

1 AN ACT relating to solar merchant electric generating facilities.

2 ***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

3 ➔Section 1. KRS 278.710 is amended to read as follows:

- 4 (1) Within one hundred twenty (120) days of receipt of an administratively complete
5 application, or within one hundred eighty (180) days of receipt of an
6 administratively complete application if a hearing is requested, the board shall, by
7 majority vote, grant or deny a construction certificate, either in whole or in part,
8 based upon the following criteria:
- 9 (a) Impact of the facility on scenic surroundings, property values, the pattern and
10 type of development of adjacent property, and surrounding roads;
 - 11 (b) Anticipated noise levels expected as a result of construction and operation of
12 the proposed facility;
 - 13 (c) The economic impact of the facility upon the affected region and the state;
 - 14 (d) Whether the facility is proposed for a site upon which existing generating
15 facilities, capable of generating ten megawatts (10MW) or more of electricity,
16 are currently located;
 - 17 (e) Whether the proposed facility will meet all local planning and zoning
18 requirements that existed on the date the application was filed;
 - 19 (f) Whether the additional load imposed upon the electricity transmission system
20 by use of the merchant electric generating facility will adversely affect the
21 reliability of service for retail customers of electric utilities regulated by the
22 Public Service Commission;
 - 23 (g) Except where the facility is subject to a statewide setback established by a
24 planning and zoning commission as provided in KRS 278.704(3) and except
25 for a facility proposed to be located on a site of a former coal processing plant
26 and the facility will use on-site waste coal as a fuel source, whether the
27 exhaust stack of the proposed merchant electric generating facility and any

1 wind turbine is at least one thousand (1,000) feet from the property boundary
2 of any adjoining property owner and all proposed structures or facilities used
3 for generation of electricity are two thousand (2,000) feet from any residential
4 neighborhood, school, hospital, or nursing home facility, unless a different
5 setback has been requested and approved under KRS 278.704(4). If a
6 planning and zoning commission has established setback requirements that
7 differ from those under KRS 278.704(2), the applicant shall provide evidence
8 of compliance. If the facility is proposed to be located on site of a former coal
9 processing plant and the facility will use on-site waste coal as a fuel source,
10 the applicant shall provide evidence of compliance with the setback
11 requirements provided in KRS 278.704(5);

12 (h) The efficacy of any proposed measures to mitigate adverse impacts that are
13 identified pursuant to paragraph (a), (b), (e), or (f) of this subsection from the
14 construction or operation of the proposed facility;

15 (i) Whether the applicant has a good environmental compliance history; and

16 (j) Whether the decommissioning plan is complete and complies with the
17 requirements of KRS 278.706(2)(m) and any other local requirements that
18 may apply.

19 (2) When considering an application for a construction certificate for a merchant
20 electric generating facility, the board may consider the policy of the General
21 Assembly to encourage the use of coal as a principal fuel for electricity generation
22 as set forth in KRS 152.210, provided that any facility, regardless of fuel choice,
23 shall comply fully with KRS 224.10-280, 278.212, 278.216, and 278.700 to
24 278.716.

25 (3) A person that has received a construction certificate for a merchant electric
26 generating facility shall:

27 (a) File with the Energy and Environment Cabinet the copy of the bond or other

- 1 similar security that, pursuant to KRS 278.706(2)(m)5., is required by a
2 county or a municipal government or as part of a decommissioning plan, no
3 later than the date upon which the construction of the merchant generating
4 facility commences, and refile an updated copy at least once every five (5)
5 years thereafter;
- 6 (b) Not transfer rights and obligation under the certificate without having first
7 applied for and received a board determination that:
- 8 1. The acquirer has a good environmental compliance history; and
 - 9 2. The acquirer has the financial, technical, and managerial capacity to
10 meet the obligations imposed by the terms of the approval or has the
11 ability to contract to meet these obligations;
- 12 (c) File with the Energy and Environment Cabinet a notice of the date that
13 construction is complete and the merchant electric generating facility begins
14 producing electricity for sale. At the time of the filing of the notice required
15 by this paragraph, a construction certificate holder for a solar merchant
16 electric generating facility shall also file a report with the Energy and
17 Environment Cabinet detailing all federal and state incentives utilized by
18 the construction certificate holder relating to the siting, construction, and
19 operation of the facility. The Energy and Environment Cabinet shall
20 compile a report of all of the state and federal incentive disclosures made by
21 solar merchant electric generating facilities under this paragraph each year
22 and submit it annually to the Legislative Research Commission on or before
23 December 1; and
- 24 (d) Following the date the merchant electric generating facility begins producing
25 electricity for sale, file a notice of any transaction involving the transfer or
26 sale of ownership, control, or the right to control the merchant electric
27 generating facility, with lessors of property where the merchant electric

