California Assembly bill would connect clean power to the grid faster and more affordably

AB 2493 holds utilities accountable for widespread delays upgrading grid equipment

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SACRAMENTO — American Clean Power-California and the Union of Concerned Scientists are co-sponsoring legislation to address widespread, costly delays connecting new clean power to the grid in California.

AB 2493, authored by **Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee Chair Cottie Petrie-Norris**, would require utilities to take concrete action to upgrade grid equipment faster when clean energy projects are waiting on the upgrades.

“This proposal is about affordability and accountability,” said Petrie-Norris. “We continue to hear about years-long delays and transmission projects taking more than twice as long as they should. Ratepayers will shoulder the impacts if we don’t get this right. This bill demands better, making clear that these delays are a priority for those of us with oversight in this space.”

The legislation responds to a California Public Utilities Commission report that found delays are rampant across California, affecting nearly two-thirds of transmission projects across two investor-owned utilities’ territories. Nearly 22 gigawatts of new clean power depend on those delayed upgrades to connect to the grid.

“The CPUC’s report is clear: These delays are too common,” said **American Clean Power-California Executive Director Alex Jackson**. “Delays add costs, and those costs show up

in electric bills. California needs to move faster to save money, keep up with rising demand and meet the state's clean energy goals. This proposal drives real progress by addressing one of the biggest friction points in the process of bringing new power online in California."

AB 2493 requires an independent auditor to assess root causes of the delays and report findings to the CPUC, and it uses carrot-and-stick measures to drive improvements in alignment with the findings. The IOUs' compliance in taking remedial action will be admissible as evidence in CPUC proceedings to evaluate IOUs' rate requests and cost of capital applications.

"To take advantage of the environmental and affordability benefits of renewable energy resources, California must quickly build a significant amount of new transmission infrastructure," said **Vivian Yang**, **Energy Analyst with Union of Concerned Scientists**. "Our analysis of transmission development delays shows that the state lacks information it needs to overcome this backlog and achieve its clean energy and climate goals. The bill will provide California with necessary information about these delays and empower the state to overcome the hurdles to building transmission infrastructure identified."

It's important to address these delays now to ensure the maximum number of clean energy projects qualify for federal tax credits that expire in 2030. The tax credits come with serious savings, reducing costs by $400 million to $650 million per gigawatt of new solar or wind, according to ACP-CA's analysis.

Speed is crucial not just for affordability but for reliability. The California Energy Commission estimates peak power demand will rise roughly 50% by 2045, driven by electric vehicles, data centers, building electrification and other factors. SB 100 goals call for tripling California's supply of clean power by the same year, which will require adding roughly 6 gigawatts every year for the next two decades. Transmission capacity will need to be more than doubled.

There are also consequences of doing nothing. It costs more to ship power across congested transmission lines, driving up electricity prices at the point of delivery. For example, an especially congested Central Valley line known as Path 15 is projected to become so busy that congestion on the line will drive up electricity costs by $1.2 billion in 2035, according to CAISO. With an abundance of capacity, on the other hand, prices are stable and deliveries are reliable.

The American Clean Power Association is the leading voice of today's multi-tech clean energy industry, representing energy storage, wind, utility-scale solar, clean hydrogen, and transmission companies. ACP is committed to meeting America's energy and national security goals and building our economy with fast-growing, low-cost, and reliable domestic

power. Learn more at cleanpower.org.

The Union of Concerned Scientists puts rigorous, independent science to work to solve our planet's most pressing problems. Joining with people across the country, we combine technical analysis and effective advocacy to create innovative, practical solutions for a healthy, safe and sustainable future. For more information, go to www.ucs.org.