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May 27, 2026

Contact: Wes Venteicher

wventeicher@cleanpower.org

(412) 818-8340

Assembly Passes Bill to Speed Power to the Grid, Cut Energy Costs

AB 2493 targets utility delays that are slowing clean energy grid connections

Sacramento, CA — American Clean Power-California applauds the California State Assembly for passing legislation Tuesday that would make it cheaper and faster to add new clean energy to the grid.

AB 2493, from Assemblymember Cottie Petrie-Norris, D-Irvine, holds investor-owned utilities accountable for widespread delays to transmission system upgrades that are slowing down the connection of new clean energy projects to the grid. The bill passed off the Assembly floor on a 57-17 vote.

The bill, co-sponsored by ACP-CA and the Union of Concerned Scientists, would require an independent auditor to evaluate root causes of delays that the California Public Utilities Commission determined to be affecting nearly two-thirds of upgrades in two investor-owned utilities' territories.

The auditor would identify gaps and recommend solutions based on the findings, and the bill would drive improvements by making the IOUs' progress resolving the delays a factor in CPUC decisions on the utilities' return on equity. The bill would also require the IOUs to initiate permitting faster for large upgrades approved by CAISO..

“California can’t continue to let avoidable delays sideline clean energy projects and drive up costs for ratepayers,” said ACP-California Executive Director Alex Jackson. “AB 2493 is a responsible, workable fix to a systemic problem.”

The delays often affect substation upgrades, power line replacements and other relatively simple improvements. They are holding up large-scale solar, storage and other renewable projects that could be delivering power to millions of homes.

Delays make major projects more expensive by dragging out timelines, in some cases [risking the loss of federal clean energy tax credits](#) worth \$450 million to \$600 million per gigawatt of new solar and wind power.

The bill's passage out of the Assembly follows the California Independent System Operator's [recent approval](#) of its annual transmission plan, which recommends investing \$6.7 billion in 38 transmission infrastructure projects to support rising demand and California's energy goals.

"California has made great strides in planning for a grid powered by clean energy," said Jackson. "Measures like AB 2493 are about the hard work of getting it built on time."

The delayed upgrades addressed by the bill are the sole province of the investor-owned utilities. Unlike a set of larger, [competitively bid transmission infrastructure projects](#), these upgrades are not subject to cost-containment measures and the IOUs are not held financially responsible for delays. AB 2493 aims to bring some of those proven benefits of accountability to the IOUs' generator interconnection upgrades.

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.