

MassSenate

An Act Upgrading the Grid and Protecting Ratepayers *Fact Sheet*

On Thursday, June 20, 2024, the Massachusetts Senate will take up and debate comprehensive climate legislation. Provisions of the bill fall into three categories:

- Expanding Clean Energy
- Reducing Building Emissions
- Expanding Electric Vehicle Use and Infrastructure

Expanding Clean Energy in Massachusetts

Reforming siting and permitting: Expedites and streamlines the siting and permitting process for clean energy projects, to empower Massachusetts to meet its aggressive climate goals.

- **Setting a 15-month deadline for large infrastructure projects:** The bill will combine all state, regional, and local permits required for certain large clean energy infrastructure projects into one consolidated permit that must be issued (or denied) by the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) in less than 15 months.
- **Setting a 1-year deadline for small infrastructure projects:** The bill will combine all local permits for smaller clean energy infrastructure projects into one consolidated permit to be issued (or denied) by a municipality in less than one year. The Department of Energy Resources will work with other state agencies to develop a uniform set of baseline health, safety, and environmental standards to guide municipalities in the issuance of permits for clean energy infrastructure.

Rethinking clean energy procurements: Maximizes opportunities to procure clean energy technologies, helping to pave the way for increased wind, solar, battery, and other green energy sources of the future.

- **Creates a Division of Clean Energy Procurements:** The division will exist in the Department of Energy Resources and direct the Department to issue plans and conduct solicitations, to be approved by the Department of Public Utilities (DPU), for clean energy.
- **Allows collaboration with other states:** Allows the Commonwealth to coordinate with other New England states to maximize the benefit of clean energy procurements.

Promoting innovation: Building on Massachusetts' leadership in carbon removal.

- **Promotes carbon removal:** Empowers the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) to promote carbon removal and embodied carbon activities.
- **Looks to a reduced-carbon future:** Directs MassCEC to conduct a study on the status of, and opportunities for, carbon dioxide removal technology.

Reducing Building Emissions Across Massachusetts

Prioritizing geothermal energy and the transition from gas: Meeting [net zero emissions targets](#) through cleaner energy.

Critically examines gas infrastructure projects to accelerate an orderly and equitable transition to cleaner energy: Requires the DPU to consider greenhouse gas emissions and climate targets when considering expanding gas service territory or access to new gas consumers and allows gas companies to pursue geothermal projects when appropriate through a re-envisioned gas line replacement program or through other opportunities.

Helping Consumers

Lowers utility rates for low- and middle-income consumers: Directs utility providers to offer discounted rates to moderate-income consumers in addition to existing low-income consumers.

Lowers overall rates via more flexible state negotiation: Gives utilities more flexibility to negotiate the lengths of basic service contracts with electricity providers, to lower the utility bills that residents face.

Bans competitive suppliers: Bans competitive electric suppliers from enrolling new individual residential customers in contracts and protect residents from unfair and deceptive practices in the competitive electric supply market.

- This is the second time the Senate has acted on this policy this session. The Senate previously [adopted](#) this policy in April.
- [According to the Attorney General's Office and the Department of Public Utilities](#), data analysis show that consumers lost more than \$577 million to competitive electric suppliers between July 2015 and June 2023.

Makes Massachusetts lead by example: Requires the Commonwealth's Division of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) to evaluate greenhouse gas emissions on state properties.

Expanding Electric Vehicles Across Massachusetts

Helps cities and towns go electric: Streamlines the procurement process for electric school buses and electric vehicle charging equipment by governmental bodies in Massachusetts.

Helps condo owners install chargers: Creates a limited right for condo owners to install an EV charger on a property subject to the owner's control and clarifies existing law to make installation of EV chargers easier in the common property of the condo association.

Maximizes statewide coordination on EV infrastructure: Expands membership of the EV Coordinating Council to ensure maximum coordination by climate advocacy bodies and agencies. Specifically requires the council to take leadership on EV charging infrastructure deployment and planning, and to report on its efforts to lead and deploy chargers.

Office of Senate President Karen E. Spilka
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Builds pole-mounted chargers: Requires the DPU to open a proceeding to advance pole-mounted EV charging.

Extends EV tax credit: Extends funding for [MOR-EV](#), the Commonwealth's program that provides money to residents that buy electric vehicles, through 2027. To date nearly 50,000 Massachusetts residents have saved over \$120 Million on the purchase of electric vehicles.

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