1 generating facility is located, the Energy and Environment Cabinet, the county
2 judge/executive of a county and, if applicable, the mayor of a municipality in
3 which the merchant electric generating facility is located, within ten (10) days
4 of completing the transaction. The notice shall include the name, street
5 address, telephone number, and e-mail address of the person acquiring
6 ownership, control, or the right to control the merchant electric generating
7 facility.

8 (4) A person that has acquired ownership, control, or the right to control a merchant
9 electric generating facility from the applicant or its successor or assign shall file
10 with the Energy and Environment Cabinet within ten (10) days of completing the
11 acquisition:

12 (a) A written consent to assume the obligations set forth in the decommissioning
13 plan as of the date the acquisition occurred; and

14 (b) A notice of adoption of an existing bond or other similar security previously
15 filed pursuant to subsection (3)(a) of this section or a replacement bond or
16 other similar security that complies with KRS 278.706(2)(m)5. An existing
17 bond or other similar security shall be adopted, or a replacement bond or other
18 similar security shall be in place, as of the date the acquisition occurs so that
19 there is no lapse in coverage of the decommissioning bond or other similar
20 security. A person making a filing pursuant to this subsection shall file an
21 updated bond or other similar security that complies with KRS
22 278.706(2)(m)5. at least once every five (5) years.

23 (5) Any person who transfers or sells ownership, control, or the right to control a
24 merchant electric generating facility shall remain liable for all existing
25 decommissioning obligations and bond requirements until the person who acquires
26 ownership, control, or the right to control the merchant electric generating facility
27 files with the Energy and Environment Cabinet the documents required by

1 subsection (4) of this section and they are accepted as complete by the secretary.

2 (6) Any application approval condition that requires the approval of the transfer of
3 control of a merchant electric generating facility after construction is complete shall
4 be void and unenforceable, but any transfer of control of a merchant electric
5 generating facility shall be subject to compliance with the requirements of
6 subsections (3)(d), (4), and (5) of this section.

7 (7) Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, including any order issued by
8 the board prior to June 29, 2023, after the board has approved an application for a
9 construction certificate for a merchant electric generating facility under this section,
10 the approved applicant has posted the bond or similar security required under KRS
11 278.706(2)(m)5., and the facility is constructed and begins generating electricity for
12 sale, the board's authority to enforce any conditions of the construction certificate,
13 including bonding and decommissioning requirements, shall end and the secretary
14 of the Energy and Environment Cabinet shall monitor and enforce the construction
15 certificate holder's compliance with the requirements of KRS 278.700 to 278.716
16 and the conditions of its construction certificate application approval.

17 (8) In addition to all compliance monitoring and enforcement performed by the
18 secretary of the Energy and Environment Cabinet, and notwithstanding any
19 provision of law to the contrary, the secretary shall also review the
20 decommissioning plan required by KRS 278.706(2)(m) or by local ordinance,
21 license, or permit and the bond or similar security amount required by KRS
22 278.706(2)(m)5. or by local ordinance, license, or permit as needed, including any
23 time a transfer determination is made under subsection (5) of this section, but in any
24 event at least once every five (5) years. Upon review, the secretary of the Energy
25 and Environment Cabinet shall require the decommissioning plan to be updated and
26 the bond amount to be changed to match any significant change in circumstances or
27 change to the estimated cost of effectuating the decommissioning plan or to the

1 salvage value of the facility or its components.

2 (9) After the facility for which an application for a construction certificate has been
3 approved is constructed and begins generating electricity for sale, the secretary of
4 the Energy and Environment Cabinet shall ensure ongoing compliance with the
5 mitigation measures that were conditions of the application approval under KRS
6 278.708(6) and any enforcement by the board of the mitigation measures shall
7 cease.

8 (10) During the period that the merchant electric generating facility is operational, if
9 solar panels are replaced and discarded, the facility owner-operator shall remove
10 discarded solar panels from the site within ninety (90) days of completion of the
11 work. Upon request of the facility owner-operator, the secretary of the Energy and
12 Environment Cabinet may extend the time period under this subsection for
13 removing discarded solar panels.