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House Passes Solar Energy Legislation, Lifts Net-Metering Cap

BOSTON – State Representative Todd M. Smola (R-Warren) joined colleagues in the House of Representatives to pass legislation that immediately raises the net-metering cap. The immediate cap increase, which equals 2 percent for private facilities and 2 percent for public facilities, will allow the majority of net metering projects currently in the development pipeline to progress. This change represents a 44 percent increase of the overall cap.

“This initiative begins the work of a larger plan that we will develop for a sustainable renewable energy industry,” said Representative Smola. “This plan must guarantee that ratepayers are treated fairly and I believe that this is a good beginning with a balanced approach. Solar development is an important part of our overall energy plan for the commonwealth and this legislation moves us in that direction.”

This legislation formally recognizes Massachusetts’ goal of developing 1600 megawatts (MWs) of solar power in the Commonwealth by 2020. All solar projects that are developed prior to the Commonwealth reaching the 1600MWs mark will be grandfathered in under existing incentive programs.

Upon meeting that goal, several reforms would be launched, as outlined below:

- Provides a framework for the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to create a new, less-costly incentive program that reflects a mature solar industry;
- Ensures that all ratepayers using the distribution system help pay for the maintenance, reliability and safety of our electric grid;

- Reforms our net metering program to more closely align with the price of power provided by the state's other electric generators.

The House expects to pass an omnibus energy bill later in the session.

For additional information please contact Representative Smola at Todd.Smola@mahouse.gov or (617)722-2100.

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