

**B-Engrossed**  
**House Bill 3696**

Ordered by the House May 31  
Including House Amendments dated May 9 and May 31

Sponsored by COMMITTEE ON ADVANCING E-GOVERNMENT

**SUMMARY**

The following summary is not prepared by the sponsors of the measure and is not a part of the body thereof subject to consideration by the Legislative Assembly. It is an editor's brief statement of the essential features of the measure.

*[Repeals provisions dealing with restructuring of electric power industry. Provides for recovery of restructuring investments by public utilities.]*

**Defines resource rate plan as plan by public utility to construct generating plant or enter into wholesale power purchase or sales agreement with term longer than one year. Authorizes Public Utility Commission to approve resource rate plan. Specifies matters that must be addressed in commission order approving resource rate plan. Provides that once commission has approved resource rate plan it may not review rates charged by utility under plan except to determine whether rates are in conformity with resource rate plan. Includes transmission company in group of entities that may enter or condemn lands and condemn trees in connection with construction of service facilities.**

Declares emergency, effective on passage.

**A BILL FOR AN ACT**

1  
2 Relating to utility regulation; creating new provisions; amending ORS 757.210, 757.800, 758.015,  
3 758.020, 772.205 and 772.210; and declaring an emergency.

4 Whereas the western United States is experiencing a shortage of electrical generating capacity,  
5 and as a result consumers in Oregon are faced with the prospect of significant increases in the cost  
6 of electricity; and

7 Whereas wholesale power markets in the western United States are reflecting extreme price  
8 volatility, and there is substantial uncertainty with respect to the level of wholesale electricity  
9 prices in the future; and

10 Whereas there is considerable uncertainty about the extent to which electric companies will be  
11 called upon to supply electricity to Oregon consumers at cost-based rates; and

12 Whereas the current regulation of electric companies and electric services may not sufficiently  
13 promote the development of new electric generating resources; and

14 Whereas in the current economic and regulatory environment, electric companies face substan-  
15 tial risk in respect to the construction or acquisition of new electric generating resources; and

16 Whereas the Public Utility Commission has the unique expertise to understand and lead changes  
17 in the regulation of electric companies that are necessary to further the purpose of this 2001 Act  
18 for the benefit of Oregon consumers; now, therefore,

19 **Be It Enacted by the People of the State of Oregon:**

20 **SECTION 1. Section 2 of this 2001 Act is added to and made a part of ORS 757.205 to**  
21 **757.220.**

22 **SECTION 2. (1) For purposes of this section, "resource rate plan" means a plan by a**  
23 **public utility to construct a generating plant or to enter into a wholesale power purchase**

**NOTE:** Matter in **boldfaced** type in an amended section is new; matter *[italic and bracketed]* is existing law to be omitted.  
New sections are in **boldfaced** type.

1 or sales agreement with a term that is longer than one year.

2 (2) The Public Utility Commission may approve a resource rate plan as an alternative  
3 form of regulation plan under ORS 757.210. If the commission approves a resource rate plan  
4 by a public utility based on the construction of a generating plant, the order approving the  
5 plan must state how the commission will reflect the costs and revenues of the generating  
6 plant in the utility's rates during all or a portion of the expected useful life of the generating  
7 plant. If the commission approves a resource rate plan based on a wholesale power purchase  
8 or sales agreement with a term longer than one year, the order approving the plan must  
9 state how the commission will reflect the costs and revenues under the wholesale power  
10 purchase or sales agreement in the utility's rates during all or a portion of the term of the  
11 agreement.

12 (3) If the commission approves a resource rate plan, the order of the commission must  
13 also address:

14 (a) The extent to which the public utility will use power from the generating plant or  
15 from the power purchase or sales agreement to serve its retail customers in Oregon;

16 (b) The allocation of power available from the generating plant or power purchase or  
17 sales agreement among different classes of the public utility's customers;

18 (c) The ratemaking consequences of the generating plant or power purchase or sales  
19 agreement, including the consequences of variations in the amount of power that is actually  
20 available after the plan is in operation compared with the amount of power that was antic-  
21 ipated to be available at the time the plan was approved; and

22 (d) Any other issue the commission chooses to consider.

