

Department of Planning and Budget
2026 General Assembly Session
State Fiscal Impact Statement

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ORIGINAL

Bill Number: SB588

Patron: Marsden

Bill Title: Department of Energy; developing criteria to determine the appropriateness of sites for solar facilities.

Bill Summary: Requires the Department of Energy (the Department) to develop a set of criteria to be used by reviewers to (i) assess the appropriateness of potential siting areas and (ii) assign a siting appropriateness score from one to 100 for each area and to establish a scoring committee to review applications for proposed solar facilities. Beginning January 1, 2027, the bill requires every completed land use application for a proposed solar facility to be forwarded by the host locality to the Department for evaluation and scoring. The bill provides that the locality shall continue to have final authority for approval or disapproval of a proposed solar facility.

Budget Amendment Necessary: No **Items Impacted:** None

Explanation: This bill involves the Department of Energy; however, estimates are not yet available.

Fiscal Summary: It is anticipated that this bill may result in an indeterminate expenditure impact to Energy.

Fiscal Analysis: The bill requires the Department of Energy to establish a scoring committee to review applications for proposed solar energy generation facilities, and to develop a set of criteria to assign a “siting appropriateness score” for each proposed project. Localities who receive completed applications for proposed solar energy generation facilities beginning January 1, 2027, would be required to forward the application to Energy for review by the committee, but the locality would retain final approval or disapproval of the project.

The bill leaves the number of committee members to Energy’s discretion and does not speak to the frequency of meetings or level of staff support for committee members. Impact estimates are not yet available from the agency, and it is unclear whether the workload required by the bill could be absorbed within existing appropriations.

This impact estimate is preliminary and may be updated if new information becomes available.

Other: None.