



Renewable Energy
Alaska Project

Contact:

Chris Rose, Executive Director, REAP
chris@realaska.org, 907-232-0908

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Renewable Portfolio Standard Introduced in Alaska Legislature

March 15, 2023

JUNEAU, Alaska – On Wednesday, March 15th, Alaska Senator Löki Tobin introduced Senate Bill 101 to establish a Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) for the Railbelt region of Alaska.

The legislation would require the five electric utilities on the Railbelt (the interconnected grid that stretches from Fairbanks through Anchorage to the Kenai Peninsula) to generate a specified percentage of their electricity from renewable resources according to the following timeline: **25% by December 31, 2027; 55% by December 31, 2035; and 80% by December 31, 2040.** Today, 29 states and several territories have RPS requirements.

In 2010, Alaska set a nonbinding, aspirational goal to generate 50% of the state’s electricity from renewable sources by 2025. There has been slow progress toward the goal since then, with the Railbelt currently generating approximately 15% of its electricity from renewables. Most of the current renewable generation in the Railbelt comes from three hydro projects.

In February 2022, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) completed a report requested by Governor Mike Dunleavy that found five different scenarios in which the Railbelt could achieve 80% renewable generation by 2040 without impacting customer reliability. All scenarios take advantage of the region’s current flexible generators, and energy storage. The study also found that reaching the 80% renewable standard would save billions of dollars in fuel costs over the next two decades.

“This legislation points Alaska towards the future”, said REAP Executive Director Chris Rose. “Cook Inlet natural gas prices keep rising as the cost of wind, solar and battery energy storage technologies are all rapidly declining. Today Railbelt electric utilities rely on Cook Inlet natural gas for about 80% of the electricity they generate, and they pay twice as much for that gas as utilities in the Lower 48 are paying. A policy shift now toward using Alaska’s vast, local and stably-priced renewable energy resources will incentivize investment, create good-paying jobs and make Alaska more energy independent.”

###

The Renewable Energy Alaska Project (REAP) was founded in 2004 by Executive Director Chris Rose with the goal of increasing the development of renewable energy in Alaska. REAP increases the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency (together, “clean energy”) in Alaska through collaboration, education, training, and advocacy. Learn more at alaskarenewableenergy.org.