsidiary or affiliate of the corporation or person generating the electricity.

(3) Sale or transmission to an electrical corporation or state or local public agency, but not for sale or transmission to others, unless the corporation or person is otherwise an electrical corporation.

(c) "Electrical corporation" does not include a corporation or person employing landfill gas technology for the generation of electricity for any one or more of the following purposes:

(1) Its own use or the use of not more than two of its tenants located on the real property on which the electricity is generated.

(2) The use of or sale to not more than two other corporations or persons solely for use on the real property on which the electricity is generated.

(3) Sale or transmission to an electrical corporation or state or local public agency.

(d) ‘‘Electrical corporation’’ does not include a corporation or person employing digester gas technology for the generation of electricity for any one or more of the following purposes:

(1) Its own use or the use of not more than two of its tenants located on the real property on which the electricity is generated.

(2) The use of or sale to not more than two other corporations or persons solely for use on the real property on which the electricity is generated.

(3) Sale or transmission to an electrical corporation or state or local public agency, provided, however, that the sale or transmission of the electricity service to a retail customer shall only be provided through the transmission system of the existing local publicly owned electric utility or electrical corporation of that retail customer.

(e) The amendments made to this section ~~at the 1987 portion of the 1987–88 Regular Session of the Legislature~~ *by Chapter 880 of the Statutes of 1988* do not apply to any corporation or person employing cogeneration technology or producing power from other than a conventional power source for the generation of electricity that physically produced electricity prior to January 1, 1989, and furnished that electricity to immediately adjacent real property for use thereon prior to January 1, 1989.

SEC. 2. Section 366 of the Public Utilities Code is amended to read:

366. (a) The commission shall take actions as needed to facilitate direct transactions between electricity suppliers and end-use customers. Customers ~~shall be entitled to~~ *may* aggregate their electrical loads on a voluntary basis, ~~provided that~~ *if* each customer does so by a positive written declaration. If no positive declaration is made by a customer, that customer shall continue to be served by the existing electrical corporation or its successor in interest, except aggregation by community choice aggregators, accomplished pursuant to Section 366.2.

(b) Aggregation of customer electrical load shall be authorized by the commission for all customer classes, including, but not limited~~,~~ to*,* small commercial or residential customers. Aggregation may be accomplished by private market aggregators, special districts, or on any other basis made available by market opportunities and agreeable by positive written declaration by individual consumers, except aggregation by community choice aggregators, which shall be accomplished pursuant to Section 366.2.

SEC. 3. Section 366.2 of the Public Utilities Code is amended to read:

366.2. (a) (1) Customers shall be entitled to aggregate their electric loads as members of their local community ~~with~~ *through* community choice aggregators.

(2) Customers may aggregate their loads through a public process with community choice aggregators, if each customer is given an opportunity to opt out of their community's aggregation program.

(3) If a customer opts out of a community choice aggregator's program, or has no community choice program available, that customer shall have the right to continue to be served by the existing electrical corporation or its successor in interest.

(b) If a public agency seeks to serve as a community choice aggregator, it shall offer the opportunity to purchase electricity to all residential customers within its jurisdiction.

(c) (1) Notwithstanding Section 366, a community choice aggregator ~~is hereby authorized to~~ *may* aggregate the electrical load of interested electricity consumers within its boundaries to reduce transaction costs to consumers, provide consumer protections, and leverage the negotiation of contracts. However, the community choice aggregator may not aggregate electrical load if that load is served by a local publicly owned electric utility, as defined in subdivision (d) of Section 9604. A community choice aggregator may group retail electricity customers to solicit bids, broker, and contract for electricity and energy services for those customers. The community choice aggregator may enter into agreements for services to facilitate the sale and purchase of electricity and other related services. Those service agreements may be entered into by a single city or county, a city and county, or by a group of cities, cities and counties, or counties.

