

SENATE ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY COMMITTEE

STATEMENT TO

SENATE, No. 1757

with committee amendments

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

DATED: MAY 18, 2026

The Senate Environment and Energy Committee reports favorably and with committee amendments Senate Bill No. 1757.

As amended, this bill would establish the Office of Clean Energy Equity (“office”) in the Board of Public Utilities (BPU). The office would be charged with promoting, guiding, and overseeing the equitable deployment of clean energy, energy efficiency, and energy storage programs and technologies in overburdened communities, and the equitable provision of the tangible benefits of clean energy, increased energy efficiency, and energy storage at the household and community level, including clean energy asset ownership, energy cost savings, and employment and economic opportunities, to overburdened communities. The bill would require the BPU to: (1) establish onsite solar or community solar programs, with the objective of benefitting 250,000 low income households or 35 percent of the low income households in the State, whichever is larger, within 10 years, with the goal of reducing these households’ average energy burden to below six percent of household income; and (2) require the establishment of a minimum of 1,600 megawatt hours of energy storage to benefit overburdened communities within 10 years. The bill would require the BPU to direct no less than 10 percent of the BPU’s annual total clean energy budget, or at least \$50 million annually, whichever is greater, to the office for the purposes of the bill. The BPU would be authorized to allocate additional funding, staff, and resources to the office as it determines appropriate.

In addition, the BPU, in cooperation with the office, would be required to: integrate workforce development training into all clean energy and energy storage programs established by the BPU; provide outreach and recruitment campaign grants to community-based organizations to increase participation in clean energy and energy efficiency programs; develop, in coordination with community-based organizations, outreach materials in multiple languages; appoint a community liaison and establish an advisory board consisting of representatives of overburdened communities to review and evaluate the clean energy and energy storage programs available to overburdened communities; and coordinate with the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (DLWD) and the Department of

Community Affairs (DCA) concerning their responsibilities pursuant to sections 2 and 3 of the bill.

In addition, the bill would require the office, in collaboration with the DLWD, New Jersey Economic Development Authority (EDA), New Jersey Commission on Science, Innovation, and Technology (CSIT), and the Office of the Secretary of Higher Education (OSHE) to establish program guidelines for clean energy job training and workforce development grants to be issued by the EDA, Department of Education (DOE), and the DLWD. The grants would be issued to community-based, diversity-focused nonprofit organizations, community colleges, vocational-technical schools, and other organizations to develop energy efficiency or clean energy paid workforce training programs that provide training to at least 2,500 individuals from overburdened communities within five years. Under the bill, it would be a condition of a grant award that the programs be updated every two years to ensure that they prepare participants adequately for the current job market in the solar energy or clean energy industry. The bill would also direct the DLWD, in coordination with community-based organizations, to develop programs to provide entrepreneurial training, mentoring, apprenticeships, investment capital, loans, or other training, capacity building, technical, and financial support to residents of overburdened communities to help launch new clean energy enterprises or establish careers in the clean energy workforce.

The bill would also direct the DCA, in consultation with the office, to require all new construction located in an overburdened community to be solar ready, and, if it is demonstrated to be economically feasible, to include a rooftop or other solar energy system. The bill would also require the DCA to give preference to applications for onsite, community solar, energy storage, or other clean energy projects that are sited in overburdened communities or include minority or women-owned businesses. Finally, the bill would amend the law establishing the Community Solar Program to require that each community solar project serving low- and moderate-income subscribers provide a guaranteed minimum bill credit discount.

This bill was prefiled for introduction in the 2026-2027 session pending technical review. As reported, the bill includes the changes required by technical review, which has been performed.

COMMITTEE AMENDMENTS:

The committee amendments to the bill:

- (1) modify the Office of Clean Energy Equity's solar installation goal and require the BPU to develop interim targets for the solar installation goal;
- (2) modify the Office of Clean Energy Equity's energy storage installation goal and require the BPU to establish safety, emergency

response, setback, fire suppression, and hazardous materials management standards applicable to energy storage facilities;

(3) require all energy storage facilities installed under the bill to include certain safety measures;

(4) limit the allowable types of administrative expenses that may be used to implement the bill;

(5) require the BPU to conduct a ratepayer impact assessment prior to establishing or expanding any onsite solar, community solar, or energy storage program pursuant to the bill;

(6) require the BPU to prioritize installing solar and energy storage facilities in certain locations, including brownfields, under the program established by the bill;

(7) require the BPU to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Office of Clean Energy Equity five years after the bill's enactment;

(8) direct the DCA to require that all new construction in overburdened communities include rooftop or other solar energy systems, so long as it can be demonstrated to be economically feasible;

(9) establish certain requirements that the DCA is to follow in implementing the bill's requirements for new construction in overburdened communities; and

(10) amend existing law concerning the Community Solar Program to require that each community solar project serving low- and moderate-income subscribers provide a guaranteed minimum bill credit discount.