



GREEN POWER PURCHASING

A. 2162 (Galef, et al.)

Summary

This bill expands the products that may be purchased for a public use by including renewable energy resources and sets the cost premium percentage for a renewable energy product deemed reasonably competitive at 15 percent.

Explanation

Currently, New York's electricity market is dominated by nuclear and fossil-fuel electric power generators. Nuclear power plants place the public at risk of exposure to radiation from waste materials and are vulnerable to potentially devastating accidents. Fossil-fuel burning power plants spew a host of pollutants: the sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides responsible for acid rain, mercury, a known toxin, and carbon dioxide, the primary greenhouse gas causing global warming. New York's abundant solar and wind energy resources should be the basis for shifting to a cleaner, more reliable energy future. This bill makes it possible for local governments to purchase electricity produced by clean renewable energy sources.

In 2004, New York's Public Service Commission finalized a renewable portfolio standard mandating that 25 percent of the electricity sold in New York State be produced from renewable sources. Local governments could be an important part of meeting this clean energy goal. While the cost of a number of renewable energy technologies has fallen dramatically over the past ten years, the retail price of electricity from wind and solar still is higher than the retail price of electricity from polluting sources. And local governments operate under an obligation to choose the cheapest product available, which may hamper their ability to choose renewable electricity. This bill makes it possible for local governments to choose clean electricity, however, at a limited added cost.

Environmental Advocates of New York supports this bill.

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