2019 Energy Legislation Recap

Signed:

HB156 (study commission on a state energy dept.): NH has no dedicated state energy office or agency. State staff working on energy are dispersed across various agencies (e.g., Public Utilities Commission, Office of Strategic Initiatives, Department of Environmental Service, etc.) resulting in a lack of coordination, direction, and leadership from the state on energy issues. NH may benefit from additional state personnel expertise in energy matters. This study commission will investigate the creation of a state energy office. Clean Energy NH will be represented on this study commission. The first meeting has been scheduled for September 17th.

SB24 (re-authorizing Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative): The Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) is a multi-state cap and trade program that prices carbon emissions from the power sector and by doing so generates revenues for states to deploy for energy and climate programs. This bill ensures NH’s continuing participation in the program according to updated memorandum of understanding between participating states.

SB165 (low-income community solar): Directs the Public Utilities Commission to authorize at least two new low-moderate income community solar projects in each utility service territory each year, beginning in 2020. Low-moderate income community solar projects will receive additional net metering credit of 3 cents per kilowatt-hour (kWh) up until July 2021 and 2.5 cent per kWh thereafter.

This bill also makes group net metering projects eligible for “on-bill crediting” under which members of a group net metering project may receive credit for their share of the renewable energy directly on their utility bill (as opposed to via a payment from the Host of the group net metering project).

SB286 (relative to municipal aggregation, aka, Community Power): Enables local governments to implement Community Power programs, which can procure and provide electricity to their residents and businesses, lowering costs and providing other energy services. Electric distribution utilities (e.g., Eversource, NH Electric Coop, Liberty Utilities, Unitil) continue to deliver electricity over their transmission and distribution networks. After town meeting or City Council approval of Community Power programs, all customers not already on competitive supply are automatically enrolled, but can choose to opt-out to remain with their regulated utility as their default electricity supplier.

In addition to bulk energy purchasing, Community Power programs can be a vehicle to construct local renewable energy systems that supply power directly to residents and businesses.

Community Power programs can be implemented at the municipal or county level. Multiple local governments may group together to form Community Power programs. Two steps for implementation: (1) governing body (e.g., select board, town council, city council, county commission) establishes an electric aggregation committee to develop a Community Power plan; (2) legislative body (e.g., town meeting, city council) approves plan.

SB284 (statewide energy data platform): Directs the Public Utilities Commission, electric and gas utilities, and other parties to initiate a proceeding to develop a statewide on-line energy data platform if found to be cost effective.

HB562 (updating building codes): Updates statewide NH building codes from the 2009 to the 2015 code.
Vetoed:

Veto override session has been scheduled for 9/18 and 9/19, all vetoed bills will come up for override vote during this session. A 2/3 vote is needed in both the House and Senate to successfully override a veto.

**HB365** (to raise the cap on net metering projects from 1 to 5 megawatts): Would increase allowed size of renewable energy projects eligible to participate in net metering from 1 megawatt (MW) up to 5 MW. All net metering projects larger than 100 kilowatts (kW) are compensated at default energy supply rate and receive no compensation for transmission, distribution, demand charges, utility stranded costs, and other utility charges. The energy supply rate is the rate utilities pay energy suppliers for electricity. Under HB365, power from net metering projects offsets power utilities would otherwise procure from traditional energy suppliers at the same rate.

**SB72** (to eliminate REC sweeping): Would eliminate a provision in the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) which creates a free credit for unregistered Renewable Energy Credits towards utilities’ and other energy supplier’s RPS obligation without knowledge, consent of, or compensation to the system owner.

**SB307** (to enable towns to invest in more advanced outdoor lighting): Would allow municipalities and the state to purchase and install streetlight smart controls (enabling networked lighting controls and dimming capabilities) and associated metering to encourage energy savings and realize the associated monetary savings.

**SB275** (to make all state vehicles zero-emission by 2039): Would set a goal and encourage conversion of state vehicle fleet to zero emission vehicles to zero-emission by 2039.

**SB168** (to increase solar under the Renewable Portfolio Standard): Would increase RPS Class II (solar) compliance targets (currently set to 0.7% by 2025) to 1.2% in 2019, 1.9% in 2020, 2.6% in 2021, 3.3% in 2022, 4.0% in 2023, 4.7% in 2024, 5.4% in 2025.

**HB582** (directing RGGI rebates to efficiency): Would direct more RGGI revenue (currently allocated to bill rebates for residential electricity customers) towards energy efficiency programs, while retaining RGGI fund allocation to rebates for commercial and industrial customers.

**SB167** (clean energy resource procurement commission): Would create a legislative study commission to explore clean energy procurements.

**HB183** (microgrids & biomass): Creates “baseload renewable generation credits” for every megawatt-hour of electricity generated by six NH biomass-fueled power plants and requires each credit be purchased by the electric distribution in whose territory the biomass plants reside. Creates a study commission to study microgrids.

**SB205** Would have made changes to the membership of the Energy Efficiency and Sustainable Energy Board and extended the period of time for which Energy Efficiency program funding changes would be exempt from required legislative approval.