

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES STAFF ANALYSIS

BILL #: HB 1471 CS Florida Energy Diversity and Efficiency Act
SPONSOR(S): Attkisson
TIED BILLS: **IDEN./SIM. BILLS:** SB 2494

REFERENCE	ACTION	ANALYST	STAFF DIRECTOR
1) Utilities & Telecommunications Committee	13 Y, 1 N, w/CS	Holt	Holt
2) Fiscal Council			
3) Commerce Council			
4) _____	_____	_____	_____
5) _____	_____	_____	_____

SUMMARY ANALYSIS

HB1471 creates the "Florida Energy Diversity and Efficiency Act," to govern the siting of new nuclear power plants. The Act is modeled after the existing Power Plant Siting Act, Chapter 403.509, F.S.

The bill streamlines the siting process while ensuring public input. The legislation also allows the Governor and Cabinet, sitting as the Siting Board, to assess the need and approve/deny the plant.

The bill consolidates all issues into one hearing before an Administrative Law Judge (local land use hearing is consolidated into ALJ hearing)

The definitions for "associated facilities" and "associated transmission lines," are broadened to create a single forum for "one-stop" permitting of all transmission issues. The bill also defines the scope of intervention in transmission line siting procedures in an effort to eliminate unnecessary delays.

Public Service Commission's (PSC) need determination is also included in the bill, and the bill imposes a 135-day schedule on the PSC for issuing a need order. Issues are defined that the PSC can address in the need proceeding and requires the PSC to grant the utility's petition upon a finding that the plant will (1) provide needed baseload capacity; (2) enhance the reliability of production in the state by improving fuel diversity and lessening reliance on natural gas and oil; (3) mitigate air emissions and; (4) provide the most cost-effective – though not necessarily the least-cost –generating alternative. Further, the bill excludes nuclear plants from the PSC bid rule.

Other provisions provide that once a need petition is granted, costs incurred shall not be subject to challenge unless and only to the extent the PSC finds, based on clear and convincing evidence offered at a hearing initiated by the PSC, that the utility was imprudent in incurring costs significantly in excess of the initial, non-binding estimate provided by the utility.

The total fiscal impact is unknown at this time. However, general estimates from PSC indicate that the costs for constructing a nuclear plant will not change by this act. It is the rate recovery mechanism that is changing which allows a utility to recoup its prudently incurred costs sooner in the process. The bill does not appear to provide any type of tax credit or economic incentive for construction that would create a known fiscal impact.

The bill takes effect upon becoming law.

This document does not reflect the intent or official position of the bill sponsor or House of Representatives.

STORAGE NAME: h1471b.UT.doc
DATE: 4/13/2006

FULL ANALYSIS

I. SUBSTANTIVE ANALYSIS

A. HOUSE PRINCIPLES ANALYSIS:

Maintain Public Security: Through the further diversification of the State fuel supply, the siting of new nuclear generation may lessen the dependence on any one particular fuel, in order to ensure power reliability.

B. EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES:

Background

Department of Environmental Protection

Certification of nuclear fueled, steam turbine, electric power generation facilities is presently done under the authority of the Electrical Power Plant Siting Act (PPSA), ss. 403.501-403.518 and ss. 403.519, F.S. The PPSA is a centralized, coordinated licensing process. This process preempts all state, regional, and local permits and other authorizations that have jurisdiction for regulation and siting of industrial facilities. All affected agencies participate as parties to the process and all non-procedural requirements of the preempted agencies are included in the certification as conditions of certification.

The PPSA is highly procedural and includes a determination of need by the Public Service Commission (PSC) ss. 403.519, F.S., a mandatory land use hearing and a mandatory certification hearing by an administrative law judge, with ultimate approval/denial authority vested in the Siting Board (Governor and Cabinet). The DEP coordinates the process.

An administrative law judge is involved from the beginning, and the process is handled as litigation and requires the exchange of most documents as legal filings. Persons wishing to become formally involved in the process, for the most part, must become parties to the proceeding. Additional opportunities exist for public comment.

Public Service Commission

A precedent condition for an electrical project to proceed under the PPSA (s. 403.508(3)) is an affirmative determination of plant need from the PSC. In implementing the requirements of s. 403.508(3), the PSC has established rules controlling the information to be included in a petition for need and the schedule of administrative events in order to meet the requirements of the PPSA. Section 403.519, F.S., requires the PSC, in considering whether to approve a need petition, to take into account several criteria. These criteria include the need for electric system reliability and integrity; the need for adequate electricity at a reasonable cost; whether the proposed plant is the most cost-effective alternative available; available conservation measures which mitigate the need for the plant; and other matters within the PSC's jurisdiction.

