HOUSE DOCKET, NO. 4234 FILED ON: 1/17/2025

HOUSE . . . . . No. 4041

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Mike Connolly

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 promoting environmental justice in Massachusetts.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	DATE ADDED:
Mike Connolly	*26th Middlesex*	*1/17/2025*

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HOUSE . . . . . No. 4041

By Representative Connolly of Cambridge, a petition (accompanied by bill, House, No. 4041) of Mike Connolly for legislation to establish an office of green zone administration within the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs. Environment and Natural Resources.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court
(2025-2026)

An Act promoting environmental justice in Massachusetts.

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

SECTION 1. The General Laws are hereby amended by inserting after chapter 21O the following chapter:-

CHAPTER 21P. GREEN ZONES.

Section 1. As used in this chapter, the following words shall, unless the context clearly requires otherwise, have the following meanings:

"Environmental justice population", as defined in section 62 of chapter 30.

"Green zone", areas of the commonwealth designated by the office of green zone administration based on a scoring methodology that accounts for environmental damage, public health disparities, past harm, energy burden, census tract data and other publicly available information, including, but not limited to, proximity of people who live near a landfill or a covered landfill.

12 “Green Zone Investment Fund”, a fund established in section 4 to provide grants, rebates,
13 financing and other investments in green zone populations.

14 “Massachusetts Community Climate Bank”, the entity established, designated or
15 recognized by the commonwealth to finance or facilitate climate-related infrastructure and clean
16 energy projects, with particular emphasis on projects in overburdened and environmental justice
17 populations.

18 “Undersecretary”, the undersecretary of environmental justice of the executive office of
19 energy and environmental affairs.

20 “Office”, the office of green zone administration established in section 2 under the
21 direction of the undersecretary.

22 Section 2. (a) There shall be established within the executive office of energy and
23 environmental affairs, under the direction of the undersecretary of environmental justices, an
24 office of green zone administration.

25 (b) The office shall oversee:

26 (i) the development and implementation of a statewide scoring system designed to rank
27 environmental damage, energy burdens and past harm in communities across the commonwealth;

28 (ii) the designation of green zones based on the ranking system established pursuant to
29 clause (i);

30 (iii) the administration of the statewide Green Zone Investment Fund; and

31 (iv) the equitable deployment of clean energy and energy efficiency programs and
32 technologies in communities designated as green zones.

33 Section 3. The office shall, in partnership with the department of energy resources,
34 develop a scoring methodology that considers public health outcomes, energy burden data,
35 census tract information and other relevant public data to identify and score environmental
36 justice populations. This methodology shall be subject to periodic review and revision as
37 necessary to ensure that investments continue to target overburdened communities effectively.

38 Section 4. (a) There shall be established and set up on the books of the commonwealth a
39 separate fund to be known as the Green Zone Investment Fund. There shall be credited to the
40 fund: (i) any appropriations or other money authorized by the general court and specifically
41 designated to be credited to the fund; (ii) funds from public and private sources, including gifts,
42 grants, donations or investment returns as authorized by law; and (iii) interest earned on any
43 money in the fund.

44 (b) The office, in coordination with the Massachusetts Community Climate Bank, shall
45 administer all disbursements from the fund to eligible recipients for the benefit of designated
46 green zone populations.

47 (c) The Massachusetts Community Climate Bank, under the direction of the office, shall
48 administer the Green Zone Investment Fund, providing financing, grants, rebates or low-interest
49 loans for projects that meet the requirements established under this chapter.

50 Section 5. (a) The office shall direct the department of energy resources and other
51 relevant agencies to develop or expand programs to install onsite solar or community solar and
52 energy efficiency measures for at least 250,000 low-income households, or 35 per cent of the

53 total low-income households in the commonwealth, whichever is greater, by 2030. These
54 programs shall have the goal of reducing these households' energy burden to at or below the
55 statewide average energy burden, as defined by the United States Department of Energy Low-
56 Income Energy Affordability Data (LEAD) Tool.

57 (b) The office shall require the establishment of a minimum of 400 megawatts of energy
58 storage capacity by 2030. Such storage shall be sited in or directly benefit public facilities,
59 especially those serving as community energy resiliency hubs, or be directly located at low-
60 income households to enhance reliability and resilience in overburdened communities.

61 Section 6. The office shall coordinate with the department of energy resources, the
62 executive office of labor and workforce development and the office of environmental justice and
63 equity to integrate comprehensive workforce development training into all clean energy and
64 energy storage programs established under this chapter. These training programs shall prioritize
65 recruitment from environmental justice populations and focus on preparing participants for
66 careers in the clean energy sector.

67 Section 7. The office shall provide outreach and recruitment campaign grants to
68 community-based organizations to increase participation by residents in overburdened
69 communities in clean energy and energy efficiency programs. Such grants shall prioritize the
70 hiring of residents from overburdened communities to conduct grassroots outreach, education
71 and program recruitment.

72 Section 8. (a) The undersecretary shall appoint a community liaison to act as the primary
73 point of contact between the office and environmental justice populations, ensuring that policy
74 decisions and program implementation incorporate community feedback.

75 (b) The office shall establish an advisory board consisting of representatives from
76 designated green zone populations. This board shall be responsible for conducting regular
77 reviews of all clean energy and energy storage programs available to overburdened communities,
78 as well as issuing an annual recommendation report to the secretary of energy and environmental
79 affairs and the general court.

80 Section 9. The secretary of energy and environmental affairs shall ensure that no less than
81 10 per cent of the statewide budget for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs is spent
82 in green zone communities each fiscal year. All programs, incentives and other financing
83 targeted to green zone communities shall be structured to address the unique barriers faced by
84 low-income households and environmental justice populations, including simplified application
85 processes, increased technical support and culturally competent outreach.

86 Section 10. (a) The secretary of energy and environmental affairs shall promulgate rules
87 and regulations, pursuant to chapter 30A, as necessary to implement the provisions of this
88 chapter. Such regulations shall include, but not be limited to, establishing criteria for project
89 eligibility for Green Zone Investment Fund support, defining monitoring and evaluation
90 requirements for the programs of the office and setting timelines for compliance with the clean
91 energy, energy efficiency and energy storage targets.

92 (b) The office, in consultation with the advisory board established pursuant to section 8,
93 shall submit an annual report to the governor, the joint committee on telecommunications,
94 utilities and energy, the joint committee on environment, natural resources and agriculture and
95 the house and senate committees on ways and means. Such report shall include: (i) progress
96 updates on meeting the clean energy and energy storage targets; (ii) a detailed accounting of the

97 Green Zone Investment Fund and all projects funded; (iii) evaluations of the scoring
98 methodology; and (iv) any recommendations for legislative or regulatory changes needed to
99 better serve green zone populations.

100 SECTION 2. This act shall take effect 90 days following its passage. The secretary of
101 energy and environmental affairs may extend implementation deadlines by no more than 90
102 additional days; provided, that a written notice with justification for the extension is submitted to
103 the house and senate clerks.