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VOTE ON ENERGY MAY NOT HAPPEN THIS WEEK

Governor Jennifer Granholm is urging the Legislature to complete work on a utility regulation reform/renewable energy package in this first week back to session since the summer recess, but officials indicate a final vote may come later in the month.

There is a chance of an agreement between the House and Senate on legislation to set a renewal portfolio standards, SB 213*, officials said, but it could go into the second or third week of the Legislature's three-week September schedule before a decision is reached on HB 5524*, the legislation that would deal with utility regulation.

A spokesperson for House Speaker Andy Dillon (D-Redford Twp.) said Monday that talks were ongoing and that he couldn't say whether or not a vote on the legislation will occur this week.

In an effort to boost pressure on the Legislature to act, Ms. Granholm released a letter sent last month to her, Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop (R-Rochester) and Mr. Dillon that urged the state to pass a renewal portfolio standard.

T. Boone Pickens, renowned as an oil executive, has a major initiative underway to build hundreds of wind turbines across the mid-section of the nation, and said in the letter, "it is simply irresponsible not to have renewable energy as part of our power generation portfolio." The U.S. Department of Energy has estimated that 20 percent of U.S. electric power could come from renewable sources by 2030, but Mr. Pickens said, "I think we can do better than that, and so should Michigan."

However, the figure that sources have indicated SB 213 will call for is for 10 percent of the state's electricity coming from renewable sources by 2015.

Discussions on the issues have been essentially non-stop. Sources said that both Sen. Patty Birkholz (R-Saugatuck Twp) and Sen. Randy Richardville (R-Frenchtown Twp.) came into Lansing on Sunday to continue working on SB 213.

Efforts also continue on HB 5524. A conference committee on the bill was scheduled for 9 a.m., Wednesday, in Room 424 in the Capitol.

On a separate note, some environmental groups, elected officials, a business owner and author/climate expert Bill McKibben called on the governor Monday to regulate carbon dioxide emissions before allowing more coal plants to be built in Michigan.

"The Supreme Court has ruled that CO2 is dangerous and can be legally regulated," Manistee County Commission Chair Allan O'Shea said. "Let's put Michigan ahead of, rather than behind, the green

development curve by making sure that new power sources in Michigan help to solve, rather than worsen, the climate crisis. It will pay us big job and economic dividends."

Granholm spokesperson Liz Boyd agreed CO2 from coal-fired plants is a growing concern and noted that 70 power plants of that type have been canceled since 2007. And citing the routine lawsuits against coal power plants, the rising expense of all fossil fuels and the likelihood of a national cap and trade system, she added, "Michigan needs to be circumspect as it moves forward on meeting its energy needs."