

HOUSE No. 3967

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Joan Meschino

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act supporting solar energy deployment in the Commonwealth.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Joan Meschino</i>	<i>3rd Plymouth</i>	<i>2/2/2023</i>
<i>Lydia Edwards</i>	<i>Third Suffolk</i>	<i>3/6/2023</i>
<i>Liz Miranda</i>	<i>Second Suffolk</i>	<i>3/6/2023</i>
<i>Samantha Montaño</i>	<i>15th Suffolk</i>	<i>3/21/2023</i>
<i>David Allen Robertson</i>	<i>19th Middlesex</i>	<i>3/28/2023</i>

HOUSE No. 3967

By Representative Meschino of Hull, a petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Joan Meschino and others for legislation to promote the development of clean energy. Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Third General Court
(2023-2024)**

An Act supporting solar energy deployment in the Commonwealth.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 25A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official
2 Edition, is hereby amended by adding the following section:

3 Section 18. The secretary of energy and environmental affairs, hereinafter and in sections
4 19 to 21, inclusive, “secretary”, shall establish programs to achieve a minimum goal of 10
5 gigawatts (GW) of solar measured in alternating current (AC) deployed in the Commonwealth
6 by 2030 including an interim goal of 5 GW ac by 2025 and 7.5 GW ac by 2027. The programs
7 established by the secretary shall ensure that annual solar deployment in the Commonwealth
8 increases at a pace sufficient to meet the 2050 statewide emissions limit of net zero greenhouse
9 gas emissions established by the secretary on April 22, as well as to achieve a 100% carbon-free
10 electric sector by 2030.

11 SECTION 2. Section 10 of chapter 25A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018
12 Official Edition, is hereby amended in subsection (d) by striking the figure “20,000,000” and

13 inserting in place thereof “40,000,000 with not less than \$10,000,000 going to green plus
14 communities”.

15 SECTION 3. Chapter 25A of the General Laws, as appearing in the 2018 Official
16 Edition, is hereby amended by inserting a Section 10B:

17 (a) The division shall establish a Climate Leader designation to recognize municipalities
18 certified as Green Communities that take additional measures to promote the development of
19 clean energy, the electrification of buildings and transportation, and the reduction of greenhouse
20 gas emissions. The purpose of the Climate Leader program shall be to align resources for
21 municipalities with the Commonwealth’s climate and energy goals; to provide a framework for
22 municipalities that seek to make a greater contribution to the Commonwealth’s decarbonization
23 efforts; and to encourage and support municipalities in identifying the local actions that can have
24 the greatest climate impact.

25 (b) To qualify as a Climate Leader, a municipality or other local governmental body
26 shall: (1) file an application with the division in a form and manner to be prescribed by the
27 division; (2) set a solar deployment goal of a certain number of megawatts (including rooftop,
28 parking canopy, and ground-mounted) to be deployed or permitted within ten years from the date
29 of application, such goal to be equal to no less than 50% of the amount of solar identified as
30 technically feasible within that community by a technical potential of solar study published by
31 the department of energy resources; (3) adopt zoning that allows renewable generation either by
32 right or by special permit in at least 30% of the land in that municipality identified as suitable by
33 a technical potential of solar study published by the department. Municipalities qualified as
34 Climate Leaders by the department shall lose their designation if they pass a moratorium on solar

35 or energy storage development. Municipalities must reapply to retain their Climate Leader
36 designation every 3 years.

37 (c) The purpose of the program shall be to provide technical and financial assistance, in
38 the form of grants and loans, to municipalities and other local governmental bodies that qualify
39 as Climate Leaders under this section. These loans and grants shall be used to finance all or a
40 portion of the costs of studying, designing, constructing, and implementing climate mitigation
41 activities, including but not limited to, staff and consultant costs incurred in relation to updating
42 land use plans, policies, and zoning to enable renewable energy and energy storage deployment;
43 costs for implementing programs that encourage adoption of renewable energy and other
44 greenhouse gas emissions reduction initiatives by residents and businesses within a municipality;
45 design, procurement, and construction of renewable energy and energy storage projects on land
46 owned by a local government body or a municipal light company; planning, design, and
47 construction of capital projects that facilitate a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions either
48 directly, for example, by electrifying heating systems in municipal buildings, or indirectly, for
49 example, by encouraging the use of non-emitting forms of transportation.

50 (d) Municipalities designated as Climate Leaders shall be prioritized for grant funding
51 allocated under Section 10 of Chapter 25A; and may be prioritized for grant funding allocated
52 under Section 2A of Chapter 209 of the Acts of 2018; Section 63 of Chapter 23A; or any other
53 non-formula funding.

54 (e) The division shall adopt rules, regulations, and guidelines for the administration and
55 enforcement of this section, including, but not limited to, establishing applicant criteria, funding
56 priority, and application forms and procedures.

57 SECTION 4: Section 82 of Chapter 179 of the acts of 2022 is hereby amended as
58 follows:

59 Section 82. The department of energy resources may coordinate with one or more New
60 England states undertaking competitive solicitations to consider projects for long-term clean
61 energy generation, transmission, or capacity for the benefit of residents of the Commonwealth
62 and the region. If the department of energy resources, in consultation with the Attorney General,
63 determines that a project would satisfy all of the benefits listed below, the electric distribution
64 companies shall enter into cost-effective long-term contracts. In its determination, the
65 department of energy resources shall determine if any proposals (i) provide cost-effective clean
66 energy generation to electric ratepayers in the Commonwealth and the region over the term of
67 the contract; (ii) provide the benefits of clean energy and associated transmission towards
68 meeting the Commonwealth's decarbonization goals; (iii) where possible, avoid, minimize, or
69 mitigate, to the maximum extent practicable, environmental impacts, impacts on commercial and
70 recreational fishing industries, and impacts to low-income populations; (iv) reduce ratepayer
71 costs in winter months and improve energy security during winter months; (v) demonstrate
72 progress toward obtaining required permit approvals and interconnection, and (vi) have credible
73 project schedule and construction plans, including plans for financing and stakeholder
74 engagement. For the purposes of this section, a long-term contract shall be a contract with a term
75 of 10 to 20 years. Eligible clean energy generation resources must (i) have a commercial
76 operation date on or after January 1, 2022; and (ii) be qualified by the department of energy
77 resources as eligible to participate in the renewable energy portfolio standard program under
78 section 11F of chapter 25A of the General Laws. Associated transmission costs must be
79 incorporated into a proposal. All proposed contracts shall be subject to the review and approval

80 of the department of public utilities. The department of public utilities shall consider both
81 potential costs and benefits of such contracts and shall only approve a contract upon a finding
82 that it is cost-effective, taking into account the factors outlined in this section.