

LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

[Environment Code - 100% Renewable Energy Required for On-Site Electricity Demands in Nonresidential Buildings of 50,000 Square Feet or More]

Ordinance amending the Environment Code to require all nonresidential buildings of 50,000 square feet or more to provide all on-site electricity demands from 100% greenhouse gas-free or renewable sources and to authorize the Director of the Department of the Environment to adopt rules and regulations for implementation of the requirements; and affirming the Planning Department's determination under the California Environmental Quality Act.

Existing Law

There are no amendments to existing law.

Amendments to Current Law

This ordinance would add Chapter 30 to the Environment Code. It requires that all nonresidential buildings of 50,000 square feet or more to meet all on-site electricity demands through any combination of (1) on-site generation of 100% greenhouse gas (GHG)-free or renewable sources and/or (2) the purchase of electricity from 100% GHG-free sources. Buildings of 500,000 gross square feet of floor area (as defined) or larger must meet the requirement by December 31, 2022; buildings of 250,000 gross square feet or larger must meet the requirement by December 31, 2024; and buildings of 50,000 gross square feet or larger must meet the requirement by December 31, 2030. The Director of the Department of Environment may adopt rules and regulations for the implementation of the requirements and may modify or suspend the requirements if the State of California or the Federal government adopts a similar or more comprehensive renewable energy requirement or a requirement that conflicts with the San Francisco requirements.

Background Information

While San Francisco has some of the most energy efficient new buildings in the nation, it is also one of the oldest urban areas in California and many of its buildings were built before energy efficiency codes were enacted. The City's older building stock uses electricity partially supplied by fossil-fuel burning power plants and heat that is primarily supplied by the combustion of natural gas – both of which emit carbon dioxide, one of several pollutants that contribute to global warming.

In 2011, the Mayor convened a Renewable Energy Task Force to develop recommendations to help San Francisco achieve its goal of 100% renewable electricity supply by 2020, and the City's most recently completed 2017 community-wide inventory of GHG emissions found that the buildings sector is responsible for 42% of emissions, second only to transportation.

Chapter 9 of the Environment Code requires a GHG emissions reduction plan for the City, mandates that City departments take certain steps to reduce the City's GHG emissions, and requires City departments to submit annual reports to the Department of the Environment. By 2017, just under 3% of San Francisco's GHG emissions were generated by energy consumed in municipal government buildings and fleet vehicles. Moving to 100% renewable energy in the private sector is a significant step the City can take to continue reducing GHG emissions and meet its Climate Action Strategy goals.

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