

Act No. 56 (H.40). Public service; energy; conservation and development

An act relating to establishing a renewable energy standard

This act creates a Renewable Energy Standard (RES) applicable to the supply portfolios of Vermont electric utilities with requirements that start in 2017. It also repeals the Sustainably Priced Energy Enterprise Development (SPEED) Program, except for the standard offer component of that program.

The RES establishes three categories:

- It converts existing total renewables targets into a total renewable energy requirement that rises from 55 percent of a utility's sales in 2017 to 75 percent in 2032. A utility may meet this requirement by owning renewable energy or renewable energy credits (RECs) from any plant, as long as the plant's energy is capable of delivery to New England.
- It creates a distributed renewable generation category that rises from one percent of a utility's sales in 2017 to 10 percent in 2032. A utility may meet this category through renewable energy or RECs from plants that come into service after June 30, 2015 and are five MW or less and directly connected to the Vermont utility grid or are net metering systems for which the utility retires the RECs. This category counts toward the total renewable energy category.
- It creates a separate energy transformation category that rises from two percent in 2017 to 12 percent in 2032, except that small municipal utilities will not have to meet this category until 2019. A utility may meet this category through additional distributed renewable generation or "energy transformation projects." Energy transformation projects must have commenced on or after January 1, 2015 and deliver energy goods or services other than electric generation and must result in a net reduction in fossil fuel consumption by a utility's customers and the attributable greenhouse gases. The act states that energy transformation projects may include home weatherization or other thermal energy efficiency measures, air source or geothermal heat pumps, and other measures.

The act also includes provisions relating to the ownership and retirement of RECs for net metering systems and to the adoption of setbacks and screening requirements for solar electric generation plants.

Multiple effective dates, beginning on June 11, 2015