

Senate Bill No. 1345

CHAPTER 537

An act to amend Section 801.5 of the Civil Code, and to add and repeal Sections 25619 and 25620.10 of, the Public Resources Code, relating to energy programs.

[Approved by Governor September 18, 2000. Filed
with Secretary of State September 19, 2000.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 1345, Peace. State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission: grant program: solar energy systems.

Existing law, for purposes of provisions governing property rights, defines the term "solar energy system" to mean any solar collector or other solar energy device whose primary purpose is to provide for the collection, storage, and distribution of solar energy for space heating or cooling, or for water heating, or any structural design feature of a building, whose primary purpose is to provide for the collection, storage, and distribution of solar energy for space heating or cooling, or for water heating.

This bill would revise that definition of "solar energy system" to additionally include within that definition of a "solar energy system" any solar collector or other solar energy device whose primary purpose is to provide for electricity generation, or any structural design feature of a building whose primary purpose is to provide for electricity generation.

Existing law requires the State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission to expand and accelerate development of alternative sources of energy including solar resources.

This bill, until January 1, 2006, would require the commission, to the extent that funds are appropriated for that purpose in the annual Budget Act, to implement a grant program to accomplish specified goals including making solar energy systems cost competitive with alternate forms of energy. The bill would require the grants to be based on either the performance of, or the type of, the solar energy system, as determined by the commission, and would prohibit duplicate grants from other grant programs administered by the commission for solar systems that produce electricity, as specified. This bill would declare that any action taken by an applicant to receive a grant award, including, but not limited to, satisfying conditions specified by the commission, would not constitute the rendering of any type of benefit to the commission.

The bill, until January 1, 2006, would also require the commission, to the extent that funds are appropriated for that purpose in the annual Budget Act, to develop and implement a grant program to offset a portion of the costs of eligible distributed generation systems, as prescribed.

The bill would authorize the commission to use up to a total of \$250,000 of the collective funds appropriated for the above-referenced grant programs to fund the commission's costs in administering those programs.

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

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares both of the following:

(a) Solar technologies produce clean, renewable energy while reducing California's energy deficit, creating in-state businesses and jobs in the manufacturing, contracting, and distribution industries, and preserving California's preeminent role as home to the world's largest concentration of solar energy companies.

(b) High-efficiency, low polluting distributed generation resources, installed on customer sites, can reduce customer costs of energy, reduce environmental pollution associated with central station powerplants, and provide customers with improved reliability in the event of an electricity outage.

SEC. 2. Section 801.5 of the Civil Code is amended to read:

801.5. (a) The right of receiving sunlight as specified in subdivision 18 of Section 801 shall be referred to as a solar easement. "Solar easement" means the right of receiving sunlight across real property of another for any solar energy system.

As used in this section, "solar energy system" means either of the following:

(1) Any solar collector or other solar energy device whose primary purpose is to provide for the collection, storage, and distribution of solar energy for space heating, space cooling, electric generation, or water heating.

(2) Any structural design feature of a building, whose primary purpose is to provide for the collection, storage, and distribution of solar energy for electricity generation, space heating or cooling, or for water heating.

(b) Any instrument creating a solar easement shall include, at a minimum, all of the following:

(1) A description of the dimensions of the easement expressed in measurable terms, such as vertical or horizontal angles measured in degrees, or the hours of the day on specified dates during which direct sunlight to a specified surface of a solar collector, device, or structural design feature may not be obstructed, or a combination of these descriptions.



(2) The restrictions placed upon vegetation, structures, and other objects that would impair or obstruct the passage of sunlight through the easement.

(3) The terms or conditions, if any, under which the easement may be revised or terminated.

SEC. 3. Section 25619 is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

25619. (a) The commission shall develop a grant program to offset a portion of the cost of eligible solar energy systems. The goals of the program are all of the following:

(1) To make solar energy systems cost competitive with alternate forms of energy.

(2) To provide support for electricity storage capabilities in solar electric applications to facilitate enhanced reliability in the event of a power outage.

(3) To encourage the purchase by California residents of California-made solar systems.

