

HOUSE RESEARCH

Bill Summary

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Overview

This bill sets setback requirements for solar panels that are part of a solar energy generating system, requires the environmental review process for a large electric generating plant or high-voltage transmission line to include analysis of the project's impact on agricultural drainage systems and if the project is a solar energy generating system, to analyze reflected solar irradiance impacts. The bill also requires the environmental review to analyze the project's impact on local land use and consistency with local plans and official controls. Finally, it requires local approval of a project if the local government has been a formal party and fully participated in the hearing process.

Section

- 1 Setback for solar energy generating systems.** Sets a general setback distance of 400 feet from any dwelling for solar panels that are part of solar energy generating system. Allows a greater setback under a local ordinance. Allows the property owner and solar generating system owner to agree to a smaller setback. Effective the day after enactment.
- 2 Environmental review.** Adds requirements to an environmental impact statement prepared for a large electric generating plant or high-voltage transmission line proposed to be constructed on agricultural land. Requires analysis of the impact of construction on agricultural drainage systems. Defines agricultural drainage system. If the electric generating plant is a solar energy system, the EIS must also analyze reflected solar irradiance impacts on nearby airports, air traffic, highways, and residences.
- 3 Considerations in designating sites and routes.** Requires the commissioner of commerce in making site and route permit determinations for electric energy generating plants and

Section

transmission lines to evaluate the impact on local land use, including whether the proposed site or route conflicts with the county or local comprehensive plan or official controls.

- 4** **Environmental review.** Similar to section 2, adds requirements to an environmental assessment prepared under the section governing alternative environmental review procedures for a large electric generating plant or high-voltage transmission line proposed to be constructed on agricultural land. Requires analysis of the impact of construction on agricultural drainage systems. Defines agricultural drainage system. If the electric generating plant is a solar energy system, the environmental assessment must also analyze reflected solar irradiance impacts on nearby airports, air traffic, highways, and residences.

- 5** **Requirement for local approval.** Prohibits the commissioner of commerce from issuing a site permit for a solar energy generating system until all required local permits have been granted and the local government adopts a resolution approving the project, as long as the local government intervened as a formal party and fully participated in the public hearing process. Effective the day after final enactment.