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TESTIMONY BEFORE THE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE

**An Act to Improve Interagency Coordination on Renewable Energy Construction
L.D. 1850**

**GOVERNOR'S ENERGY OFFICE
May 7, 2025**

Senator Lawrence, Representative Sachs, and Members of the Joint Standing Committee on Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT): My name is Caroline Colan, and I am the Legislative Liaison for the Governor's Energy Office (GEO).

The GEO testifies neither for nor against L.D. 1850

Under existing statute, the permitting and regulation of renewable energy construction projects is performed by a variety of state agencies and other entities. For example, the Department of Environmental Protection administers site location of development permits for qualifying projects under Title 38, section 484; the Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry has permitting authority over solar energy development on high value agricultural land under Title 38, chapter 35; the Department of Labor regulates adherence with certain labor requirements, such as apprenticeship requirements under Title 26, chapter 43; and the Public Utilities Commission monitors and approves interconnection for small generators under Ch. 324. Additionally, other non-State entities such as the New England Independent Service Operator (ISO-NE) and electric utilities maintain other data on renewable energy projects under construction. This bill seeks to create a central repository for certain data related to renewable energy projects under construction. Depending on its design and functions, this database could improve clarity for the public and municipalities; allow for additional insight into trends, including the characteristics of both successful and unsuccessful projects; and could provide additional resources to developers seeking to make responsible siting decisions. While GEO recognizes these potential benefits from more accessible information, we also want to better understand the desired usability and functions of this database and how to efficiently access the required information to ensure this could be a useful product for the full-range of potential stakeholders.

GEO, through the solar dashboard we maintain on our website, and the PUC, through its database of Registered Distributed Generation / Net Energy Billing Project Sponsors and Related Entities currently track completed solar projects. Expanding this monitoring to projects under construction, and to encompass additional renewable energy projects, could support: 1) identification of trends in siting location, type, size, and other characteristics to support policy development and responsible siting practices; 2) provide clarity for developers on the current geographic distribution of development; 3) support policy makers and state entities in identifying the relative uptake of certain initiatives; and 4)



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increase transparency for the public around potential renewable energy construction projects in their communities.

To ensure such a database could successfully, and efficiently, achieve these potential benefits, GEO welcomes additional conversations with the bill sponsor and relevant stakeholders to identify how to best access information listed in the bill which may not currently be collected from developers such as *"A description of the purposes for which the land on which the project is located was used prior to the development of the project"* and how to present the required information listed in the bill to develop a useful product. The GEO would also seek additional clarity on the intended purpose(s) and desired usability features of the database, such as whether it would be a publicly accessible tool, or exclusively an internal repository to construct the required report and the expectation of the frequency of database updates.

Due to the administrative effort to develop, create, and maintain this database—which would potentially require the development of new forms and outreach mechanisms on the front end and require ongoing regular updates and coordination to ensure accuracy—the GEO would recommend a fiscal note for this bill.

Thank you for your consideration.


Caroline Colan, Legislative Liaison
Governor's Energy Office