

Introduced by Senators McGuire and Hueso

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Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 48—Relative to geothermal awareness.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL’S DIGEST

SCR 48, as introduced, McGuire. Geothermal Awareness Month and Geothermal Awareness Day.

This measure would recognize the month of May 2015, as Geothermal Awareness Month and May 21, 2015, as Geothermal Awareness Day.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, California contains the largest amount of
2 geothermal generating capacity in the United States due to its
3 location on the Pacific “Ring of Fire” and the tectonic plate
4 junctions; and
5 WHEREAS, There are 25 Known Geothermal Resource Areas
6 located in California, 14 of which have temperatures of 300 degrees
7 Fahrenheit or greater for commercial geothermal production of
8 electricity; and
9 WHEREAS, There are major geothermal electrical production
10 locations throughout the State of California in the Counties of
11 Sonoma, Lake, Imperial, Inyo, and Mono; and
12 WHEREAS, California currently has 2,565.5 megawatts of
13 installed electric generation capacity from geothermal resources

1 with an additional 4,000 megawatts of potential for development;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Geothermal energy is a reliable baseload renewable
4 energy source that has been commercially operating in California
5 since 1960 at the Geysers, the world's most developed geothermal
6 resource area, which has been providing Californians with clean,
7 reliable, and affordable electricity for more than 50 years; and

8 WHEREAS, Geothermal energy produces electricity 24 hours
9 a day, seven days a week, with a high availability record and is
10 important to balance the needs of the state's transmission grid
11 system; and

12 WHEREAS, Geothermal energy is a clean renewable energy
13 resource. The operation of the Geysers and operations in Imperial
14 County help avoid the emissions of 11.6 billion pounds of carbon
15 dioxide annually, which is equivalent to greenhouse gas emissions
16 from more than 1,050,000 cars being taken off the road, that would
17 otherwise be emitted by fossil fuel plants to meet baseload energy
18 needs; and

19 WHEREAS, In comparison to other existing renewable
20 technologies, geothermal energy has many unique benefits,
21 including consistent, predictable production, a relatively small
22 land footprint, and low integration costs; and

23 WHEREAS, Imperial County's Salton Sea Known Geothermal
24 Resource Area is considered to have a significant near-term growth
25 opportunity of over 2,000 megawatts of electric generation from
26 additional geothermal resource development and additional
27 geothermal resource development opportunities exist in the
28 Counties of Sonoma, Modoc, Mono, and Lake; and

29 WHEREAS, The geothermal industry is a major employer in
30 the local communities where projects are located, providing a
31 diverse range of full-time employment opportunities as well as
32 contractor jobs throughout all phases of development and operation;
33 and

34 WHEREAS, Construction of the two proposed projects in
35 Sonoma County is expected to require about 900,000 hours of
36 labor by 190 construction workers, as well as hundreds of millions
37 of dollars in materials, supplies, and services during construction.
38 This new construction would result in an estimated \$12 million in
39 one-time sales tax revenue, \$7 million in new annual property tax
40 revenues, and millions of dollars in additional royalties paid to

1 state, federal, and private leaseholders. Once operational, the new
2 plants could create up to 19 full-time jobs; and

3 WHEREAS, Fully developing Imperial County’s Salton Sea
4 Known Geothermal Resource Area could produce 5,214
5 construction jobs, and up to 1,093 long-term operating and
6 maintenance jobs, substantially improving the economy of one of
7 the most impoverished counties in the state, where over 22 percent
8 of the population is unemployed; and

9 WHEREAS, Geothermal power contributes to the tax revenue
10 in local communities, serving as the largest property taxpayers in
11 the Counties of Lake, Sonoma, and Inyo, as well as representing
12 10 percent of all property tax revenue in Imperial County; and

13 WHEREAS, Geothermal development, from exploration through
14 construction, spurs local economic growth through jobs, sales tax
15 revenues, materials and supplies purchase, and purchase of other
16 associated goods and services; and

17 WHEREAS, California has one of the most ambitious
18 renewables portfolio standards in the country with a mandate to
19 procure 33 percent of energy from renewable sources by 2020,
20 and geothermal energy is a major contributor to achieving this
21 goal; and

22 WHEREAS, Governor Brown has proposed expanding
23 California’s Renewables Portfolio Standard Program to require
24 50 percent of our energy from renewable sources by 2030, further
25 increasing the importance of geothermal energy to achieve our
26 renewable energy goals; and

27 WHEREAS, California is on course to meet the near-term 2020
28 greenhouse gas emissions reduction target under the California
29 Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 (Division 25.5
30 (commencing with Section 38500) of the Health and Safety Code),
31 but more emissions reductions from the use of clean energy like
32 geothermal and other technological innovations will be needed to
33 maintain and make further reductions in carbon emissions; and

34 WHEREAS, Geothermal energy presents a unique opportunity
35 to address other environmental issues, such as the Geysers’
36 partnership with the City of Santa Rosa and Lake County to use
37 their treated wastewater to recharge the Geysers. This innovative
38 partnership is helping to keep local waterways clean and reduce
39 carbon emissions from the wastewater, all while sustaining this

1 important source of reliable, affordable, and renewable energy;
2 and

3 WHEREAS, Geothermal energy is essential and complimentary
4 to California's environmental and economic policies, yet new fully
5 permitted geothermal projects have failed to keep pace with the
6 procurement of other renewable resources; and

7 WHEREAS, According to the State Air Resources Board, the
8 State Energy Resources Conservation and Development
9 Commission, and the Public Utilities Commission, existing
10 geothermal generation production is expected to drop significantly
11 by 2020, a result of renewable procurement policies that have
12 failed to fully capture the benefits of geothermal generation and
13 the costs associated with other renewable technologies; and

14 WHEREAS, A diverse renewable energy portfolio fits with
15 California's energy demand profile and lowers costs; and

16 WHEREAS, The preservation of California's existing
17 geothermal generation and the development of new geothermal
18 generation could facilitate the achievement of the state's post-2020
19 energy and environmental goals; now, therefore, be it

20 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
21 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature recognizes the month of
22 May 2015 as Geothermal Awareness Month to raise awareness of
23 the significant contributions geothermal energy makes to
24 California's Renewables Portfolio Standard Program and toward
25 meeting the state's environmental goals to reduce greenhouse gas
26 emissions; and be it further

27 *Resolved*, That the Legislature recognizes May 21, 2015, as
28 Geothermal Awareness Day in California, and urges all citizens
29 to show their support on that day by learning more about
30 geothermal energy in California and supporting public events
31 planned by the geothermal industry; and be it further

32 *Resolved*, That the Legislature considers geothermal resources
33 important to California's future and recognizes the environmental
34 and economic values of existing and future geothermal energy for
35 the state and local communities; and be it further

36 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
37 this resolution to the Governor, the members of the Public Utilities
38 Commission, the State Energy Resources Conservation and
39 Development Commission, the Independent System Operator, the

- 1 State Air Resources Board, and to the author for appropriate
- 2 distribution.

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