

**JOINT COMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS, UTILITIES, AND ENERGY**

**BILL SUMMARY**

**BILL NO.** H.3465

**TITLE:** An Act promoting the adoption of renewable energy for heating, cooling and hot water

**SPONSOR:** Rep. Mike Connolly

**COMMITTEE:** Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy

**HEARING DATE:** September 25, 2025

**PRIOR HISTORY:** New bill

**CURRENT LAW:**

M.G.L. Chapter 40A: governs how municipalities create and enforce zoning laws, including rules for land use, building types, density, height, setbacks, and special permits. It sets the framework for municipal zoning authority while also establishing statewide protections for certain uses such as agriculture, and religious facilities.

M.G.L. Chapter 184, §23C: protects solar access rights, and prevents private restrictions such as covenants, conditions, restrictions in deeds, or homeowners' association rules from prohibiting or unreasonably limiting the installation or use of solar energy systems on properties.

M.G.L. Chapter 59: pertains to the assessment and taxation of real and personal property in Massachusetts. It lays out how property values are determined, what property is taxable or exempt, how tax bills are issued, and procedures for abatements and appeals. It also authorizes specific property tax exemptions for certain energy systems, veterans, seniors, and other eligible categories.

**SUMMARY:**

This legislation amends Chapter 40A and prevents municipalities from enacting any zoning ordinance or by-laws to prohibit or unreasonably regulate the installation of alternative and renewable energy systems for electricity, heating, cooling or hot water, or the building of structures that facilitate the use of alternative and renewable energy systems for electricity, heating, cooling or hot water. Zoning or by-laws are still allowed where necessary to protect the public health, safety or welfare.

The bill also allows a municipality to require that an application for a permit to build a new structure, replace an existing structure, or undertake a major renovation (greater than 50% of the structure) to include a plan that uses alternative and renewable energy sources, and an analysis of the feasibility and cost of installing such a system compared with a fossil fueled energy system.

The bill extends legal protections under Chapter 184 beyond solar energy to cover a broad range of renewable and alternative energy systems (powered in whole or in part by the sun, wind, water, biomass, alcohol, or any renewable, non-depletable or recyclable fuel). Deed restrictions, condo rules, or neighborhood covenants cannot unreasonably prohibit or limit these installations under this legislation.

This also amends property tax exemptions under Chapter 59 to include heat pump systems used for heating or supplying energy needs, but only for twenty years from the date of installation.