


**REPORT OF THE
CHIEF LEGISLATIVE ANALYST**

DATE: August 31, 2021

TO: Honorable Members of the Rules, Elections, and Intergovernmental Relations Committee

FROM: Sharon M. Tso 
Chief Legislative Analyst Council File No: 21-0002-S42
Assignment No.: 21-03-0240

SUBJECT: Resolution (Krekorian - Martinez) relative to Expedited Environmental Compliance Reviews for Transmission Lines

CLA RECOMMENDATION: Adopt the attached revised Resolution to include in the City's 2021-2022 State and Federal Legislative Programs SPONSORSHIP and/or SUPPORT for legislation that establishes expedited environmental compliance and siting reviews for new and upgraded transmission lines required to supply and maintain energy services for the City as it moves toward a 100% clean energy supply.

SUMMARY:

Resolution (Krekorian - Martinez), introduced on February 9, 2021, states that due to the global crisis of climate change and the urgency it compels, the Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is committed to transitioning to a 100% clean energy while maintaining reliable and cost-effective electricity for its customers. The Resolution states that the LADWP is aggressively decarbonizing its power generation portfolio through clean energy initiatives, including completely divesting from coal, developing energy storage systems, investing in energy efficiency, and supporting the electrification of vehicles and buildings.

The Resolution notes that the LADWP, in partnership with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL), has spent four years engaged in the "LA 100" Study, comprehensively analyzing how to achieve a 100% clean energy portfolio. The Study's findings indicate that all viable pathways to achieving 100% clean energy require expansion of LADWP's in-basin transmission capacity. The expansion of in-basin transmission capacity would be reviewed under a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consistent with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Federal siting reviews.

The Resolution indicates that for the LADWP to expand in-basin transmission capacity to meet its renewable energy goals, it needs to accelerate State and Federal permitting reviews; and shorten the timeline for resolution of any litigation challenging siting of transmission upgrade projects.

Therefore, the Resolution requests that the City support expedited State and Federal environmental compliance and siting reviews for new and upgraded transmission lines in order to meet its clean energy objectives.

BACKGROUND:

In March 2016, the Council approved a Motion (Krekorian – Bonin; CF No. 16-0243) that requested the LADWP to develop a partnership with the US Department of Energy’s NREL to determine what investments must be made to achieve a 100% clean energy portfolio for the Department.

As a result of the Council's action, the LADWP entered into an innovative, first-in-the-nation partnership with the NREL to study the technical feasibility of achieving clean energy objectives. After several years of assessing the matter, the LADWP and the NREL completed the “LA 100” Study which made the following key determinations:

- 100% renewable energy system is achievable under a variety of scenarios;
- All scenarios show significant drops in power sector emissions by 2030 due to the elimination of coal.

The LADWP is now in the process of preparing a Strategic Long Term Resource Plan (SLTRP) which will outline the schedule and investments needed to reach the 100% clean energy goal. Key components of the SLTRP are anticipated to include the following:

- Substantial investments in new transmission capacity;
- Substantial investments in new storage capacity;
- Expanded distributed energy generation programs, particularly rooftop solar;
- Expanded energy efficiency programs; and
- Affordable rate structures that promote electrification of buildings, transportation, and facilitate demand response.

The LADWP recognizes that in order to effectively implement the SLTRP and achieve the objectives of the “LA100” Study, new and upgraded transmission lines and associated infrastructure need to be constructed in the near-term. The LADWP recognizes that this is a vital pre-condition to achieving the 100% clean energy portfolio.

Yet, the LADWP faces a variety of State and Federal environmental and siting requirements which must be completed prior to the implementation of new and upgraded transmission infrastructure. The process to complete these requirements can take years and has the potential to significantly

delay project development. Given these potential challenges, the LADWP seeks to pursue State and Federal legislation that facilitates expedited environmental compliance and siting reviews; thereby allowing the City to effectively move toward a 100% clean energy grid in a timely manner.