(b) (1) The grant for an eligible solar energy system shall be based on either the performance of, or the type of, the solar energy system, as the commission determines, and the amount of the grant shall not exceed seven hundred fifty dollars (\$750). Except as provided in paragraph (2), if a grant is awarded pursuant to this section for an eligible solar energy system that produces electricity, no grant shall be made for that system from any other grant program administered by the commission.

(2) An applicant who receives a grant for a photovoltaic solar energy system from another program administered by the commission, may also receive a grant for that system pursuant to this section, if all of the following conditions are met:

(A) The system will accomplish the purpose specified in paragraph (3) of subdivision (a).

(B) The system is an eligible solar energy system.

(C) The system includes adequate battery storage, as determined by the commission.

(c) Purchasers, sellers, owner-builders, or owner-developers of the solar energy system may apply for a grant under this section. An owner-builder or owner-developer of a new single-family dwelling on which a system is installed may elect not to apply for a grant on a solar energy system installed on a new single-family dwelling. If an owner-builder or owner-developer of a new single-family dwelling on which a system is installed elects not to apply for the grant for a solar energy system, the purchaser of the dwelling may apply for the grant. The seller, owner-builder, or owner-developer shall reflect the amount of the grant received on the purchaser's bill of sale.

(d) The commission shall develop and adopt guidelines to provide appropriate consumer protection under the grant program and to govern other aspects of the grant program. The guidelines shall be

adopted at a publicly noticed meeting and all interested parties shall be provided an opportunity to comment either orally or in writing. Not less than 30 days notice shall be provided for the public meeting. Subsequent substantive changes to adopted guidelines shall be adopted by the commission at a public meeting upon written notice to the public of not less than 10 days. The guidelines adopted pursuant to this subdivision are not subject to the requirements of Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(e) The commission shall require installers of solar energy systems funded through grants under this section to be properly licensed to do so by the Contractors' State License Board. This requirement does not apply to the owner of a single-family dwelling who installs a solar energy system on his or her single-family dwelling.

(f) The award of a grant pursuant to this section is subject to appeal to the commission upon a showing that factors other than those described in the guidelines adopted by the commission were applied in making the award. Any action taken by an applicant to apply for, or become or remain eligible to receive an award, including satisfying conditions specified by the commission, does not constitute the rendering of goods, services, or a direct benefit to the commission. Awards made pursuant to this section are not subject to any repayment requirements of Chapter 7.4 (commencing with Section 25645).

(g) For the purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) "Cost" includes equipment, installation charges, and all components necessary to carry out the intended use of the system if those components are an integral part of the system. In the case of a system that is leased, "cost" means the principal recovery portion of all lease payments scheduled to be made during the full term of the lease, which is the cost incurred by the taxpayer in acquiring the solar energy system, excluding interest charges and maintenance expenses.

(2) (A) "Eligible solar energy system" means any new, previously unused solar energy device whose primary purpose is to provide for the collection, conversion, transfer, distribution, storage, or control of solar energy for water heating or electricity generation, and that meets applicable standards and requirements imposed by state and local permitting authorities, including, but not limited to, the National Electric Code. Eligible solar energy systems for water heating purposes shall be certified by the Solar Rating and Certification Corporation (SRCC) or any other nationally recognized certification agency that certifies complete systems. Major components of eligible solar energy systems for electricity generation shall be listed by a certified testing agency, such as the Underwriters Laboratory.



(B) “Eligible solar energy system” does not include any of the following:

(i) Wind energy devices that produce electricity or provide mechanical work.

(ii) Additions to or augmentation of existing solar energy systems.

(iii) A device that produces electricity for a structure unless the device is interconnected and operates in parallel with the electric grid.

(C) Eligible solar energy systems shall have a warranty of not less than three years.

(3) “Installed” means placed in a functionally operative state.

(h) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2006, and as of that date is repealed, unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2006, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 4. Section 25620.10 is added to the Public Resources Code, to read:

25620.10. (a) The commission shall develop and implement a grant program to offset a portion of the costs of eligible distributed generation systems.