23 (4) If the commission approves a resource rate plan, the commission may not thereafter  
24 review the rates charged by the public utility under the plan except for the purpose of de-  
25 termining whether the rates are in conformity with the plan. The commission may not con-  
26 sider any complaint under ORS 756.500 relating to the public utility's rates except for those  
27 relating to whether the rates are in conformity with the resource rate plan.

28 (5) A resource rate plan and a public utility's rates under a resource rate plan are not  
29 subject to ORS 757.355.

30 (6) The commission may not vacate or amend an order approving a resource rate plan  
31 unless the public utility operating under the plan approves the vacation or amendment.

32 (7) Notwithstanding ORS 756.580, any appeal of a commission order disapproving or ap-  
33 proving a resource rate plan must be pursuant to the provisions of ORS 183.482.

34 **SECTION 3.** ORS 757.210 is amended to read:

35 757.210. (1) Whenever any public utility files with the Public Utility Commission any rate or  
36 schedule of rates stating or establishing a new rate or schedule of rates or increasing an existing  
37 rate or schedule of rates, the commission may, either upon written complaint or upon the commis-  
38 sion's own initiative, after reasonable notice, conduct a hearing to determine the propriety and  
39 reasonableness of such rate or schedule. The commission shall conduct such a hearing upon written  
40 complaint filed by the utility, its customer or customers, or any other proper party within 60 days  
41 of the utility's filing; provided that no hearing need be held if the particular rate change is the re-  
42 sult of an automatic adjustment clause. At such hearing the utility shall bear the burden of showing  
43 that the rate or schedule of rates proposed to be established or increased or changed is just and  
44 reasonable. The term "automatic adjustment clause" means a provision of a rate schedule which  
45 provides for rate increases or decreases or both, without prior hearing, reflecting increases or de-

1 creases or both in costs incurred or revenues earned by a utility and which is subject to review by  
2 the commission at least once every two years.

3 (2)(a) Subsection (1) of this section does not apply to rate changes under an approved alternative  
4 form of regulation plan, **including a resource rate plan under section 2 of this 2001 Act.**

5 (b) Any alternative form of regulation plan shall include provisions to ensure that the plan op-  
6 erates in the interests of utility customers and the public generally and results in rates that are just  
7 and reasonable and may include provisions establishing a reasonable range for rate of return on  
8 investment. In approving a plan, the commission shall, at a minimum, consider whether the plan:

9 (A) Promotes increased efficiencies and cost control;

10 (B) Is consistent with least-cost resources acquisition policies;

11 (C) Is consistent with maintenance of safe, adequate and reliable service; and

12 (D) Is beneficial to utility customers generally, for example, by minimizing utility rates.

13 (c) As used in this subsection, "alternative form of regulation plan" means a plan adopted by the  
14 commission upon petition by a public utility, after notice and an opportunity for a hearing, that sets  
15 rates and revenues and a method for changes in rates and revenues using alternatives to cost-of-  
16 service rate regulation.

17 (d) Prior to implementing a rate change under an alternative form of regulation plan, the utility  
18 shall present a report that demonstrates the calculation of any proposed rate change at a public  
19 meeting of the commission.

20 (3) **Except as provided in section 2 of this 2001 Act**, the commission, at any time, may order  
21 a utility to appear and establish that any, or all, of its rates in a plan authorized under subsection  
22 (2) of this section are in conformity with the plan and are just and reasonable. **Except as provided**  
23 **in section 2 of this 2001 Act**, such rates, and the alternative form of regulation plan under which  
24 the rates are set, also shall be subject to complaint under ORS 756.500.

25 (4) Periodically, but not less often than every two years after the implementation of a plan re-  
26 ferred to in subsection (2) of this section, the commission shall submit a report to the Legislative  
27 Assembly that shows the impact of the plan on rates paid by utility customers.

28 (5) The commission and staff may consult at any time with, and provide technical assistance to,  
29 utilities, their customers, and other interested parties on matters relevant to utility rates and  
30 charges. If a hearing is held with respect to a rate change, the commission's decisions shall be based  
31 on the record made at the hearing.