In determining whether the proposed plant is the most cost-effective alternative, the PSC established Rule 25-22.082, F.A.C. Selection of Generating Capacity. This rule requires utilities to request bids for alternatives to its proposed plant in order to meet the identified need for power. The effect of the rule is to provide the PSC with more complete information about potential alternatives to the proposed power plant to use as a consideration in its deliberation of the project's cost-effectiveness.

Federal Legislation

The Energy Policy Act of 2005 provides significant financial incentives that may inure to the benefit of Florida consumers. These incentives, however, are limited to the first 6,000 megawatts of new nuclear plants constructed. To date, utilities in a number of other states have announced their intent to build new nuclear plants.

EFFECT OF PROPOSED CHANGES

Section 1. The act may be cited as the Florida Energy Diversity and Efficiency Act.

Section 2. The bill provides legislative purpose declaring that it is in the public interest and critical to the health, prosperity, and general welfare of the state and its citizens to promote the expansion of nuclear generation by the siting of new nuclear power plants and associated facilities within the state.

Section 3. Definitions: The bill provides definitions as used in this act. The definitions are adapted largely from those used in the PPSA, with exceptions for using the term “nuclear” in lieu of “electric.” Noteworthy, however, are the following definitions which are expanded from the PPSA for use in the act:

(4) "Applicant" means any electric utility as defined under s. 366.8255(1)(a)¹, Florida Statutes, city, town, county, public utility district, electric cooperative, or joint operating agency, or combination thereof, authorized under Florida law to engage in the business of generating, transmitting, or distributing electric energy to retail electric customers in the state.

The regulatory approval of a nuclear plant in the bill only applies to retail serving utilities as defined in s. 366.8255(10)(a). This allows for the inclusion of municipal and rural electric utilities. Historically, no individual Florida municipal or rural electric cooperative has sought to construct a nuclear unit. However, joint ownership arrangements could exist, and these entities as a result could have ownership shares of future nuclear plants.

(21) "Nuclear power plant" means, for the purpose of certification, any electrical generating facility using any process involving nuclear materials, fuels, or processes and, at the applicant's election, includes associated facilities and associated transmission lines.

The definition includes, at the applicant's option, associated transmission lines which encompass not only lines and substations directly interconnected to nuclear plants, but any transmission upgrades or expansions on the state's transmission system. As a result, any grid-wide upgrades required to reliably handle the electric output of the proposed nuclear plant would be considered as part of the licensing process required under this act.

Three concerns were raised in this regard to the definition: 1) definition goes beyond the current definition of associated facilities contained in the PPSA. 2) references to the notice provisions and request for hearings use the term “nuclear power plant” and make no mention of “associated facilities. 3) in order for the Siting Board to comprehensively balance the cost and benefits of a new nuclear power plant, all directly associated facilities should be included in the application and evaluated by the reporting agencies, and should not be at the applicant's option.

The bill deletes the definitions used in PPSA for “person” and “sufficiency.”

Section 4. Department of Environmental Protection; powers and duties enumerated: Powers are designated to the DEP to adopt rules to implement the act provisions and conduct various studies. However, the concern was raised the bill provides DEP with no authority to issue final orders if not hearing is requested.

Section 5. Applicability and certification: Provisions provide that the act applies exclusively to any new nuclear power plant and to any expansion in steam-generation capacity of any existing nuclear power plant. Any new construction and capacity expansion occurring after the effective date of this requires certification under this act. The bill provides an exemption from modification of certification for

¹ (1) As used in this section, the term:

(a) “Electric utility” or “utility” means any investor-owned electric utility that owns, maintains, or operates an electric generation, transmission, or distribution system within the State of Florida and that is regulated under this chapter.

changes to fuel make-up that result in no increase of generation capacity. The processing of any federally delegated or approved program shall be processed within the time constraints of the certification review.

Section 6. Distribution of application; schedules: The bill provides that:

- within 7 days after a site certification application (SCA) is filed, the DEP shall provide the applicant and the Division of Administrative Hearings (DOAH) the names and addresses of affected parties.
- within 7 days after an SCA is determined complete, the DEP distributes the processing schedules. (According to DEP, this could be 66 days after receipt of a SCA. See the correlating note in s. 8 regarding 45 days after receipt for a SCA completeness determination.)
- within 7 days after DEP provides the names and addresses of the affected parties, the applicant distributes copies of the application to all affected parties.

