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Governor Newsom Signs Papan Bill to Modernize Electricity Transmission Planning in California

Assembly Bill 2111 to align transmission planning and investments to a diverse and changing energy future

SACRAMENTO, CA — Governor Gavin Newsom has signed Assembly Bill 2111 authored by Assemblymember Diane Papan (D-San Mateo), legislation requiring prudent investments today that can protect consumers from greater costs in the future. AB 2111 is about efficient planning for a dynamic grid.

“When transmission planning falls behind demand or fails to anticipate regional growth, the consequences can include delayed clean energy projects, expensive network upgrades, and higher electricity costs for ratepayers,” said Papan. “This bill mandates a holistic approach to transmission planning.”

California’s transmission planning process is designed around a single projected electricity demand forecast. This approach works well when the forecast is reasonably accurate. However, when the forecast is wrong, there are significant consequences. Recently, underdevelopment of the grid has prevented new renewable energy projects from accessing necessary interconnections to the grid and required costly network upgrades. When fewer energy providers can access the grid, consumers will not benefit from increased competition.

This approach will help California anticipate potential grid constraints, manage infrastructure costs, and facilitate the timely interconnection of new energy resources.

“WestLight Energy works to provide our customers with clean, reliable energy at the lowest price possible,” said Shawn Marshall, Chief Executive Officer of WestLight Energy. “We were proud to co-sponsor AB 2111, authored by Assemblymember Diane Papan, because it will help California make transmission investments with a clearer view of what the future may require—reducing the risk of costly overbuilding while ensuring the grid is ready to meet California’s future needs.”

As California transitions to a clean and renewable energy portfolio, the state faces growing uncertainty about how quickly electricity demand will increase and what type of new energy resources will be developed. AB 2111 requires the California Public Utilities Commission, in coordination with the California Energy Commission and California Independent System Operator, to evaluate resource and transmission needs across multiple plausible futures and identify transmission needs that improve system adaptability, reduce risk, or support competitive resource procurement across all scenarios.

"This legislation is a major step forward in adapting the grid to the changing needs of California while protecting ratepayers and sustaining our momentum with renewable power," said Sonoma Clean Power CEO Geof Syphers. "We congratulate Assemblymember Papan for her work in getting this bill signed and thank her for her leadership on this critical issue."

The future is becoming harder to accurately forecast, while the cost of waiting for certainty is becoming more consequential. AB 2111 ensures California is planning for a dynamic power grid that will meet the needs of the moment.

"Climate change requires our critical infrastructure to be resilient and flexible and adapt to our new reality. Responding to this call, AB 2111 reforms how California plans and builds transmission lines," said Todd David, Political Director of Abundance Network. "Abundance Network is proud to be driving, along with our coalition partners, the 21st century clean energy transition that will simultaneously lower electricity bills for Californians and help the state meet its ambitious climate goals."

AB 2111 will go into effect January 1, 2027.

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