

HB 2301 -- COMMUNITY SOLAR GARDENS

SPONSOR: Berry

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Energy and the Environment by a vote of 12 to 0.

This bill specifies that if an electrical corporation plans to acquire or construct a new supply-side resource in its resource plan filed with the Public Service Commission, they must provide for a plan to purchase energy and renewable energy credits from one or more community solar gardens. Beginning on January 1, 2017, the electrical corporation must issue offers to purchase energy from community solar gardens of 500 kW or less, as long as the energy does not exceed 20% of the corporation's renewable energy standard portfolio requirements. Beginning January 1, 2022, the Public Service Commission must determine the electrical corporation's minimum and maximum purchases of energy from community solar gardens of different output capacity. At the same time, electrical corporations must specify a proposal for including low-income customers as community solar garden subscribers.

Energy generated by a community solar garden can only be sold to the electrical corporation that provides service in the area in which the solar garden is located. Electrical corporations can be eligible to recover a margin, in an amount determined by the Public Service Commission, on all energy and renewable energy credits purchased from community solar gardens.

The electrical corporation and subscribers of the community solar garden are required to provide certain information as specified in the bill.

Any excess energy generated by the solar garden must be credited to the community solar garden subscriber in proportion to the percentage of shares that the subscriber owns of the community solar garden, less any appropriate customer charges. Any credits expire within 12 months of issuance, when the subscriber disconnects service, or when the community solar garden terminates the agreement to sell excess energy to the electrical corporation. The provisions of this bill do not apply to rural electric cooperatives or municipally owned utilities.

This bill is similar to SB 630 (2016).

PROPOSERS: Supporters say that this bill allows members of a community to share in the benefits of a solar project without installing solar panels on their property. Through a solar garden project, lower income families can receive the same energy benefits

as other members of a community without the initial infrastructure costs.

Testifying for the bill were Representative Berry; Caleb Arthur, MOSEIA; Renew Missouri; Empower Missouri; and MOSEIA.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that the electric utilities have constructed over 2200 megawatts of renewable energy in the past 10 years. This bill is too directive for electric utility companies and should be an optional program.

Testifying against the bill was Missouri Energy Development Association.