

RCW 19.405.090 Compliance, enforcement, and penalties—

Alternatives. (1)(a) An electric utility or an affected market customer that fails to meet the standards established under RCW 19.405.030(1) and 19.405.040(1) must pay an administrative penalty to the state of Washington in the amount of one hundred dollars, times the following multipliers, for each megawatt-hour of electric generation used to meet load that is not electricity from a renewable resource or nonemitting electric generation:

- (i) 1.5 for coal-fired resources;
- (ii) 0.84 for gas-fired peaking power plants; and
- (iii) 0.60 for gas-fired combined-cycle power plants.

(b) Beginning in 2027, this penalty must be adjusted on a biennial basis according to the rate of change of the inflation indicator, gross domestic product implicit price deflator, as published by the bureau of economic analysis of the United States department of commerce or its successor. Beginning in 2040, the commission may by rule increase this penalty for investor-owned utilities if the commission determines that doing so will accelerate utilities' compliance with the standards established under this chapter and that doing so is in the public interest.

(2) Consistent with the requirements of RCW 19.405.040(1)(b), a utility may opt to make a payment in the amount of the administrative penalty as an alternative compliance payment, without incurring a penalty for noncompliance.

(3)(a) Upon its own motion or at the request of an investor-owned utility, and after a hearing, the commission may issue an order relieving the utility of its administrative penalty obligation under subsection (1) of this section if it finds that:

(i) After taking all reasonable measures, the investor-owned utility's compliance with this chapter is likely to result in conflicts with or compromises to its obligation to comply with the mandatory and enforceable reliability standards of the North American electric reliability corporation, violate prudent utility practice for assuring resource adequacy, or compromise the power quality or integrity of its system; or

(ii) The investor-owned utility is unable to comply with the standards established in RCW 19.405.030(1) or 19.405.040(1) due to reasons beyond the reasonable control of the investor-owned utility, as set forth in subsection (6) of this section.

(b) If the commission issues an order pursuant to (a) of this subsection that relieves an investor-owned utility of its administrative penalty obligation under subsection (1) of this section, the commission may issue an order:

(i) Temporarily exempting the investor-owned utility from the requirements of RCW 19.405.040(1) for an amount of time sufficient to allow the investor-owned utility to achieve full compliance with the standard;

(ii) Directing the investor-owned utility to file a progress report to the commission on achieving full compliance with the standard within six months after issuing the order, or within an amount of time determined to be reasonable by the commission; and

(iii) Directing the investor-owned utility to take specific actions to achieve full compliance with the requirements of this chapter.

(c) An investor-owned utility may request an extension of a temporary exemption granted under this section. An investor-owned

utility that requests an extension must request an update to the order issued by the commission under (b) of this subsection.

(4) Subsection (3) of this section does not permanently relieve an investor-owned utility of its obligation to comply with the requirements of this chapter.

(5) (a) The governing body of a consumer-owned utility may authorize a temporary exemption from the standard established under RCW 19.405.040(1), for an amount of time sufficient to allow the consumer-owned utility to achieve full compliance with the standard, if the governing body finds that:

(i) The consumer-owned utility's compliance with the standard is likely to: Result in conflicts with or compromises to its obligation to comply with the mandatory and enforceable reliability standards of the North American electric reliability corporation; violate prudent utility practice for assuring resource adequacy; or compromise the power quality or integrity of its system; or

(ii) The consumer-owned utility is unable to comply with the standard due to reasons beyond the reasonable control of the utility, as set forth in subsection (6) of this section; and

(iii) The consumer-owned utility has provided to the department a plan demonstrating how it plans to achieve full compliance with the standard, consistent with the findings of the report submitted to the legislature under RCW 19.405.080.

(b) Upon request by the governing body of a consumer-owned utility, a consumer-owned utility must be relieved of its administrative penalty obligation under subsection (1) of this section if the auditor issues a finding that:

(i) The governing body of the consumer-owned utility has properly issued a temporary exemption under (a) of this subsection for a period of time not to exceed six months; and

(ii) The governing body of the consumer-owned utility has submitted to the department a plan to take specific actions to achieve full compliance with the standard, consistent with the findings of the report submitted to the legislature under RCW 19.405.080.

