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Reduce Reliance on a Dangerous Transmission System

The 2019 IEPR can provide the advice legislators need to develop policies that will promote microgrids as an asset as the state adapts to the changing climate by fostering resiliency and clean energy generation.

Legislation should encourage microgrids that are based on renewable energy generation resources combined with energy storage capacity. Local solar and wind energy generation capacity will minimize the need for high-capacity, long-line transmission. Wastewater treatment facilities should incorporate the capture of methane emissions for use as generation fuel reducing the warming impact of emissions and/or for the extraction of hydrogen for fuel cell use. Electricity thus produced could power both wastewater treatment and water treatment and pumping requirements.

The market conditions to support this kind of change should include time-of-use electric tariffs applied to all market segments. High-rise office building air-conditioning should pay for the full cost of the energy it sucks up, while warehouse owners, parking lot, and home owners and landlords should all find roof-top solar investment a simple yes decision. Investment tax credits upfront should offset property tax adjustments in every jurisdiction.

Tariffs should also be structured to pay transmission line investors for transmission, not for idle capacity. A premium should be paid for underground transmission line use while only declining rates should be paid for overhead transmission capacity. In general, no new rights-of-way for overhead transmission nor distribution lines should be added. Underground transmission routes should lie alongside existing roadways. Idle overhead transmission should be removed at the cost of owner equity within four years of the end of its regular use.