Section 7. Appointment of administrative law judge: The bill provides that:

- within 7 days of receipt to the SCA, the DEP request DOAH to designate and administrative law judge (ALJ).
- within 7 days of receipt of the DEP request, DOAH appoints an ALJ.

Section 8. Determination of completeness: The bill provides that:

- within 30 days of distribution of the SAC, agencies are to submit recommendations on completion to DEP
- within 45 days of distribution, the DEP submits its statement on completeness with the applicant and DOAH. (The bill combines at this point the determination of completeness and the determination of sufficiency which are separate concepts in PPSA).

If a finding of incompleteness is declared, the applicant may: 1) withdraw SCA or amendment, or 2) within forty days or such later date as authorized by department rules, file additional information (DEP then has thirty days to issue a second completeness finding), or 3) ask for additional time to file additional information, or 4) ask for an administrative hearing. If a hearing is requested, the request must be filed within fifteen days. If a hearing is requested, the request must be filed within fifteen days. The hearing shall be within twenty-one days of request and ALJ's decision to be within ten days of end of hearing and all processing time-clocks are tolled until the ALJ's decision.

Section 9: Land use and zoning consistency: This section is created to generally streamline the land use and zoning determination. The bill requires an applicant to include in its application a statement of consistency of the site or any directly associated facilities with existing land use plans and zoning ordinances. Local government is to file with all relevant parties with 80 days its determination consistency of the site and its directly associated facilities with existing land use plans and zoning ordinances. The applicant is to then publish the notice of consistency determination in accordance with s. 17(1)(b). Substantially affected individuals, within 15 days of the published notice, shall file a petition of dispute with DEP.

By stipulation among the applicant, local government, and DEP, the dates in this section may be altered pursuant to s. 403.5095.

If it is determined by the local government that the proposed site, or directly associated facility conform with existing land use plans and zoning ordinances, in effect as of the date of the application, and no petition has been filed, the responsible zoning or planning authority shall not change the land use plans or zoning ordinances, in order to foreclose construction and operation of the proposed site, or directly associated facilities, unless certification is subsequently denied or withdrawn.

Section 10. Preliminary statements of issues, reports, and studies: Affected agencies within 45 days of SCA distribution are to file preliminary statement of issues. Statutory agencies, or any other agency, must submit agency reports within 60 days of completeness. All proposed conditions of certification shall specify specific statute, rule, or ordinance which authorizes the condition. No condition may be included in the conditions of certification without such specific authorization.

DEP issues a written analysis 85 days after application determined complete. Analysis contains statement of compliance with agency rules, copies of studies and reports, comments from other agencies or persons, DEP recommendations on disposition of the application, variances or exemptions and exceptions, and DEP's recommendation of federal permits.

Section 11. Notice of department recommendation, petition for certification hearing: DEP and the applicant shall publish notice of DEP's recommendation on the SCA and any associated facilities in newspapers of the affected areas. (In correlation with section 4, if no hearing is requested, DEP's believes it final order would not be challengeable).

Section 12. Land use and certification hearing, parties, participants: The bill created this section to address land use and certification hearings as follows:

Land use hearing: provides that if a petition is filed for a land use hearing relating to the proposed site or directly associated facility the ALJ as expeditiously as possible, but no later than 30 days after DEP's receipt of the petition shall conduct the hearing. The land use hearing is to be held whether or not the application is complete. However, incompleteness of information may be used by the local government in making its determination on consistency with land use. If in the recommended order, the ALJ finds a site inconsistent with local land use and zoning requirements, the bill outlines the procedure that follows such situations.

Additionally, it clarifies that local land use plans and zoning ordinances may be preempted by the siting board.

If any party or person whose substantial interests are affected, files a petition for a certification within 14 days after DEP's notice of certification, the designated ALJ shall no later than 260 days hold a hearing. The PSC affirmative determination of need is a condition precedent to the conduct of the certification hearing. For timely petitions for a certification hearing, the hearing shall be held at a location in proximity to the site. This hearing constitutes the sole hearing allowed by ch. 120, to determine the party's interest regarding any required agency license or any related permit required by any federally delegated or approved permit program. The ALJ's recommended order shall be issued within 60 days. The amendment provides a list of the parties to the proceeding.

Provisions are included in the bill for the listed parties, and others, to file intent to be a party or a waiver of participation. The ALJ shall have all powers and duties granted by ch., 120, this act, and the rules of DEP, and the Administration Commission.