(2) Under community choice aggregation, customer participation may not require a positive written declaration, but all customers shall be informed of their right to opt out of the community choice aggregation program. If no negative declaration is made by a customer, that customer shall be served through the community choice aggregation program.

(3) A community choice aggregator establishing electrical load aggregation pursuant to this section shall develop an implementation plan detailing the process and consequences of aggregation. The implementation plan, and any subsequent changes to it, shall be considered and adopted at a duly noticed public hearing. The implementation plan shall contain all of the following:

(A) An organizational structure of the program, its operations, and its funding.

(B) Ratesetting and other costs to participants.

(C) Provisions for disclosure and due process in setting rates and allocating costs among participants.

(D) The methods for entering and terminating agreements with other entities.

(E) The rights and responsibilities of program participants, including, but not limited to, consumer protection procedures, credit issues, and shutoff procedures.

(F) Termination of the program.

(G) A description of the third parties that will be supplying electricity under the program, including, but not limited to, information about financial, technical, and operational capabilities.

(4) A community choice aggregator establishing electrical load aggregation shall prepare a statement of intent with the implementation plan. Any community choice load aggregation established pursuant to this section shall provide for the following:

(A) Universal access.

(B) Reliability.

(C) Equitable treatment of all classes of customers.

(D) Any requirements established by state law or by the commission concerning aggregated service.

(5) In order to determine the cost-recovery mechanism to be imposed on the community choice aggregator pursuant to subdivisions (d), (e), and (f) that shall be paid by the customers of the community choice aggregator to prevent shifting of costs, the community choice aggregator shall file the implementation plan with the commission, and any other information requested by the commission that the commission determines is necessary to develop the cost-recovery mechanism in subdivisions (d), (e), and (f).

(6) The commission shall notify any electrical corporation serving the customers proposed for aggregation that an implementation plan initiating community choice aggregation has been filed, within 10 days of the filing.

(7) Within 90 days after the community choice aggregator establishing load aggregation files its implementation plan, the commission shall certify that it has received the implementation plan, including any additional information necessary to determine a cost-recovery mechanism. After certification of receipt of the implementation plan and any additional information requested, the commission shall then provide the community choice aggregator with its findings regarding any cost recovery that must be paid by customers of the community choice aggregator to prevent a shifting of costs as provided for in subdivisions (d), (e), and (f).

(8) No entity proposing community choice aggregation shall act to furnish electricity to electricity consumers within its boundaries until the commission determines the cost-recovery that must be paid by the customers of that proposed community choice aggregation program, as provided for in subdivisions (d), (e), and (f). The commission shall designate the earliest possible effective date for implementation of a community choice aggregation program, taking into consideration the impact on any annual procurement plan of the electrical corporation that has been approved by the commission.

(9) All electrical corporations shall cooperate fully with any community choice aggregators that investigate, pursue, or implement community choice aggregation programs. Cooperation shall include providing the entities with appropriate billing and electrical load data, including, but not limited to, data detailing electricity needs and patterns of usage, as determined by the commission, and in accordance with procedures established by the commission. Electrical corporations shall continue to provide all metering, billing, collection, and customer service to retail customers that participate in community choice aggregation programs. Bills sent by the electrical corporation to retail customers shall identify the community choice aggregator as providing the electrical energy component of the bill. The commission shall determine the terms and conditions under which

the electrical corporation provides services to community choice aggregators and retail customers.

(10) (A) A city, county, or city and county that elects to implement a community choice aggregation program within its jurisdiction pursuant to this chapter shall do so by ordinance.

(B) Two or more cities, counties, or cities and counties may participate as a group in a community choice aggregation pursuant to this chapter, through a joint powers agency established pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 6500) of Division 7 of Title 1 of the Government Code, if each entity adopts an ordinance pursuant to subparagraph (A).