32 **SECTION 4. The Public Utility Commission may not approve resource rate plans under**  
33 **section 2 of this 2001 Act for generation resources or power purchase or sales agreements**  
34 **that have been included in rates of the public utility before the effective date of this 2001**  
35 **Act.**

36 **SECTION 5.** ORS 757.800 is amended to read:

37 757.800. As used in this section and ORS 757.805, unless the context requires otherwise:

38 (1) "Authorized person" means:

39 (a) An employee of a utility which produces, transmits or delivers electricity.

40 (b) An employee of a utility which provides and whose work relates to communication services  
41 or state, county or municipal agencies which have authorized circuit construction on or near the  
42 poles or structures of a utility.

43 (c) An employee or agent of an industrial plant whose work relates to the electric system of the  
44 industrial plant.

45 (d) An employee of a cable television or communication services company or an employee of a

1 contractor of a cable television or communication services company if specifically authorized by the  
2 owners of the poles to make cable television or communication services attachments.

3 (e) An employee or agent of state, county or municipal agencies which have or whose work re-  
4 lates to overhead electric lines or circuit construction or conductors on poles or structures of any  
5 type.

6 **(f) An employee of a transmission company as defined in ORS 758.015.**

7 (2) "High voltage" means voltage in excess of 600 volts measured between conductors or be-  
8 tween a conductor and the ground.

9 (3) "Overhead line" means all bare or insulated electric conductors installed above ground.

10 (4) "Person" or "business entity" means those parties who contract to perform any function or  
11 activity upon any land, building, highway or other premises.

12 (5) "Utility" means any electric or communication utility described by ORS 757.005, any plant  
13 owned or operated by a municipality, any person furnishing community antenna television service  
14 to the public and any cooperative corporation or people's utility district engaged in furnishing  
15 electric or communication service to customers.

16 (6) "Proximity" means within 10 feet or such greater distance as may be prescribed by rule  
17 adopted pursuant to ORS chapter 654.

18 **SECTION 6.** ORS 758.015 is amended to read:

19 758.015. (1) When any person, as defined in ORS 758.400, providing electric utility service, as  
20 defined in ORS 758.400, **or any transmission company**, proposes to construct an overhead trans-  
21 mission line which will necessitate a condemnation of land or an interest therein, it shall petition  
22 the Public Utility Commission for a certificate of public convenience and necessity setting forth a  
23 detailed description and the purpose of the proposed transmission line, the estimated cost, the route  
24 to be followed, the availability of alternate routes, a description of other transmission lines con-  
25 necting the same areas, and such other information in such form as the commission may reasonably  
26 require in determining the public convenience and necessity.

27 (2) The commission shall give notice and hold a public hearing on such petition. The commission,  
28 in addition to considering facts presented at such hearing, shall make the commission's own inves-  
29 tigation to determine the necessity, safety, practicability and justification in the public interest for  
30 the proposed transmission line and shall enter an order accordingly. The order shall be subject to  
31 review as in other cases. In any proceeding for condemnation, a certified copy of such order shall  
32 be conclusive evidence that the transmission line for which the land is required is a public use and  
33 necessary for public convenience.

34 (3) This section shall not apply to construction of transmission lines in connection with a project  
35 for which a permit or license is otherwise obtained pursuant to state or federal law.

36 **(4) As used in this section and ORS 758.020, "transmission company" means a person or**  
37 **entity that owns or operates high voltage transmission lines and is subject to the jurisdiction**  
38 **of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission. "Transmission company" does not include a**  
39 **cooperative organized under ORS chapter 62.**

40 **SECTION 7.** ORS 758.020 is amended to read:

41 758.020. (1) The county court, board of county commissioners or the Department of Transporta-  
42 tion, when designating the location where poles or other aboveground facilities described in ORS  
43 758.010 may be placed on a road or highway which fronts on the ocean or on a river or other body  
44 of water and the water frontage of the highway is being developed or maintained for its scenic or  
45 recreational value, may require all lines to occupy the opposite side of the right of way, if such joint

1 occupancy can be maintained without undue impairment of service or damage to public life and  
2 property.