Section 13. Final disposition of application: If no certification hearing is held, or within 60 days of ALJ's recommended order following a certification hearing, the SB must approve or deny issuance of a certification by written order, If denied, the reasons for denial are to also be included in the order. Criteria are provided upon which the SB is to consider whether an SCA is to approve in whole, with modifications or conditions, or denied. If certification is denied, the SB is required to set forth in writing actions needed to secure approval. Concerns were raised in this section concerning: 1) that the bill does not contemplate fatal error that cannot be fixed; 2) that only parties to the proceeding may appear before the SB thereby creating a situation that is contrary to Government in the Sunshine; 3) that local comprehensive plans are to be overridden by the SB to allow the project at the selected site.

Section 14. Alteration of time limits: The provisions in this section are identical to the PPSA.

Section 15. Superseded laws, regulations, and certification power:

(1) If any provision of this act is in conflict with any other provision, limitation, or restriction under any law, rule, regulation, or ordinance of this state or any political subdivision, municipality, or agency, this act shall govern and control, and such law, rule, regulation, or ordinance shall be deemed superseded for the purposes of this act.

(2) The state hereby preempts the siting, regulation, and certification of nuclear power plant sites and nuclear power plants as defined in this act.

(3) The board may adopt reasonable procedural rules pursuant to ss. 120.536(1) and 120.54 to carry out its duties under this act and to give effect to the legislative intent that this act is to provide an efficient, simplified, centrally coordinated, one-stop licensing process.

Section 16. Effect of certification: The majority of these provisions model the PPSA. However, concern was raised that agencies have 60 days after completeness to notify an applicant that a variance, exemption or other relief is needed. This is the same date agency reports are due. It appears the bill offers no response time to the applicant, and no time is given to DEP to include the additional information into the DEP report.

Section 17. Notice; costs of proceeding: The provisions of this section model the PPSA, except for (1)(b) and (c). Section (1)(b) provides that notice of the land use determination made pursuant to section 9(1) within 15 days after the determination is filed. Section(1)(c) provides notice of land use hearing, which shall be published as specified in subsection (2), no later than 15 days before the hearing.

Section 18. Revocation or suspension of certification: The provisions of this section model the PPSA.

Section 19. Review: The bill provides that proceedings under this act shall be subject to judicial review in the Florida Supreme Court. Separate appeals of the certification and federally delegated or approved permit programs shall be consolidated for purposes of judicial review. Review on appeal shall be based solely on the record before the board and briefs to the court and shall be limited to determining whether the certification order conforms to the constitution and laws of this state and the United States and is within the authority of the board under this act. The Supreme Court shall expeditiously as practicable review the case. Concern has been raised regarding this provision creating an avenue of appeal contrary to the requirements of section 10.

Section 20. Enforcement of compliance: The provisions of this section model the PPSA.

Section 21. Availability of information: The provisions of this section model the PPSA.

Section 22. Modification of a certificate: The majority of this section models the PPSA. The DEP proposed clarifying the language in regard the initial request to specify who makes it and how, as well as what is needed to entirely accomplish a modification.

Section 23. Supplemental applications for sites certified for ultimate capacity: The majority of this provision models the PPSA.

Section 24. Fees; disposition: The bill provides fee provisions similar to the PPSA. However, the DEP noted that the fees are too low, and that DOAH receives it full fee even if there is no hearing.

Section 25. Exclusive forum for determination of need: The provisions of this section are similar to the PPSA. The PSC is the sole forum for determination of electrical need. Section 403.519 reads in part:

In making its determination, the commission shall take into account the need for electric system reliability and integrity, the need for adequate electricity at a

reasonable cost, and whether the proposed plant is the most cost-effective alternative available.

The bill proposes new language in s. (2)(a) that reads:

In making its determination to either grant or deny a petition for determination of need, the commission shall consider the need for electric system reliability and integrity, including fuel diversity, the need for base-load generating capacity, and the need for adequate electricity at a reasonable cost.

According to the PSC, it has and can examine fuel diversity and type of generating plant that is being requested as part of its consideration of a need petition. The bill however makes fuel diversity and base-load generating capacity specific criteria.

Section (2)(c) has outlined that the Commission “shall grant” a petition for need if it finds that the proposed nuclear plant will: 1) provide needed baseload capacity, 2) enhance the reliability of electric power within the state and reduce Florida’s dependence on fuel oil and natural gas, and 3) provide a “cost-effective, although not necessarily the least cost source of power, taking into account the need to improve the balance of fuel diversity, reduce Florida’s dependence on fuel oil and natural gas, mitigate air emission effects within the state, and contribute to the long-term stability and reliability of the electric grid.”