(11) Following adoption of aggregation through the ordinance described in paragraph (10), the program shall allow any retail customer to opt out and to continue to be served as a bundled service customer by the existing electrical corporation, or its successor in interest. Delivery services shall be provided at the same rates, terms, and conditions, as approved by the commission, for community choice aggregation customers and customers that have entered into a direct transaction where applicable, as determined by the commission. Once enrolled in the aggregated entity, any ratepayer that chooses to opt out within 60 days or two billing cycles of the date of enrollment may do so without penalty and shall be entitled to receive default service pursuant to paragraph (3) of subdivision (a). Customers that return to the electrical corporation for procurement services shall be subject to the same terms and conditions as are applicable to other returning direct access customers from the same class, as determined by the commission, as authorized by the commission pursuant to this code or any other provision of law. Any reentry fees to be imposed after the opt-out period specified in this paragraph, shall be approved by the commission and shall reflect the cost of reentry. The commission shall exclude any amounts previously determined and paid pursuant to subdivisions (d), (e), and (f) from the cost of reentry.

(12) Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorizing any city or any community choice retail load aggregator to restrict the ability of retail electricity customers to obtain or receive service from any authorized electric service provider in a manner consistent with law.

(13) (A) The community choice aggregator shall fully inform participating customers at least twice within two calendar months, or 60 days, in advance of the date of commencing automatic enrollment. Notifications may occur concurrently with billing cycles. Following enrollment, the aggregated entity shall fully inform participating customers for not less than two consecutive billing cycles. Notification may include, but is not limited to, direct mailings to customers, or inserts in water, sewer, or other utility bills. Any notification shall inform customers of both of the following:

(i) That they are to be automatically enrolled and that the customer has the right to opt out of the community choice aggregator without penalty.

(ii) The terms and conditions of the services offered.

(B) The community choice aggregator may request the commission to approve and order the electrical corporation to provide the notification required in subparagraph (A). If the commission orders the electrical corporation to send one or more of the notifications required pursuant to subparagraph (A) in the electrical corporation's normally scheduled monthly billing process, the electrical corporation shall be entitled to recover from the community choice aggregator all reasonable incremental costs it incurs related to the notification or notifications. The electrical corporation shall fully cooperate with the community choice aggregator in determining the feasibility and costs associated with using the electrical corporation's normally scheduled monthly billing process to provide one or more of the notifications required pursuant to subparagraph (A).

(C) Each notification shall also include a mechanism by which a ratepayer may opt out of community choice aggregated service. The opt out may take the form of a self-addressed return postcard indicating the customer's election to remain with, or return to, electrical energy service provided by the electrical corporation, or another straightforward means by which the customer may elect to derive electrical energy service through the electrical corporation providing service in the area.

(14) The community choice aggregator shall register with the commission, which may require additional information to ensure compliance with basic consumer protection rules and other procedural matters.

(15) Once the community choice aggregator's contract is signed, the community choice aggregator shall notify the applicable electrical corporation that community choice service will commence within 30 days.

(16) Once notified of a community choice aggregator program, the electrical corporation shall transfer all applicable accounts to the new supplier within a 30-day period from the date of the close of their normally scheduled monthly metering and billing process.

(17) An electrical corporation shall recover from the community choice aggregator any costs reasonably attributable to the community choice aggregator, as determined by the commission, of implementing this section, including, but not limited to, all business and information system changes, except for transaction-based costs as described in this paragraph. Any costs not reasonably attributable to a community choice aggregator shall be recovered from ratepayers, as determined by the commission. All reasonable transaction-based costs of notices, billing, metering, collections, and customer communications or other services provided to an aggregator or its customers shall be recovered from the aggregator or its customers on terms and at rates to be approved by the commission.

(18) At the request and expense of any community choice aggregator, electrical corporations shall install, maintain and calibrate metering devices at mutually agreeable locations within or adjacent to the community aggregator's political boundaries. The electrical corporation shall read the metering devices and provide the data collected to the community aggregator at the aggregator's expense. To the extent that the community aggregator requests a metering location that would require alteration or modification of a circuit, the electrical corporation shall only be required to alter or modify a circuit if such alteration or modification does not compromise the safety, reliability or operational flexibility of the electrical corporation's facilities. All costs incurred to modify circuits pursuant to this paragraph, shall be born by the community aggregator.

