

Date of Hearing: June 30, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Lorena Gonzalez, Chair

SB 479 (Laird) – As Amended June 3, 2021

Policy Committee: Utilities and Energy

Vote: 14 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: Yes

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill expands eligibility for an existing renewable energy distributed generation program, known as the Renewable Energy Self-generation Program (RES-BCT), to California Native American tribes.

FISCAL EFFECT:

No additional state costs.

COMMENTS:

- 1) **Rationale.** The author intends to extend the benefits of the RES-BCT program to California Native American tribes. According to the author:

Tribal governments are of a similar geographic size relative to currently eligible local governments and fulfill similar, and sometimes expanded, roles for local residents. The systematic disenfranchisement of tribal governments necessitates their inclusion in the RES-BCT program.

- 2) **Background.** The RES-BCT program was established by the passage of AB 2466 (Laird), Chapter 540, Statutes of 2008. The program allows a local governmental entity, a joint-powers authority or state-operated university campuses to operate a small renewable electricity generating facility, up to five megawatts in capacity, in one metered location (known as a “generating account”). The utility then credits the output of that facility, at the time-of-use rate of generation, against electricity the participant consumes at another metered location or locations (known as “benefitting accounts”). For example, a local government may install a solar array above a vehicle yard, which has little demand for electricity, and have the electrical utility credit the array’s generation of electricity against the local government’s coincident electrical use at another metered location within the local government’s geographic boundaries, such as an office building or jailhouse.

Existing law caps the RES-BCT program at 250 megawatts, allocated proportionally across the state’s three largest investor-owned utilities: 105.25 megawatts for Pacific Gas & Electric, 124.59 megawatts for Southern California Edison and 20.25 megawatts for San Diego Gas & Electric. There remains substantial RES-BCT capacity under each IOU’s RES-BCT allocation.