



Legislation Summary:

An Act relative to enhancing RPS standards

Initial bill number: [S1876/H2700](#) (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsors: Sen. Marc R. Pacheco, Rep. Kay Khan

This bill will increase the minimum percentage of renewable energy supplied by electricity suppliers from qualifying renewable resources, e.g., wind, solar, anaerobic digestion, small hydro. Additionally, the bill would expand the electricity suppliers to include municipal electric utilities, currently exempted from requirements to include renewable energy as a source of electricity supplied.

There are two problems this bill will solve:

- 1) Ensuring the balance of renewable energy supply and the demand for renewable energy;
- 2) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions mandated by the Global Warming Solutions Act.

The Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) sets a minimum requirement for renewable energy supplied by electric utilities. The RPS also drives consistent demand for renewable energy generation by setting supply standards that increase annually. It is the demand for renewable energy that drives the growth of the renewable energy industry. Energy legislation passed last session dramatically increases the potential supply of renewable energy available in Massachusetts, and is projected to easily meet current RPS requirements.

The Massachusetts renewable energy sector has grown dramatically in the last decade. The 2016 Mass Clean Energy Center report found that clean energy sector has outpaced expectations for growth, and contributes \$11.8 billion to Massachusetts Gross State Product (GSP) - 2.5% of the state's economy. The growth of the clean energy sector has resulted in a 75% increase in clean energy jobs in Massachusetts since 2010. This industry, with its many economic and environmental benefits, requires a consistent, predictable level of demand to thrive.

The 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act requires the Commonwealth to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 25% below 1990 levels by 2020, and 80% below 1990 levels, and stay on track for 2050 reduction target of 80% below 1990 levels. Given current policies and regulations, it is projected that Massachusetts will fail to meet those mandated reductions.

Additionally, legislation proposed this session seeks to aggressively increase GHG emissions reductions' targets in recognition of the accelerated rate of climate change. A faster transition to renewable energy to replace GHG emitting fossil fuels is viewed as essential to meeting current and future goals. Renewable Portfolio Standards requirements need to be adjusted to match the current reality.

League position: This bill is consistent with LWVUS positions on the environment and energy. From the 2016-2018 Impact on Issues, Natural Resources section:

“In 2008 the League called on Congress to enact legislation to significantly cut the greenhouse gas emissions which cause global climate change and supported increased energy efficiency and a shift to a clean, renewable energy. The League called for a moratorium on the building of new coal-fired electric power plants and supported requirements for utilities to produce a significant percentage of electricity from renewable resources.”