

Site Suitability Methodology for Clean Energy Infrastructure Straw Proposal

I. Overview

This proposal outlines a methodology for determining the suitability of sites for deploying clean energy infrastructure, and associated guidance for incorporating the site suitability methodology into state and local permitting processes. The methodology is required by *An Act promoting a clean energy grid, advancing equity and protecting ratepayers* (“2024 Climate Act”), which comprehensively reforms Massachusetts’ siting and permitting processes for clean energy infrastructure.

The 2024 Climate Act tasks the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) with the following deliverables, to be completed by March 1, 2026:

- A methodology for determining the suitability of sites for clean energy generation facilities, clean energy storage facilities and clean transmission and distribution infrastructure facilities in newly established rights of way. The methodology must include multiple geospatial screening criteria to evaluate sites for: (i) development potential; (ii) climate change resilience; (iii) carbon storage and sequestration; (iv) biodiversity; and (v) social and environmental benefits and burdens; and
- Guidance to inform state, regional and local regulations, ordinances, by-laws and permitting processes on ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts on the environment and people to the greatest extent practicable.

Although it is not required by the 2024 Climate Act, EEA is considering a proposal to authorize the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) and the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to assess mitigation fees based on site suitability determinations, and to establish a trust fund for the collection and distribution of these fees.

II. Objectives

The site suitability methodology and guidance are intended to achieve the following objectives:

- Encourage energy infrastructure development in desirable areas, including in the existing built environment; on previously developed, impacted, or otherwise lower conservation-value lands; and/or in areas of anticipated and otherwise desirable new development and load growth;
- Avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to ecologically important natural and working lands and the ecosystem services they provide;
- Ensure long-term resilience of energy infrastructure by steering development away from areas with high potential for climate or other environmental hazards;
- Ensure long-term viability of distributed energy resource (DER) development in the Commonwealth;
- Ensure communities who already bear a disproportionate environmental and public health burden do not carry a disproportionate burden of energy infrastructure; and

- Support the issuance of consolidated state and local permits by serving as a screening tool for developers and a tool that informs the permitting agency's final decision.

III. Context

There are a number of ongoing efforts that are being administered by EEA or its agencies that are interrelated to this Site Suitability Straw Proposal, which include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:

SMART Incentive Program Land Use Proposal

The proposed methodology largely aligns with and builds upon the DOER's land use proposal¹ under the forthcoming changes to the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target program (SMART 3.0). Under this proposal, projects will be scored utilizing a framework that determines the scale of the impact of siting the project in a particular location. Under DOER's proposal, most ground-mounted solar projects over 250 kW that are sited on not previously developed land would be required to pay a mitigation fee based on the impact of their development. Funds would be directed to a trust account to support efforts such as natural resource protection, stewardship, and restoration programs. The calculation of the mitigation fee would be informed by weighted criteria related to environmental impacts and policy goals such as carbon storage, ecological integrity, agricultural production, biodiversity, geographic distribution, and grid alignment.

Energy Facilities Siting Board - Siting and Permitting Regulations

Under the 2024 Climate Act, the EFSB is developing regulations governing the siting and permitting of large, and in certain circumstances, small clean energy infrastructure facilities subject to the review of the EFSB. After March 1, 2026, the EFSB will issue a single consolidated permit to clean energy facilities subject to its jurisdiction.

In its regulations, the EFSB must apply the site suitability criteria developed by EEA to evaluate the social and environmental impacts of proposed large clean energy infrastructure project sites and include a mitigation hierarchy to be applied during the permitting process. EFSB will also require use of a separate Route/Site Scoring Tool with its applications that integrates Cumulative Impact Analysis and other factors.

Department of Energy Resources - Siting and Permitting Regulations

Under the 2024 Climate Act, DOER is responsible for promulgating regulations establishing standard conditions, criteria, and requirements for the siting and permitting of small clean energy infrastructure facilities by local governments, and providing technical support and assistance to local governments, small clean energy infrastructure facility project proponents, and other stakeholders. In its regulations, DOER must include standards for applying the site suitability criteria developed by EEA.

Office of Environmental Justice and Equity - Cumulative Impacts Analysis

¹ [SMART Land Use Policy Update](#) presented to stakeholders on December 10, 2024

Under the 2024 Climate Act, EEA's Office of Environmental Justice and Equity (OEJE) is responsible for developing guidelines for cumulative impact analyses (CIA) for new energy facilities that includes assessment of existing and anticipated disproportionate adverse environmental, public health, and climate resilience impacts in an affected area. While CIAs will be project and location-specific, some of the criteria and indicators used for CIA also may be incorporated into the site suitability methodology.

