

Assembly Bill No. 693

CHAPTER 582

An act to amend Section 748.5 of, and to add Chapter 9.5 (commencing with Section 2870) to Part 2 of Division 1 of, the Public Utilities Code, relating to energy.

[Approved by Governor October 8, 2015. Filed with
Secretary of State October 8, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 693, Eggman. Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program.

Under existing law, the Public Utilities Commission has regulatory authority over public utilities, including electrical corporations. Existing law authorizes the commission to fix the rates and charges for every public utility, and requires that those rates and charges be just and reasonable.

The California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 establishes the State Air Resources Board as the state agency responsible for monitoring and regulating sources emitting greenhouse gases. That act requires the state board to adopt a statewide greenhouse gas emissions limit, as defined, to be achieved by 2020, equivalent to the statewide greenhouse gas emissions level in 1990. The state board is authorized to include market-based compliance mechanisms to comply with the regulations. The implementing regulations adopted by the state board provide for the direct allocation of greenhouse gas allowances to electrical corporations pursuant to a market-based compliance mechanism.

Existing law authorizes the commission to allocate 15% of these revenues for clean energy and energy efficiency projects established pursuant to statute that are administered by electrical corporations and requires the commission to direct the balance of the revenues to be credited directly to the residential, small business, and emissions-intensive trade-exposed retail customers of the electrical corporations, as specified.

This bill would authorize a qualified 3rd-party administrator to administer the clean energy and energy efficiency projects.

Existing law requires the commission to ensure that not less than 10% of the funds for the California Solar Initiative are utilized for the installation of solar energy systems, as defined, on low-income residential housing, as defined. Pursuant to this requirement, the commission adopted decisions that established the Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes Program and the Multifamily Affordable Solar Housing Program, pursuant to which the electrical corporations provide monetary incentives for the installation of solar energy systems on low-income residential housing.

This bill would require the commission to annually authorize the allocation of \$100,000,000 or 10% of available funds, whichever is less, beginning

with the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2016, and ending with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020, from the greenhouse gas allowance revenues received by electrical corporations set aside for clean energy and energy efficiency projects for the Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program, which the bill would create. The bill would require the commission to consider the most appropriate program administration, as specified, with not more than 10% of the allocated funds to be used for administration. The bill would require the commission to authorize, by June 30, 2017, the award of monetary incentives for solar energy systems, as defined, that are installed on qualified multifamily affordable housing properties, as defined, through December 31, 2030, with the target of the program being to install a combined generating capacity of at least 300 megawatts on qualified properties. The bill would require the commission to require that the electricity generated by qualifying solar energy systems installed on qualified multifamily affordable housing properties pursuant to the program be primarily used to offset electricity usage by low-income tenants. The bill would require that low-income tenants receive credits on utility bills from the program through tariffs that allow for the allocation of credits, as specified. The bill would require the commission, on or before July 30, 2020, and by July 30 of every third year thereafter through 2029, to submit an assessment, as specified, to the Legislature of the Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program.

Existing law makes any public utility and any corporation or person other than a public utility that violates any part of any order, decision, rule, direction, demand, or requirement of the commission guilty of a crime.

Because the provisions of this bill require action by the commission to implement its requirements, a violation of these commission-ordered requirements would impose a state-mandated local program by creating a new crime.

The California Constitution requires the state to reimburse local agencies and school districts for certain costs mandated by the state. Statutory provisions establish procedures for making that reimbursement.

This bill would provide that no reimbursement is required by this act for a specified reason.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) It is necessary to provide assistance to low-income utility customers to make sure they can afford to pay their energy bills.

(b) Programs that reduce the costs of the energy utilities' California Alternate Rates for Energy, or CARE, program can support the long-term ability of the CARE program to meet the needs of low-income customers.

(c) Installing qualifying solar energy systems in disadvantaged communities can provide local economic development benefits while

advancing the state’s renewable energy policies and policies to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases.

(d) The Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Investment Plan and Communities Revitalization Act (Chapter 4.1 (commencing with Section 39710) of Part 2 of Division 26 of the Health and Safety Code) requires that a minimum of 25 percent of the available moneys in the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund be allocated to projects that provide benefits to disadvantaged communities and 10 percent fund projects in disadvantaged communities.

