

§631. Purposes

1. Findings. The Legislature finds and declares that the surface waters of the State constitute a valuable indigenous and renewable energy resource; and that hydropower development utilizing these waters is unique in its benefits and impacts to the natural environment, and makes a significant contribution to the general welfare of the citizens of the State for the following reasons.

A. Hydropower is the state's only economically feasible, large-scale energy resource which does not rely on combustion of a fuel, thereby avoiding air pollution, solid waste disposal problems and hazards to human health from emissions, wastes and by-products. Hydropower can be developed at many sites with minimal environmental impacts, especially at sites with existing dams or where current type turbines can be used. [PL 1983, c. 458, §18 (NEW).]

B. Like all energy generating facilities, hydropower projects can have adverse effects; in contrast with other energy sources, they may also have positive environmental effects. For example, hydropower dams can control floods and augment downstream flow to improve fish and wildlife habitats, water quality and recreational opportunities. [PL 1983, c. 458, §18 (NEW).]

C. Hydropower is presently the state's most significant indigenous resource that can be used to free our citizens from their extreme dependence on foreign oil for peaking power. [PL 1983, c. 458, §18 (NEW).]

[PL 1983, c. 458, §18 (NEW).]

2. Policy and purpose. The Legislature declares that hydropower justifies singular treatment. The Legislature further declares that it is the policy of the State to support and encourage the development of hydropower projects by simplifying and clarifying requirements for permits, while assuring reasonable protection of natural resources and the public interest in use of waters of the State. It is the purpose of this subarticle to require a single application and permit for the construction of all hydropower projects and for the reconstruction or structural alteration of certain projects, including water storage projects. The permit application process shall be administered by the Department of Environmental Protection, except that, for hydropower projects within the jurisdiction of the Maine Land Use Planning Commission, the commission shall administer the permit application process under this subarticle.

[PL 1983, c. 458, §18 (NEW); PL 2011, c. 682, §38 (REV).]

3. Encouragement of tidal and wave power development. It is the policy of the State to encourage the attraction of appropriately sited development related to tidal and wave energy, including any additional transmission and other energy infrastructure needed to transport such energy to market, consistent with all state environmental standards; the permitting and siting of tidal and wave energy projects; and the siting, permitting, financing and construction of tidal and wave energy research and manufacturing facilities.

[PL 2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §5 (NEW).]

SECTION HISTORY

PL 1983, c. 458, §18 (NEW). PL 2009, c. 615, Pt. A, §5 (AMD). PL 2011, c. 682, §38 (REV).

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