Revised Resolution

A revised Resolution was created in cooperation with the author of the original Resolution and the LADWP in order to effectively convey the Department’s need for expedited regulatory review of transmission line infrastructure as reflected in the “LA 100” Study and LADWP presentations concerning the SLTRP (CF No. 21-0352); and to specify that the legislative position shall apply to both the State and Federal Legislative Programs.



Rafael E. Prieto
Analyst

Attachment(s): Revised Resolution
 Resolution (Krekorian – Martinez)

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles (City) with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal government body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the global crisis of climate change and the urgency that it compels, and further recognizing the adverse public health impacts that result from local air pollution caused by fossil fuels, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is committed to transitioning to a 100 percent clean energy supply while maintaining reliable and cost-effective electricity for its customers; and

WHEREAS, LADWP is aggressively decarbonizing its power generation portfolio through clean energy initiatives, including completely divesting from coal, expanding renewable energy, developing energy storage systems, investing in energy efficiency, and supporting the electrification of vehicles and buildings; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the direction of the City Council (Council File #16-0243, Krekorian - Bonin), LADWP, in partnership with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, has spent four years engaged in the “LA 100” Study, comprehensively analyzing how to achieve a 100% clean energy portfolio, and its findings will show that all viable pathways to achieving 100% clean energy require expansion of LADWP’s in-basin transmission capacity; and

WHEREAS, the in-basin transmission upgrade project will be fully analyzed in a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consistent with CEQA and Federal siting reviews; and

WHEREAS, to accomplish its renewable electricity goals, increase electrification and ensure electricity grid reliability, LADWP needs to accelerate State and Federal permitting and reviews; and shorten the timeline for resolution of any litigation challenging its siting of transmission upgrade projects;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by adoption of this Resolution, with the concurrence of the Mayor, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2021-2022 State and Federal Legislative Programs SPONSORSHIP and/or SUPPORT for legislation that establishes expedited environmental compliance and siting reviews for new and upgraded transmission lines required to supply and maintain energy services for the City as it moves toward a 100% clean energy supply.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, any official position of the City of Los Angeles (City) with respect to legislation, rules, regulations or policies proposed to or pending before a local, state, or federal government body or agency must have first been adopted in the form of a Resolution by the City Council with the concurrence of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the global crisis of climate change and the urgency that it compels, and further recognizing the adverse public health impacts that result from local air pollution caused by fossil fuels, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) is committed to transitioning to a 100 percent clean energy supply while maintaining reliable and cost-effective electricity for its customers; and

WHEREAS, LADWP is aggressively decarbonizing its power generation portfolio through clean energy initiatives, including completely divesting from coal, expanding renewable energy, developing energy storage systems, investing in energy efficiency, and supporting the electrification of vehicles and buildings; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to the direction of the City Council (Council File #16-0243, Krekorian-Bonin), LADWP, in partnership with the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, has spent four years engaged in the "LA100" study, comprehensively analyzing how to achieve a 100% clean energy portfolio, and its findings will show that all viable pathways to achieving 100% clean energy require expansion of LADWP's in-basin transmission capacity; and

WHEREAS, the in-basin transmission upgrade project will be fully analyzed in a programmatic Environmental Impact Report (EIR) consistent with CEQA; and

WHEREAS, to accomplish its renewable electricity goals, increase electrification and ensure electricity grid reliability, LADWP needs to accelerate permitting and shorten the timeline for resolution of any litigation challenging its programmatic environmental review of its in-basin transmission upgrade project; and

WHEREAS, it is critical that once the environmental review process is completed, it be given an expedited litigation timetable similar to previous legislation by expediting litigation timelines and preventing an injunction from stopping project construction while any deficiencies in the environmental review documents are addressed; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that by adoption of this Resolution, with the concurrence of the Mayor, the City of Los Angeles hereby includes in its 2021-2022 Legislative Program, Sponsorship of legislation that establishes specified procedures for the administrative and judicial review of the environmental review and approvals granted for new and upgraded transmission lines required to supply and maintain reliability of energy services to the City of Los Angeles as it moves toward a 100% clean energy supply.

Presented by



PAUL KREKORIAN
Councilmember, 2nd District

Seconded by



FEB 09 2021

