

Michigan's energy regulations now law

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Michigan's newly passed energy regulations have become law, with Gov. Jennifer Granholm signing the measures on Monday.

Included in the three-bill package are provisions that alter utility rate structures and rate approvals, require utilities to obtain 10 percent of their electricity from renewable sources by 2015, and set limits of 10 percent on the amount of a utility's customer load that can go to alternate suppliers.

The **Customer Choice Coalition**, a group that fought against the restrictions on electric choice and some other provisions, called on lawmakers to monitor the impact of the new laws.

"We still believe competition and markets work better than monopolies and government regulators. It is now incumbent on supporters of this policy to prove to Michigan that regulation can work better than competition to hold down rates while increasing energy generation in the state," said coalition executive director Barry Cargill, in a news release. The coalition includes some business groups, consumer interests and alternative-electricity providers.

In signing the bills, Granholm said the package will boost energy efficiency, create Michigan energy jobs and make the state more attractive to companies in the renewable-energy industry.

"We are sending a signal that Michigan is ready to build a bright future for our citizens by creating jobs, diversifying our economy, and meeting our 21st century energy needs while protecting both our pocketbooks and our planet," she said.