



PRESSing Forward: Modernizing Pennsylvania's Electricity Standards to Enhance Affordability

Introduction

Pennsylvania stands at a pivotal juncture in its position of energy leadership. House Bill 501, known as the Pennsylvania Reliable Energy Sustainability Standards (PRESS) Act, offers a transformative approach to energy generation, while enhancing affordability for residents across the Commonwealth.

From AEPS to PRESS: A Necessary Evolution

Enacted in 2004, the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standards (AEPS) Act was instrumental in promoting renewable energy in Pennsylvania. However, over the last two decades, surrounding states have surpassed us in supporting clean energy and the economic growth that comes with it. PRESS modernizes AEPS by aligning Pennsylvania's energy policies with current technological advancements and market dynamics.

KEY PROVISIONS

Increased Renewable Energy Targets:

- The bill mandates that 35 percent of Pennsylvania's electricity come from Tier I clean energy sources—such as wind, solar, and geothermal—by 2035, up from the current 8 percent. This brings the cheapest and most readily deployable forms of electricity online to serve our residents now.

Introduction of Zero Emissions Credits (ZECs)

- To keep baseload nuclear energy facilities on the grid, HB501 establishes ZECs, providing financial incentives for zero-emission power generation.

Alternative Compliance Payments:

- Energy providers failing to meet the new standards must make payments, which will fund sustainable energy projects, particularly in environmental justice areas.

Affordability Through Energy Diversification

One of the pressing concerns for Pennsylvanians is the rising cost of energy. Despite being a significant producer of natural gas, the state currently ranks 36th in residential electricity rates with an average cost of 17 cents per kilowatt/hour.

PRESS takes on this challenge by:

- **Reducing Energy Costs:** Increasing the share of renewable energy, the bill stabilizes and lowers electricity prices over time, as renewables have lower operational costs and no fuel costs compared to fossil fuels.
- **Investing in Local Projects:** Ensuring projects are built in Pennsylvania ensures jobs are created in Pennsylvania.
- **Enhancing Grid Reliability:** Diversifying energy sources can lead to a more resilient power grid, reducing the risk of outages and associated costs.

CONCLUSION

HB501 represents a comprehensive approach to modernizing Pennsylvania's energy landscape. By setting ambitious renewable energy targets and establishing mechanisms to fund sustainable projects, the bill seeks to make energy more affordable for residents while promoting environmental stewardship.

As the state deliberates on this legislation, it's crucial to consider the long-term benefits of a diversified and sustainable energy portfolio—for our utility bills, for our jobs, and for our environment.

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