(b) A grant for an eligible distributed generation system shall be based on either the performance or type of distributed generation system, as determined by the commission. The amount of the grant shall not exceed the lesser of 10 percent of the costs of the eligible distributed generation system or two thousand dollars (\$2,000).

(c) An applicant who receives a grant for an eligible distributed generation system from another program administered by the commission may also receive a grant for that system pursuant to this section if the system possesses adequate black-start capability, as determined by the commission.

(d) Purchasers, sellers, owner-builders, or owner-developers of the eligible distributed generation system may apply for a grant under this section. If the owner-developer or owner-builder of the property on which a system is installed elects to not apply for a grant under this section, the purchaser of the property may apply for the grant. The seller, owner-builder, or owner-developer shall reflect the amount of the grant received on the purchaser’s bill of sale.

(e) The commission shall develop and adopt guidelines to provide appropriate consumer protection under the grant program and to govern other aspects of the grant program, which shall be made available to the public. Not less than 30 days’ notice shall be provided for a public meeting to adopt the guidelines. Public meetings to adopt subsequent substantive guideline changes require written public notice of not less than 10 days. The guidelines adopted pursuant to this subdivision are not subject to the requirements of Chapter 3.5 (commencing with Section 11340) of Part 1 of Division 3 of Title 2 of the Government Code.

(f) The commission shall require installers of eligible distributed generation systems funded through grants under this section to be properly licensed to do so by the Contractors' State License Board.

(g) The award of a grant pursuant to this section is subject to appeal to the commission upon a showing that factors other than those adopted by the commission were applied in making the award. Any action taken by an applicant to apply for, or become or remain eligible to receive a grant award, including satisfying conditions specified by the commission, does not constitute the rendering of goods, services, or a direct benefit to the commission. Awards made pursuant to this section are not subject to any repayment requirements of Chapter 7.4 (commencing with Section 25645).

(h) Eligible distributed generation systems shall have a warranty of not less than three years.

(i) For purposes of this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) "Black-start capability" means the capability to provide electricity to the customer in the event of an outage.

(2) "Cost" includes equipment, installation charges and all components necessary to carry out the intended use of the system if those components are an integral part of the system. In the case of a system that is leased, "cost" means the principal recovery portion of all lease payments scheduled to be made during the full term of the lease, which is the costs incurred by the customer in acquiring the distributed generation system, excluding interest charges and maintenance expenses.

(3) "Distributed generation" means any onsite generation, interconnected and operating in parallel with the electricity grid, that is used solely to meet onsite electric load.

(4) "Eligible distributed generation system" means any new, previously unused distributed generation system, interconnected and operating in parallel with the electricity grid, certified by the commission to provide environmental and system reliability benefits equal to or greater than the following specifications:

(A) Forty percent total fuel-to-energy conversion efficiency for any nonrenewable fuel system.

(B) Thirty-five percent total fuel-to-energy conversion efficiency for any renewable fuel system.

(C) Emission of oxides of nitrogen and any other applicable criteria pollutants that equal or exceed Best Achievable Control Technology (BACT) for natural gas fired central station powerplants. The State Air Resources Board shall, in consultation with the commission, prepare and update specifications for those emissions and other applicable criteria pollutants.

(D) Ninety percent total system reliability.

(5) Potentially certifiable technologies include all of the following:

(A) Microcogeneration.

(B) Gas turbines.

(C) Fuel cells.

(D) Electricity storage technologies in systems not eligible for grants under Section 25619.

(E) Reciprocating internal combustion engines.

(6) “Installed” means placed in a functionally operative state.

(j) This section shall remain in effect only until January 1, 2006, and as of that date is repealed unless a later enacted statute, that is enacted before January 1, 2006, deletes or extends that date.

SEC. 5. The State Energy Resources Conservation and Development Commission shall only implement Sections 25619 and 25620.10 of the Public Resources Code to the extent that moneys are appropriated for the purposes of those sections in the annual Budget Act. The commission may annually expend up to a total of two hundred fifty thousand dollars (\$250,000) of the funds collectively available for those programs to fund the commission’s cost of administering the programs.

