

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

PRESENTED BY:

*Steven George Xiarhos*

*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 establishing a special commission to study the potential risks to cities and towns from the onshore electrical infrastructure supporting offshore wind energy generation projects.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
<i>Steven George Xiarhos</i>	<i>5th Barnstable</i>	<i>6/25/2024</i>

**HOUSE . . . . . No.**

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By Representative Xiarhos of Barnstable, a petition (subject to Joint Rule 12) of Steven George Xiarhos for legislation to establish a special commission to study the potential risks to cities and towns from the onshore electrical infrastructure supporting offshore wind energy generation projects. Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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

An Act establishing a special commission to study the potential risks to cities and towns from the onshore electrical infrastructure supporting offshore wind energy generation projects.

*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 ONE. (a) There is hereby established a special commission to study the  
2 potential financial, environmental, public health, and public safety risks to cities and towns and  
3 their residents from onshore electric infrastructure associated with offshore wind energy  
4 generation projects as they land in and traverse communities of the Commonwealth. Said special  
5 commission shall include within the scope of its study, without limitation: (1) potential risks  
6 from the development, operation, and catastrophic failure of underground and above-ground  
7 electric transmission lines, electric substations, and associated onshore electric infrastructure; (2)  
8 potential risks of electromagnetic emissions, smoke and fire as the result of catastrophic events,  
9 and the release of oil, hazardous materials, and any other pollutants into the soil, water, and air;  
10 (3) potential hazards to public and private water supplies, and the sole source aquifer, from  
11 onshore infrastructure supporting offshore wind power; (4) the need for legislation requiring the

12 Commonwealth to indemnify cities and towns for their costs of responding to, and cleaning up  
13 after, a catastrophic event relating to onshore infrastructure for offshore wind power, including  
14 but not limited to fire and the release of oil and hazardous materials; (5) the implementation of  
15 risk assessments and routine audits of electric substations supporting offshore wind-generated  
16 power to ensure compliance with safety standards, including potential cybersecurity risks; (6) the  
17 readiness of the Commonwealth to provide coordination across relevant state agencies in the  
18 event of a catastrophic event relating to infrastructure to support offshore wind energy; and (6)  
19 the need for facility-specific emergency response plans concerning onshore electric substations  
20 and similar facilities supporting power generated by offshore wind energy.

21 (b) Said special commission shall consist of the following 15 members: the chairperson  
22 of the Energy Facilities Siting Board or said chairperson's designee; the chairperson of the  
23 Department of Public Utilities or said chairperson's designee; the commissioner of the  
24 Department of Environmental Protection or said commissioner's designee; the commissioner of  
25 the Department of Energy Resources or said commissioner's designee; the commissioner of the  
26 Department of Public Health or such commissioner's designee; the Executive Director of the  
27 Massachusetts Municipal Association; three members to be appointed by the Governor (one of  
28 whom shall have professional experience with the development of offshore wind energy  
29 generation projects; one of whom shall be a member of the city council, select board or town  
30 council of a city or town that has entered into a host community agreement with an offshore  
31 wind energy generation project; and one of whom shall have substantial professional experience  
32 in public safety matters); two members appointed by the President of the Senate; one member  
33 appointed by the Minority Leader of the Massachusetts Senate; two members appointed by the  
34 Speaker of the House of Representatives; and, one member appointed by the Minority Leader of

35 the House of Representatives. All members of said commission shall be persons with substantial  
36 knowledge or experience concerning the development of offshore wind energy projects,  
37 municipal government, environmental contamination, public safety, public health, and/or the  
38 potential for financial, environmental, public health, and public safety risks associated with  
39 large-scale electric infrastructure. At its first meeting and not less than once annually thereafter,  
40 the members of said Commission shall elect from among its members a chair, vice chair,  
41 secretary, and such other officers as the members of the Commission deem necessary.

42 (c) The members of said Commission shall receive no compensation for their services but  
43 shall be reimbursed for necessary traveling expenses incurred in the performance of their duties.

44 (d) Said commission shall hold meetings and public hearings at such times and places as  
45 it may designate, provided that such meetings and public hearings shall be preferred to take  
46 place, to the extent practicable, within cities and towns that are host communities for onshore  
47 infrastructure to support offshore wind energy projects.

48 (e) A majority of the members of said Commission shall constitute a quorum for the  
49 transaction of business of the Commission.

50 (f) The Commission shall present a preliminary report of its findings, together with  
51 recommendations for legislative and regulatory changes, if any, not more than six months after  
52 the effective date of this Act, and shall present regular reports of its findings and  
53 recommendations at least once every six months thereafter. Such reports shall be made to the  
54 Governor, to the Clerks of the Senate and House of Representatives, and to the House and Senate  
55 Chairs of the Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies.