

Comments of Peter McKay on HB-66

Heard in the House Special Committee on Energy, Labor, and Commerce March 31, 2009.

I would like to thank Representative Seaton for bringing this bill forward (again). It reflects a lot of effort on his part, and that of his staff especially Louis Flora. The supporting documentation is extensive – and in my opinion - irrefutable. There is no valid reason not to pass this bill. I really appreciate the effort that Representative Seaton's office has taken to contact so many states with net metering and interconnection standards in place to solicit responses that counter the typical arguments against net metering/interconnection that Alaskan utilities have used. Great work!

As much as I support this bill, I urge the Committee to consider an amendment to strike section "G", found on Page 3, Line 25 thru Page 4, Line 1. This "opt-out" provision for smaller utilities is unnecessary. The stability and security of smaller grids is ensured with 1) the small system size limits, and 2) the small (1%) penetration limit for interconnected customer/generator systems. The "opt-out" provisions of section "G" will not pass a legal challenge when a customer/generator seeking to interconnect to a smaller grid is denied and protests that he is being discriminated against because of where he lives, the size of the utility company, or whether his retail electric supplier is organized as a municipal, co-operative etc. Small utilities may only allow a few interconnections to meet the 1% limit – but this should be done on a first-come/first-serve basis throughout the state. This is an issue of fairness and equity.

I strongly support HB-66. I urge the Committee to approve the measure and move it along. This bill is much more comprehensive than HB-31 heard by this committee last week. I use the same recommendation for this bill as I did in testimony last week. Work cooperatively with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska on these issues. The RCA Commissioners and Staff are very talented and well informed on this issue. They have worked very hard to progress these standards and have been inclusive in their approach to these issues. The public has been very active in these issues. Please do not let the issue fall between the cracks – saying that it is the RCA's job to move this alone. This year... the Regulatory and Legislative (and perhaps the Executive branch) need to work this thru to completion. Alaska needs Net Metering and Interconnection standards.

Thank you for considering my opinion.

Respectfully

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