(e) It is the goal of the state to make qualifying solar energy systems more accessible to low-income and disadvantaged communities and, as in the case of the Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program, to install those systems in a manner that represents the geographic diversity of the state.

(f) It is the goal of the state to install qualifying solar energy systems that have a generating capacity equivalent to at least 300 megawatts for the express purpose of lowering the energy bills of tenants at low-income multifamily housing.

SEC. 2. Section 748.5 of the Public Utilities Code is amended to read:

748.5. (a) Except as provided in subdivision (c), the commission shall require revenues, including any accrued interest, received by an electrical corporation as a result of the direct allocation of greenhouse gas allowances to electric utilities pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 95890 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations to be credited directly to the residential, small business, and emissions-intensive trade-exposed retail customers of the electrical corporation.

(b) Not later than January 1, 2013, the commission shall require the adoption and implementation of a customer outreach plan for each electrical corporation, including, but not limited to, such measures as notices in bills and through media outlets, for purposes of obtaining the maximum feasible public awareness of the crediting of greenhouse gas allowance revenues. Costs associated with the implementation of this plan are subject to recovery in rates pursuant to Section 454.

(c) The commission may allocate up to 15 percent of the revenues, including any accrued interest, received by an electrical corporation as a result of the direct allocation of greenhouse gas allowances to electrical distribution utilities pursuant to subdivision (b) of Section 95890 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, for clean energy and energy efficiency projects established pursuant to statute that are administered by the electrical corporation, or a qualified third-party administrator as approved by the commission, and that are not otherwise funded by another funding source.

SEC. 3. Chapter 9.5 (commencing with Section 2870) is added to Part 2 of Division 1 of the Public Utilities Code, to read:

CHAPTER 9.5. MULTIFAMILY AFFORDABLE HOUSING SOLAR ROOFS PROGRAM

2870. (a) As used in this section, the following terms have the following meanings:

(1) “CARE program” means the California Alternate Rates for Energy program established pursuant to Section 739.1.

(2) “Program” means the Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program established pursuant to this chapter.

(3) “Qualified multifamily affordable housing property” means a multifamily residential building of at least five rental housing units that is operated to provide deed-restricted low-income residential housing, as defined in clause (i) of subparagraph (A) of paragraph (3) of subdivision (a) of Section 2852, and that meets one or more of the following requirements:

(A) The property is located in a disadvantaged community, as identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code.

(B) At least 80 percent of the households have incomes at or below 60 percent of the area median income, as defined in subdivision (f) of Section 50052.5 of the Health and Safety Code.

(4) “Solar energy system” means a solar energy photovoltaic device that meets or exceeds the eligibility criteria established pursuant to Section 25782 of the Public Resources Code.

(b) (1) Adoption and implementation of the Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program may count toward the satisfaction of the commission’s obligation to ensure that specific alternatives designed for growth among residential customers in disadvantaged communities are offered as part of the standard contract or tariff authorized pursuant to paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) of Section 2827.1.

(2) Nothing in this section shall preclude electrical corporations from offering and administering a distributed energy resource program, including solar energy systems, in disadvantaged communities offered under current or proposed programs using funds provided under subdivision (c) of Section 748.5 or programs proposed to comply with paragraph (1) of subdivision (b) as approved by the commission.

(c) The commission shall annually authorize the allocation of one hundred million dollars (\$100,000,000) or 10 percent of available funds, whichever is less, from the revenues described in subdivision (c) of Section 748.5 for the Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program, beginning with the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2016, and ending with the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020. The commission shall continue authorizing the allocation of these funds through June 30, 2026, if the commission determines that revenues are available after 2020 and that there is adequate interest and participation in the program.

(d) The commission shall consider the most appropriate program administration structure, including administration by a qualified third-party

administrator, selected by the commission through a competitive bidding process, or administration by an electrical corporation, in an existing or future proceeding.

(e) Not more than 10 percent of the funds allocated to the program shall be used for administration.

(f) (1) By June 30, 2017, the commission shall authorize the award of monetary incentives for qualifying solar energy systems that are installed on qualified multifamily affordable housing properties through December 31, 2030. The target of the program is to install a combined generating capacity of at least 300 megawatts on qualified properties.

