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California seeks one third renewable power by 2020

SAN FRANCISCO (Reuters) - California committed to getting a third of its electricity from renewable sources by 2020 in a Monday executive order by Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.

California, which often leads the federal government on environmental issues, already had committed to produce 20 percent of its power from renewables such as wind and solar by 2010 as part of its plan to cut emissions of carbon that contribute to global warming.

California's Air Resources Board had recommended the additional 2020 goal for the state's so-called renewable portfolio standard, and the state legislature still must pass the goal into law.

The executive order requires state agencies to begin preparing for the change.

"All retail sellers of electricity shall serve 33 percent of their load with renewable energy by 2020. State government agencies are hereby directed to take all appropriate actions to implement this target in all regulatory proceedings, including siting, permitting, and procurement for renewable energy power plants and transmission lines," the order said.

California's renewables mandate has sent utilities such as PG&E Corp and Edison International scrambling to add more renewable power generation, and many new solar power plants and wind farms are currently under construction in the Golden State.

Schwarzenegger also ordered that renewables project regulation be streamlined, for instance allowing multiple applications required for a new plant be filed at once, instead of sequentially.

(Reporting by Peter Henderson ; Editing by Marguerita Choy)

