

JOINT COMMITTEE ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS, UTILITIES, AND ENERGY

BILL SUMMARY

BILL NO. H.3519

TITLE: An Act relative to a feasibility report on solar rooftop energy on new buildings

SPONSOR: Representative Jack Patrick Lewis

COMMITTEE: Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy

HEARING DATE: October 9, 2025

PRIOR HISTORY: *New file*

CURRENT LAW:

Section 2A of Chapter 4 of the General Laws pertains to the statutory protocol for establishing special legislative commissions.

Section 6 of Chapter 25A of the General Laws pertains to the powers and duties of the Department of Energy Resources (DOER).

Chapter 143 of the General Laws pertains to the inspection and regulation of – and licenses for – buildings, elevators, and cinematographs. Sections 93 – 99 of said Chapter 143 pertain to the State Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS), and Section 100 pertains to the Building Code Appeals Board.

Chapter 298 of the Acts of 2008, known as the *Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA)*, required the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) to set economy-wide greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction goals for Massachusetts in order to achieve reductions of 10-25% below statewide 1990 GHG emission levels by 2020 and at least 80% below statewide 1990 GHG emission levels by 2050.

Chapter 21N of the General Laws pertains to the Climate Protection and Green Economy Act, which includes requirements related to statewide greenhouse gas emission limits and 2050 net zero economy-wide limits.

SUMMARY:

This legislation establishes a special commission on solar rooftop energy on new buildings, which is tasked with conducting a review of the policies and procedures related to solar energy systems, battery storage systems, and building construction pursuant to the base energy code, the stretch energy code, and the specialized stretch energy code. The special commission must develop a report determining the feasibility of requiring the installation of solar energy systems on new buildings. Said feasibility report

must provide recommendations, including for policy and legislative changes, related to solar energy installations and battery storage systems on new buildings. The report must also touch upon the following:

- The feasibility of allowing the installation of rooftop solar energy systems in new buildings.
- The feasibility of allowing the installation of an energy storage system in conjunction with solar energy systems.
- How the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) can provide services to advance the Commonwealth's statutory greenhouse gas reduction and climate goals.

The special commission will be comprised of 12 members. This includes the DOER Commissioner, or a designee, and the following 11 members who are to be appointed by the EEA Secretary:

- Representative of the commercial real estate sector
- Representative of the residential real estate sector
- Representative of the organized labor industry
- Representative of the solar energy industry
- Representative of an environmental group concerned with energy
- Representative of the construction industry
- Representative of an electric utility or organization representing electric utilities
- Representative of local government
- Person with expertise in energy siting
- Person with expertise in solar energy and energy efficiency

The special commission must submit its feasibility report and any recommendations (including drafts of enabling legislation pursuant to such recommendations) with the House and Senate Clerks by January 1, 2026.