Under the 2024 Climate Act, OEJE is also tasked with developing guidelines for Community Benefit Plans (CBPs). While CBPs are not required in the permitting process for energy infrastructure, project proponents are required to avoid, minimize and mitigate impacts. CBPs are one tool to mitigate impacts. Project proponents will be encouraged to engage in conversations with municipalities and community-based organizations to develop CBPs that respond to the needs of the host community/ies.

Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy

Under the [Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050](#) (2050 CECP), EEA is responsible for leading state agencies in the development of a proactive land use strategy to site clean energy and housing, conserve natural and working lands, and address other infrastructure and activities. EEA will develop the energy site suitability methodology and guidance in coordination with this broader land use planning effort – Massachusetts Integrated Land Use Strategy (MILUS) – which will include a statewide land use plan and mapping tool to guide state policies, programs, and investments.

IV. Methodology

Under this proposal, clean energy infrastructure projects would be scored based on a weighted scoring framework. Project developers would be able to use publicly available datasets and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) tools to score their projects. Later, this methodology will be incorporated into a GIS tool released separately or as part of the MILUS initiative.

By law, the methodology is required to include multiple geospatial screening criteria to evaluate sites for: (i) development potential; (ii) climate change resilience; (iii) carbon storage and sequestration; (iv) biodiversity; and (v) social and environmental benefits and burdens.

The initial list of criteria EEA proposes to include in the scoring framework is below. Project impacts will be scored for each criterion, and criteria will be weighted based on expert, stakeholder, and public input. EEA intends to periodically review, and update as needed criteria, weightings, data sources, and scoring protocols to ensure they continue to reflect policy goals and best available data and practices.

Criteria

1. Development potential

A critical factor in the siting of clean energy generation is the ability to connect to Massachusetts' transmission or distribution systems, or in the case of transmission and distribution infrastructure, the ability to serve nearby loads. EEA proposes to use "grid

alignment” to measure development potential, as this could help reduce interconnection challenges or unnecessary grid upgrades. This metric allows the Commonwealth to incentivize development in desirable areas, in accordance with MILUS.

For clean energy generation projects, grid alignment could be measured by distance from an existing substation, or one planned for in the electric distribution companies’ (EDCs) Electric Sector Modernization Plans (ESMPs) or Capital Investment Plans (CIPs).

EEA is looking for feedback on how best to measure development potential for clean transmission and distribution projects. One option could be to measure the amount of load projected for that area in the future by either the ESMP load projections or EEA’s planned building electrification load projection analysis that will be completed by the end of 2025.

2. Climate change resilience

In order to ensure the resilience of our energy infrastructure as the climate changes, it is critical to avoid locating it in areas that are at high risk of damage from natural hazards under climate change, like flooding or sea level rise. Climate resilience will be evaluated using riverine and sea level rise exposure scores, following the methods used in the [ResilientMass Climate Resilience Design Standards Tool](#). EEA is proposing using these factors as flooding presents the largest climate-related risk to siting energy infrastructure within the Commonwealth.

3. Carbon storage and sequestration

Sequestering carbon and avoiding carbon emissions on natural and working lands is a critical component of Massachusetts’ pathway to achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. For this criterion, site suitability will be evaluated based on the project’s anticipated carbon emissions and impact on future carbon storage potential. Carbon emissions will be assessed from estimates of current biomass and soil carbon stocks on a site, while future carbon storage potential will be estimated from modeled future carbon sequestration in biomass and soils on the site over a period of 30 to 50 years.

4. Biodiversity

Protecting habitat for the plants, animals, and other living organisms in Massachusetts is essential for conserving the state’s biological diversity and associated ecosystem services, and the Healey-Driscoll Administration committed to supporting biodiversity conservation in Massachusetts in [Executive Order 618](#). The biodiversity criteria will assess site suitability in terms of avoidance and minimization of negative impacts on land and waters with high habitat and biodiversity conservation value, identified primarily from the latest available version of BioMap, the Commonwealth’s biodiversity conservation mapping tool. Suitability will be based on project footprint overlap with BioMap elements (Core Habitat and Critical Natural Landscape), with scores based on specific BioMap elements and components, and in some cases other indices of biodiversity conservation value (e.g., UMass CAPS index of ecological integrity). Suitability scores may be adjusted upward in specific instances where

energy infrastructure projects are expected to result in habitat benefits (e.g. transmission or distribution corridors that would maintain open grass/shrub habitat).

5. Social and environmental burdens

To evaluate social and environmental burdens, EEA proposes a criterion considering the area's existing burdens and the proximity to vulnerable populations. EEA envisions this working as an initial screening of the area for existing burdens, while the cumulative impact analysis that will be required for large clean infrastructure projects would be a more granular evaluation of the specific project and its impact.