(d) (1) It is the intent of the Legislature that each retail end-use customer that has purchased power from an electrical corporation on or after February 1, 2001, should bear a fair share of the Department of Water Resources' electricity purchase costs, as well as electricity purchase contract obligations incurred as of the effective date of the act adding this section, that are recoverable from electrical corporation customers in commission-approved rates. It is further the intent of the Legislature to prevent any shifting of recoverable costs between customers.

(2) The Legislature finds and declares that this subdivision is consistent with the requirements of Division 27 (commencing with Section 80000) of the Water Code and Section 360.5, and is therefore declaratory of existing law.

(e) A retail end-use customer that purchases electricity from a community choice aggregator pursuant to this section shall pay both of the following:

(1) A charge equivalent to the charges that would otherwise be imposed on the customer by the commission to recover bond related costs pursuant to any agreement between the commission and the Department of Water Resources pursuant to Section 80110 of the Water Code, which charge shall be payable until any obligations of the Department of Water Resources pursuant to Division 27 (commencing with Section 80000) of the Water Code are fully paid or otherwise discharged.

(2) Any additional costs of the Department of Water Resources, equal to the customer's proportionate share of the Department of Water Resources' estimated net unavoidable electricity purchase contract costs as determined by the commission, for the period commencing with the customer's purchases of electricity from the community choice aggregator, through the expiration of all then existing electricity purchase contracts entered into by the Department of Water Resources.

(f) A retail end-use customer purchasing electricity from a community choice aggregator pursuant to this section shall reimburse the electrical corporation that previously served the customer for all of the following:

(1) The electrical corporation's unrecovered past undercollections for electricity purchases, including any financing costs, attributable to that customer, that the commission lawfully determines may be recovered in rates.

(2) Any additional costs of the electrical corporation recoverable in commission-approved rates, equal to the share of the electrical corporation's estimated net unavoidable electricity purchase contract costs attributable to the customer, as determined by the commission, for the period commencing with the

customer's purchases of electricity from the community choice aggregator, through the expiration of all then existing electricity purchase contracts entered into by the electrical corporation.

(g) (1) Any charges imposed pursuant to subdivision (e) shall be the property of the Department of Water Resources. Any charges imposed pursuant to subdivision (f) shall be the property of the electrical corporation. The commission shall establish mechanisms, including agreements with, or orders with respect to, electrical corporations necessary to ensure that charges payable pursuant to this section shall be promptly remitted to the party entitled to payment.

(2) Charges imposed pursuant to subdivisions (d), (e), and (f) shall be nonbypassable.

(h) Notwithstanding Section 80110 of the Water Code, the commission shall authorize community choice aggregation only if the commission imposes a cost-recovery mechanism pursuant to subdivisions (d), (e), (f), and (g). Except as provided by this subdivision, this section shall not alter the suspension by the commission of direct purchases of electricity from alternate providers other than by community choice aggregators, pursuant to Section 80110 of the Water Code.

(i) (1) The commission shall not authorize community choice aggregation until it implements a cost-recovery mechanism, consistent with subdivisions (d), (e), and (f), that is applicable to customers that elected to purchase electricity from an alternate provider between February 1, 2001, and January 1, 2003.

(2) The commission shall not authorize community choice aggregation until it submits a report certifying compliance with paragraph (1) to the Senate Energy, Utilities and Communications Committee, or its successor, and the Assembly Committee on Utilities and Commerce, or its successor.

(3) The commission shall not authorize community choice aggregation until it has adopted rules for implementing community choice aggregation.

(j) The commission shall prepare and submit to the Legislature, on or before January 1, 2006, a report regarding the number of community choices aggregations, the number of customers served by community choice aggregations, third party suppliers to community choice aggregations, compliance with this section, and the overall effectiveness of community choice aggregation programs.

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