The PSC has limited expertise but no jurisdiction as it relates to mitigation of air impacts within the state. It does however consider environmental costs associated with proposed power plants.

Section (3) exempts nuclear plants from the FPSC Rule 25-22.082, Selection of Generating Capacity. This rule requires utilities prior to requesting a determination of need to solicit bids from alternative providers of generating capacity.

The effect of the rule is to provide the PSC with more complete information about potential alternatives to the proposed power plant to use as a consideration in its deliberation of the project’s cost-effectiveness. Requirements of the bid rule can be waived upon a showing by a public utility and a finding by the PSC “that a proposal not in compliance with this rule’s provisions will likely result in a lower cost supply of electricity to the utility’s general body of ratepayers, increase the reliable supply of electricity to the utility’s general body of ratepayers, or otherwise will serve the public welfare.” The exemption of nuclear units from this process would reduce the amount of time necessary to proceed with a need hearing.

Section (4) addresses procedural issues. First, the PSC’s final order will serve as the report that must be submitted to the DEP under Section 9(2)(a)2. After consideration of any Motions for Reconsideration, a party may appeal the final PSC’s order to the Florida Supreme Court. Any such appeals must be based on the record before the PSC and the issues to be considered are limited to whether the order “conforms to the constitution and laws of this state and the United States and is within the authority of the Commission under this section.” It also directs the Supreme Court to hear such appeals as “expeditiously as possible”.

Section (5) outlines cost recovery with specific direction that once the need determination has been granted, the utility has the right to recover any costs associated with “siting, design, licensing, or construction of the plant...” The only mechanism for permitting any disallowance of costs would be based on the PSC finding of imprudence in the utility’s “siting, licensing and construction” of the plant. According to the PSC, it currently uses a standard to determine prudence based on a “preponderance of the evidence.” This bill creates a more difficult “clear and convincing” evidence standard that must be applied by the in determining what expenditures could be deemed imprudent. Section 24(5) also states that imprudence may not be found for any costs outside the utility’s control and then proceeds to

enumerate a list of such events “including, but not limited to” delays in getting necessary permits, litigation delays, construction and equipment costs, or changes in laws or regulations.

Under traditional ratemaking practice, expenditures for any pre-operational costs to build power plants would accrue in a regulatory account and when the plant becomes operational, all costs in this account would become part of the total plant cost that could be placed in rate. PSC practice does allow public utilities to request early cash flows to occur for power plant construction costs upon a showing that the utility would suffer financial hardship without such early recovery of costs.

Further, the PSC points out that while it is unlikely that any municipal or cooperative utility would initiate a need determination for a nuclear unit, the provisions of this act would appear to apply to them. As a matter of administrative review, all of the provisions of this bill could appropriately apply to municipal or cooperative utilities, except for the cost recovery provisions contained in 24(5). The PSC does not have any authority over how and what time period municipal or cooperative utilities finance power plants and recovery pre and post construction costs.

Section 26. Cost recovery for the siting, design, licensing and construction of nuclear power plants. The bill provides definitions as used in this section. Within 6 months after the effective date of this act, the PSC shall establish, by rule, alternative cost recovery mechanisms for the recovery of cost incurred in the siting, design, licensing, and construction of nuclear power plants. Such mechanism shall be designed to promote utility investment in nuclear plants and allow for the recovery in rates all prudently incurred costs, with exceptions as listed in the bill. After an affirmative determination of need, a utility may petition the PSC for cost recovery as permitted by this section and commission rules.

Provisions are included that outline the cost recovery method. The utility is required to annually report the budgeted and actual costs as compared to the estimated inservice cost of the nuclear plant pursuant to 25(2)(b). In the event, the utility elects not to complete or is precluded from completing construction, it shall be allowed to recover all prudent preconstruction and construction costs incurred following the determination of need. These costs are to be recovered through the capacity cost recovery clause, over a period equal to the period during which the costs were incurred ,or 5 years, whichever is greater. The unrecovered balance during the recovery period will accrue interest at the utility’s weighted average cost of capital.

Section 27. This act shall take effect upon becoming law.

C. SECTION DIRECTORY:

II. FISCAL ANALYSIS & ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

A. FISCAL IMPACT ON STATE GOVERNMENT:

1. Revenues:

None.

2. Expenditures:

None.

