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Representative Kane supports comprehensive climate bill promoting clean energy and offshore wind

BOSTON – State Representative Hannah Kane, R-Shrewsbury, has voted to support comprehensive climate legislation designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by promoting clean energy and offshore wind in Massachusetts, without imposing a new gas fee on consumers.

House Bill 5060 was approved by the House of Representatives on a vote of 146-7 on July 21. The bill represents a compromise between earlier House and Senate versions of the bill that was negotiated by a six-member conference committee representing both legislative branches.

Representative Kane noted that the conference committee report removes a controversial gas fee proposal contained in an earlier version of the bill that would have implemented a charge of 14.65 mill per therm on gas customers until 2032 to support the Renewable Energy Trust Fund. She had spoken out against the fee since it was first proposed, calling it unfair to the state's ratepayers.

Representative Kane was also happy to see changes were made to a provision establishing a pilot program that would allow up to 10 communities to require the use of fossil free fuel in all new construction projects. House Bill 5060 would limit participating communities to those who have already achieved a 10% affordable housing target and would also provide an exemption for health care facilities and life science labs.

According to Representative Kane, House Bill 5060 also makes changes to the state's procurement cap on offshore wind, which currently requires each successive wind proposal to be less expensive than the previously selected bid. The conference committee report amends the statute by allowing a modified cap to remain in place if only two bids are received but removes the cap if three or more bids are submitted.

In addition, the new climate bill establishes an Offshore Wind Industry Investment Program & Trust Fund, which will be administered by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC). The program will offer \$35 million in annual tax incentives over a 10-year period to promote job creation within the industry, as well as other grants, loans and investments for manufacturing, workforce training, and clean energy research. The bill also establishes a Clean Energy Investment Fund to be administered by the Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center to help further advance clean energy research and technologies.

House Bill 5060 also:

- establishes a commercial fisheries commission to provide input on minimizing and mitigating the impact of offshore energy generation and transmission on wildlife;
- authorizes the secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, in consultation with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER), to consider the advantages and disadvantages of participating in regional or multi-state competitive markets to facilitate the development of clean energy generation resources;

- authorizes DOER to coordinate with other New England states to competitively solicit long-term clean energy generation and transmission projects, including nuclear power from Connecticut;
- creates rebates and incentives for electric vehicle (EV) purchases;
- establishes an intergovernmental coordinating council to implement an EV charging infrastructure deployment plan;
- mandates that all new vehicle sales in Massachusetts be zero emissions vehicles (ZEV) by 2035;
- requires all new MBTA bus purchases and leases to be ZEV by 2030, with the entire MBTA fleet required to be ZEV by 2040;
- requires the Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development to produce a list of high-demand jobs within the state and share it with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE);
- creates a DESE high school offshore wind credential training pilot program through which DESE would reimburse school districts for each student that obtains the credentials between \$600 and \$750;
- directs the Department of Public Utilities to convene a stakeholder working group to recommend regulatory and legislative changes to align gas system enhancement plans with statewide greenhouse emissions limits; and
- eliminates Mass Save incentives to install fossil fuel infrastructure in buildings, except as a backup for an electric heat pump, beginning with the 2025-2027 Mass Save plan

With the enactment of House Bill 5060 by the House and Senate, the conference committee report now moves to Governor Charlie Baker's desk for his review.

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