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K-Electric, HESCO Slammed in Sindh Assembly Session

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The Sindh Assembly on Tuesday unanimously passed a resolution opposing the Rs50 billion surcharge recently approved by the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) for recovery from electricity consumers in Karachi. The resolution drew support from members across party lines and was jointly submitted by Aamir Siddiqui of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P), Heer Soho of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), and Shabbir Qureshi of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

The July 18 NEPRA decision authorized K-Electric to recover the amount over a period of 12 months. Lawmakers criticized the surcharge as an unfair burden on already struggling consumers and expressed concern over continued power outages and inflated electricity bills across Sindh. The session, chaired by Nida Khuhro, was marked by cross-party frustration with the performance of power distribution companies, including K-Electric, Hyderabad Electric Supply Company (HESCO), and Sukkur Electric Power Company (SEPCO).

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon stated that similar resolutions had been passed in previous sessions, yet no significant action had been taken by the relevant federal authorities or power companies. He announced that the provincial government had begun providing solar energy systems to households most affected by the intense summer heat. Memon clarified that this is a temporary solution and called for long-term reforms in the electricity supply system.

To address billing complaints and reduce power theft, Memon proposed the widespread adoption of prepaid electricity meters. He argued that prepaid metering would increase transparency and reduce consumer disputes over billing.

Opposition Leader Ali Khursheedi emphasized that repeated disregard for the Assembly's resolutions undermines the legislature's authority. He urged NEPRA and the federal government to withdraw the surcharge, arguing that it disproportionately affects residents of Karachi and other parts of Sindh.

MQM-P's Aamir Siddiqui described the surcharge as unjust and alleged that electricity theft is often used as a pretext to shift losses onto paying consumers. He warned that an unreliable power supply has led some industrial units to consider relocating, though no specific examples or data were cited during the session.

PTI's Shabbir Qureshi proposed raising the electricity base slab from 200 to 300 units to ease the financial burden on low-income households. PPP legislators, including Heer Soho and Asif Mus, pointed out that even a marginal increase in power usage often results in disproportionately higher bills due to the current slab system.

The resolution also called for an independent audit of K-Electric's claimed losses and urged the implementation of a transparent recovery mechanism. With unanimous support from all parties present, the resolution was adopted by the Assembly.

NEPRA and K-Electric had not issued a response to the resolution at the time of reporting.