B. FISCAL IMPACT ON LOCAL GOVERNMENTS:

1. Revenues:

The fiscal impact is yet to be determined.

2. Expenditures:

The fiscal impact is yet to be determined.

C. DIRECT ECONOMIC IMPACT ON PRIVATE SECTOR:

The total fiscal impact is yet to be determined. However, general estimates from PSC indicate that the cost for constructing a nuclear plant will not change. It is the rate recovery mechanism that is allowing the utility to recoup its prudently incurred costs sooner than later.

D. FISCAL COMMENTS:

None.

III. COMMENTS

A. CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES:

1. Applicability of Municipality/County Mandates Provision:

This bill does not require counties or municipalities to spend funds or to take an action requiring the expenditure of funds. The bill does not reduce the percentage of a state tax shared with counties or municipalities. This bill does not reduce the authority that municipalities have to raise revenue.

2. Other:

None.

B. RULE-MAKING AUTHORITY:

Rulemaking authority is granted to the DEP to implement the provisions of the act.

C. DRAFTING ISSUES OR OTHER COMMENTS:

According to the DEP, the act would apply to any electric power generation that is fueled by a nuclear process. Whereas the PPSA only applies to steam turbine electric power generation (including nuclear fueled). However, all nuclear fueled electric power generation is by steam turbine.

The deletion of the reference to nuclear fuels in the PPSA does not relieve a generation facility producing steam turbine generated electric power from the need for certification under the PPSA. This means two certifications would be required: one for the steam turbine generation (PPSA), and one for the use of a nuclear fuel (EDEA). Two certifications require two fees. Since the two applications would be virtually identical, all other processes could carry forward as one, however, all official documents would have to be produced and processed separately for each act.

IV. AMENDMENTS/COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE & COMBINED BILL CHANGES

On March 30, the Utilities and Telecommunications Committee adopted a strike-all amendment to the bill. The strike-all added two new sections 9 and 26 and all subsequent sections were renumbered. The strike-all also added language in section 12 related to land use.

Section 9: Land use and zoning consistency: This section is created to generally streamline the land use and zoning determination. The bill requires an applicant to include in its application a statement of consistency of the site or any directly associated facilities with existing land use plans and zoning ordinances. Local government is to file with all relevant parties with 80 days its determination consistency of the site and its

directly associated facilities with existing land use plans and zoning ordinances. The applicant is to then publish the notice of consistency determination in accordance with s. 17(1)(b). Substantially affected individuals, within 15 days of the published notice, shall file a petition of dispute with DEP.

By stipulation among the applicant, local government, and DEP, the dates in this section may be altered pursuant to s. 403.5095.

If it is determined by the local government that the proposed site, or directly associated facility conform with existing land use plans and zoning ordinances, in effect as of the date of the application, and no petition has been filed, the responsible zoning or planning authority shall not change the land use plans or zoning ordinances, in order to foreclose construction and operation of the proposed site, or directly associated facilities, unless certification is subsequently denied or withdrawn.

Section 12: Land use and certification hearing, parties, participants: The amendment added provisions related to land use hearing: providing that if a petition is filed for a land use hearing relating to the proposed site or directly associated facility the ALJ as expeditiously as possible, but no later than 30 days after DEP's receipt of the petition shall conduct the hearing. The land use hearing is to be held whether or not the application is complete. However, incompleteness of information may be used by the local government in making its determination on consistency with land use. If in the recommended order, the ALJ finds a site inconsistent with local land use and zoning requirements, the bill outlines the procedure that follow such situations. Additionally, it clarifies that local land use plans and zoning ordinances may be preempted by the siting board.

If any party or person whose substantial interests are affected, files a petition for a certification within 14 days after DEPs notice of certification, the designated ALJ shall no later than 260 days hold a hearing. The PSC affirmative determination of need is a condition precedent to the conduct of the certification hearing. For timely petitions for a certification hearing, the hearing shall be held at a location in proximity to the site. This hearing constitutes the sole hearing allowed by ch. 120, to determine the party's interest regarding any required agency license or any related permit required by any federally delegated or approved permit program. The ALJ's recommended order shall be issued within 60 days. The amendment provides a list of the parties to the proceeding.

Provisions are included in the bill for the listed parties, and others, to file intent to be a party or a waiver of participation. The ALJ shall have all powers and duties granted by ch., 120, this act, and the rules of DEP, and the Administration Commission.

Section 26: Cost recovery: This section does not change the amount to build a nuclear plant. The recovery will