(2) The commission shall require that the electricity generated by qualifying renewable energy systems installed pursuant to the program be primarily used to offset electricity usage by low-income tenants. These requirements may include required covenants and restrictions in deeds.

(3) The commission shall require that qualifying solar energy systems owned by third-party owners are subject to contractual restrictions to ensure that no additional costs for the system be passed on to low-income tenants at the properties receiving incentives pursuant to the program. The commission shall require third-party owners of solar energy systems to provide ongoing operations and maintenance of the system, monitor energy production, and, where necessary, take appropriate action to ensure that the kWh production levels projected for the system are achieved throughout the period of the third-party agreement. Such actions may include, but are not limited to, providing a performance guarantee of annual production levels or taking corrective actions to resolve underproduction problems.

(4) The commission shall ensure that incentive levels for photovoltaic installations receiving incentives through the program are aligned with the installation costs for solar energy systems in affordable housing markets and take account of federal investment tax credits and contributions from other sources to the extent feasible.

(5) The commission shall require that no individual installation receive incentives at a rate greater than 100 percent of the total system installation costs.

(6) The commission shall establish local hiring requirements for the program to provide economic development benefits to disadvantaged communities.

(7) The commission shall establish energy efficiency requirements that are equal to the energy efficiency requirements established for the program described in Section 2852, including participation in a federal, state, or utility-funded energy efficiency program or documentation of a recent energy efficiency retrofit.

(g) (1) Low-income tenants who participate in the program shall receive credits on utility bills from the program. The commission shall ensure that utility bill reductions are achieved through tariffs that allow for the allocation of credits, such as virtual net metering tariffs designed for Multifamily Affordable Solar Housing Program participants, or other tariffs that may be adopted by the commission pursuant to Section 2827.1.

(2) The commission shall ensure that electrical corporation tariff structures affecting the low-income tenants participating in the program continue to provide a direct economic benefit from the qualifying solar energy system.

(h) Nothing in this chapter is intended to supplant CARE program rates as the primary mechanism for achieving the goals of the CARE program.

(i) The commission shall determine the eligibility of qualified multifamily affordable housing property tenants that are customers of community choice aggregators.

(j) (1) On or before July 30, 2020, and by July 30 of every third year thereafter through 2029, the commission shall submit to the Legislature an assessment of the Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program. That assessment shall include the number of qualified multifamily affordable housing property sites that have a qualifying solar energy system for which an award was made pursuant to this chapter and the dollar value of the award, the electrical generating capacity of the qualifying renewable energy system, the bill reduction outcomes of the program for the participants, the cost of the program, the total electrical system benefits, the environmental benefits, the progress made toward reaching the goals of the program, the program's impact on the CARE program budget, and the recommendations for improving the program to meet its goals. The report shall include an analysis of pending program commitments, reservations, obligations, and projected demands for the program to determine whether future ongoing funding allocations for the program are substantiated. The report shall also include a summary of the other programs intended to benefit disadvantaged communities, including, but not limited to, the Single-Family Affordable Solar Homes Program, the Multifamily Affordable Solar Housing Program, and the Green Tariff Shared Renewables Program (Chapter 7.6 (commencing with Section 2831)).

(2) Every three years, the commission shall evaluate the program's expenditures, commitments, uncommitted balances, future demands, performance, and outcomes and shall make any necessary adjustments to the program to ensure the goals of the program are being met. If, upon review, the commission finds there is insufficient participation in the program, the commission may credit uncommitted funds back to ratepayers pursuant to Section 748.5.

(3) As part of the annual workplan required pursuant to Section 321.6, the commission shall provide an annual update of the Multifamily Affordable Housing Solar Roofs Program that shall include, but not be limited to, the number of projects approved, number of projects completed, number of pending projects awaiting approval, and geographic distribution of the projects.

SEC. 4. No reimbursement is required by this act pursuant to Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution because the only costs that may be incurred by a local agency or school district will be incurred because this act creates a new crime or infraction, eliminates a crime or infraction, or changes the penalty for a crime or infraction, within the meaning of

Section 17556 of the Government Code, or changes the definition of a crime within the meaning of Section 6 of Article XIII B of the California Constitution.

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