(c) Upon issuance of a finding by the auditor, the consumer-owned utility must submit a progress report to the department on achieving full compliance with the standard within the term authorized in the temporary exemption.

(d) A consumer-owned utility may request an extension of a temporary exemption granted under this subsection, subject to the same requirements as provided in (a) through (c) of this subsection.

(e) The attorney general may bring a civil action in the name of the state for any appropriate civil remedy including, but not limited to, injunctive relief, penalties, costs, and attorneys' fees, to enforce compliance with this chapter:

(i) Upon the failure of the governing body of a consumer-owned utility to comply with the conditions of a temporary exemption found by the auditor to be properly adopted or extended; or

(ii) Upon failure of the governing body of a consumer-owned utility to comply with a finding by the auditor that a temporary exemption is not properly granted.

(f) This subsection does not permanently relieve a consumer-owned utility of its obligation to comply with the requirements of this chapter.

(6) To the extent an event or circumstance cannot be reasonably foreseen and ameliorated, such events or circumstances beyond the

reasonable control of an electric utility may include but are not limited to:

- (a) Weather-related damage;
 - (b) Natural disasters;
 - (c) Mechanical or resource failure;
 - (d) Failure of a third party to meet contractual obligations to the electric utility;
 - (e) Actions of governmental authorities that adversely affect the generation, transmission, or distribution of nonemitting electric generation or renewable resources owned or under contract to an electric utility, including condemnation actions by municipal electric utilities, public utility districts, or irrigation districts that adversely affect an investor-owned utility's ability to meet the standard established in RCW 19.405.030(1) and 19.405.040(1);
 - (f) Inability to acquire sufficient transmission to transmit electricity from nonemitting electric generation or renewable resources to load; and
 - (g) Substantial limitations, restrictions, or prohibitions on nonemitting electric generation or renewable resources.
- (7) An electric utility must notify its retail electric customers in published form within three months of paying the administrative penalty established under subsection (1) of this section. An electric utility is not required to notify its retail electric customers when making a payment in the amount of the administrative penalty as an alternative compliance payment consistent with the requirements of RCW 19.405.040(1)(b).
- (8) Moneys collected under this section must be deposited into the low-income weatherization and structural rehabilitation assistance account created in RCW 70A.35.030.
- (9) For an investor-owned utility, the commission must determine compliance with the requirements of this chapter.
- (10) For consumer-owned utilities, the auditor is responsible for auditing compliance with this chapter and rules adopted under this chapter that apply to those utilities and the attorney general is responsible for enforcing that compliance.
- (11) If the report submitted under RCW 19.405.080 demonstrates adverse system reliability impacts from the implementation of RCW 19.405.040 and 19.405.050, the governor, consistent with the emergency powers under RCW 43.21G.040, may suspend or delay implementation of this chapter, or exempt an electric utility from paying the administrative penalty under this section, until system reliability impacts can be addressed. Adverse system reliability impacts may include, but are not limited to, the inability of electric utilities or transmission operators to meet reliability standards mandated by federal or state law and required by prudent utility practices.
- (12) Notwithstanding RCW 54.16.020, the fair market value compensation for an asset that is condemned by a municipal electric utility, public utility district, or irrigation district and that is either demonstrated in an electric utility's clean energy action plan or clean energy implementation plan to be used or acquired after May 7, 2019, to meet the requirements of RCW 19.405.040 and 19.405.050, or an asset that generates electricity from renewable resources or nonemitting electric generation, must include but not be limited to a replacement value approach. Additionally, the electric utility may seek, and the court may award, damages attributable to the severance, separation, replacement, or relocation of utility assets. The trier of

fact may also consider other damages, as well as offsetting benefits, that it finds just and equitable.

(13) An entity that establishes or extends service to the premises of a customer who is being served by an electric utility or was served by an electric utility prior to May 7, 2019, must serve those premises in a manner that complies with the requirements of chapter 288, Laws of 2019 and with chapter 19.285 RCW, if applicable. An electric utility or other entity that fails to comply with the requirements of this subsection must pay the administrative penalty under subsection (1) of this section for each megawatt-hour of electric generation used to serve load that does not meet the terms of this subsection. [2021 c 65 § 20; 2019 c 288 § 9.]

Explanatory statement—2021 c 65: See note following RCW 53.54.030.