3 (2) If the owners of such lines are unable to agree on the terms and conditions of joint occu-  
4 pancy, such department, court or board shall request the Public Utility Commission to determine the  
5 practicability of such joint occupancy and the effect thereof upon adequate and safe service by the  
6 prospective joint occupants, the location of the lines, and, if found to be practicable, to fix and  
7 prescribe the terms and conditions pursuant to which joint occupancy shall be accomplished. Before  
8 making or entering an order, such commission shall hold a hearing and make findings in accordance  
9 with ORS 756.500 to 756.610, subject to review as provided in ORS 756.580 to 756.610. In fixing terms  
10 and conditions pursuant to which joint occupancy shall be accomplished, the Public Utility Com-  
11 mission shall require the installation by each occupant of standards, devices and equipment reason-  
12 ably necessary to protect the equipment of the other occupants from damage and the public from  
13 injury arising from such joint occupancy.

14 (3) The right of any public utility, [or] telecommunications utility **or transmission company** to  
15 construct, maintain and operate on a public highway poles or fixtures is contingent on compliance  
16 with reasonable requirements established by the Department of Transportation, county courts,  
17 boards of county commissioners or the Public Utility Commission under authority of this section and  
18 ORS 758.010. Such rights are likewise contingent and conditioned on all facilities, equipment and  
19 installations being constructed and maintained in strict conformance with modern and approved  
20 standards.

21 **SECTION 8.** ORS 772.205 is amended to read:

22 772.205. As used in ORS 772.210 and 772.215, unless the context requires otherwise:

23 (1) "Electrical cooperative association" means a cooperative association which is subject to a  
24 tax on gross revenue derived from the use or operation of transmission and distribution lines pur-  
25 suant to ORS 308.805 to 308.820.

26 (2) "Public utility" has the meaning given that term in ORS 757.005.

27 (3) "Service facilities" include any line, wire, pipe, conduit, main, pump, pole, tower, fixture,  
28 structure, shop, office or building for any use or purpose reasonably necessary and incident to the  
29 conduct of the business of a public utility.

30 **(4) "Transmission company" has the meaning given that term in ORS 758.015.**

31 **SECTION 9.** ORS 772.210 is amended to read:

32 772.210. (1) Any public utility, [or] electrical cooperative association **or transmission company**  
33 may:

34 (a) Enter upon lands within this state for the purpose of examining, locating and surveying the  
35 line thereof and also other lands necessary and convenient for the purpose of construction of service  
36 facilities, doing no unnecessary damage thereby.

37 (b) Condemn such lands not exceeding 100 feet in width for its lines (including poles, towers,  
38 wires, supports and necessary equipment therefor) and in addition thereto, other lands necessary and  
39 convenient for the purpose of construction of service facilities; and if the lands are covered by trees  
40 which are liable to fall and constitute a hazard to its wire or line, any public utility **or trans-**  
41 **mission company** organized for the purpose of building, maintaining and operating a line of poles  
42 and wires for the transmission of electricity for lighting or power purposes, may condemn such trees  
43 for a width not exceeding 300 feet, as may be necessary or convenient for such purpose.

44 (2) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, any public utility, [or] electrical cooperative  
45 association **or transmission company** may, when necessary or convenient for transmission lines

1 (including poles, towers, wires, supports and necessary equipment therefor) designed for voltages in  
2 excess of 330,000 volts, condemn land not to exceed 300 feet in width. In addition, if the lands are  
3 covered by trees which are liable to fall and constitute a hazard to its wire or line, such public  
4 utility **or transmission company** may condemn such trees for a width not exceeding 100 feet on  
5 either side of the condemned land, as may be necessary or convenient for such purpose.

6 (3) Notwithstanding subsection (1) of this section, a water or gas public utility may condemn  
7 such lands, not exceeding 50 feet in width, as may be necessary or convenient for purposes of con-  
8 structing, laying, maintaining and operating its lines, including necessary equipment therefor.

9 (4) The proceedings for the condemnation of such lands shall be the same as that provided in  
10 ORS chapter 35, provided that any award shall include, but shall not be limited to, damages for de-  
11 struction of forest growth, premature cutting of timber, and diminution in value to remaining timber  
12 caused by increased harvesting costs.

13 **SECTION 10. This 2001 Act being necessary for the immediate preservation of the public**  
14 **peace, health and safety, an emergency is declared to exist, and this 2001 Act takes effect**  
15 **on its passage.**

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