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Indiana House of Representatives passes Good and Bad Energy Bills

The Indiana House of Representatives has passed two bills with Renewable Energy Standards (RES) —Senate Bills 300 and 420. The Hoosier Chapter supports the stronger of these bills, SB 300, which also includes a strong net metering requirement.

The net metering component of SB 300 would allow customers to generate up to 1 megawatt (1,000 kilowatts) of electricity from renewable sources and get credit on their bills for any electricity that they provide to the utilities. It also expands the list of groups eligible for the benefits of net metering to businesses, industry, schools and local governments.

SB 300 also establishes a Renewable Energy Standard that would require investor-owned utilities to get 15% of their electricity using renewable resources by the year 2025. Renewable resources include solar, wind, small hydroelectric facilities and facilities generating electricity from renewable fuels. Right now, Indiana is the only Midwest state without an RES, which means we are missing out on economic opportunities that would create thousands of jobs for the construction, operation and maintenance of wind farms, solar panels and renewable biomass plants.

On the other hand, SB 420 would allow utilities to meet a lower renewable standard of only 10 percent by 2025, although it provides customer-financed incentives for utilities to reach the higher 15 percent level. The Hoosier Chapter thinks the state shouldn't be forcing customers to pay for utilities to increase their use of renewable energy sources.

“The worst aspect of SB 420, however, is that it includes ‘clean coal technology’ as a renewable energy source and allows utilities to use it to meet up to one-quarter of the required standard” according to Bowden Quinn, Sierra Club State Conservation Coordinator. “This promotes the use of coal gasification techniques, which reduce the emission of some toxic pollutants but don't reduce carbon dioxide emissions that contribute to global climate change. By calling coal a renewable energy resource, this bill would lose much of the benefit of clean energy sources like wind and solar power, which are truly renewable and don't have toxic or greenhouse gas emissions,” Quinn added.

The Hoosier Chapter calls on the General Assembly to promote real clean energy by passing SB 300.

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