A suitability score for social and environmental burdens will be calculated based on a location's existing environmental and health burden, vulnerable population characteristics, and infrastructure-specific impacts.

Locations with high existing environmental burdens and vulnerable populations will be considered less suitable than sites with lower burdens and/or less vulnerable populations, but the suitability may vary depending on the type of facility and the specific environment and public health consequences. Burdens and facility impacts could be assessed separately for different categories (e.g., public health, natural environment) or could be aggregated into overall burden and impact assessment. An existing burden metric will be calculated from selected indicators that can be mapped statewide, while facility impact metrics will be determined from expert input on the risks and consequences of different facility types.

The [CalEnviroScreen tool](#) is an example of how this calculation could work. This tool was developed to help identify the most environmentally vulnerable or burdened communities in California based on a cumulative impact score that incorporates exposure to pollution and the presence of sensitive or vulnerable populations. A similar tool or calculation will be developed based on the above approach to facilitate the measurement of social and environmental burdens in the site suitability framework.

6. Social and environmental benefits

A separate benefits score will be calculated to reflect any social and environmental benefits, such as construction on environmentally degraded lands or the built environment, providing habitat or other environmental benefits, or providing social benefits to the community like job creation or expanded recreational opportunities.

EEA proposes adding points through a social and environmental benefits score for criteria like siting facilities on brownfields or landfills, siting on the built environment, providing habitat benefits, creating local jobs, or displacing an emitting resource. If a facility receives a benefits score, that score would be added to the overall suitability score to ensure the project receives credit for the benefit it is providing the host community.

7. Agricultural production potential

While agricultural production potential is not one of the criteria required to be used in the site suitability methodology by the 2024 Climate Law, EEA proposes including this criterion as

productive farmland is an essential, limited, and diminishing resource for Massachusetts' local food economy. It is critical to ensure that energy infrastructure does not reduce the viability of the Commonwealth's most important agricultural lands or remove agricultural land from production. This objective could be achieved by the energy facility being co-located in a manner that ensures farming can continue. Agricultural production potential will be assessed using the US Department of Agriculture's farmland soil classes for Massachusetts. Additional consideration may be given to whether land is under current agricultural use.

Site Suitability Scoring

Using the criteria listed above, EEA proposes calculating for each site both a *Total Site Suitability Score*, which represents how suitable a site is for a given energy infrastructure project across all criteria, and *Criteria-Specific Suitability Scores*, which represent the suitability of a site for a given energy infrastructure project with respect to each criterion. Each criterion would be assigned a weight. Each criterion would be multiplied by their weight, then added together to calculate the *Total Site Suitability Score*. Careful consideration must be given to how criteria weights are assigned.

Criteria site suitability scores will be calculated for a proposed site based on the area-weighted average score across the entire site footprint. Higher suitability scores would indicate more suitable locations for energy infrastructure development.

Each Criteria-Specific Suitability Score would be calculated using a specific dataset(s) and formula or tool. Several datasets and tools of interest are listed in Section VIII of this document, and EEA requests input from stakeholders on the applicability and usability of these resources.

Ineligible Areas

Additionally, EEA is considering whether to create certain categories of "ineligible areas" where projects would not be allowed to receive a permit or siting approval. Large and small clean energy transmission and distribution infrastructure facilities could apply for a waiver if located in these areas if they can demonstrate no other suitable route or location exists; however, large and small clean energy generation and clean energy storage facilities would not be eligible to apply for a waiver.

Potential categories for ineligible areas could include the following. In some of these areas, like Article 97 land, it is already very difficult for an infrastructure project to be sited.

- BioMap Core Habitat or Priority Habitat
- Article 97 protected open space²
- Top 20% of forests for carbon storage statewide
- Wetland resource areas (310 CMR 10.04)

² If Article 97 land is categorized as an ineligible area, an exception for solar canopies (e.g., solar over a DCR beach parking lot) should be considered.

- Properties included in the State Register (950 CMR 71.03), except as authorized by regulatory bodies

V. Guidance and Process

As required by the 2024 Climate Act, EEA will develop guidance on (1) how the site suitability methodology should be incorporated into permitting processes at both the state and local level, and (2) how to ensure projects avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts on the environment and people to the greatest extent practicable.

Energy infrastructure projects applying to the EFSB or municipalities for permit approval will be required to use the site suitability framework to score their projects. The types of clean energy facilities required to complete the site suitability framework will include clean energy generation facilities, clean energy storage facilities, and clean transmission and distribution infrastructure facilities.

Developers should use the scoring framework to determine their project's score before submitting their permit application. This would allow the methodology to work as a pre-filing screening tool that discourages developers from submitting applications for sites with low scores, or encourages developers to incorporate proactive mitigation measures into their project plan. If alternative locations are required by the permitting agency, the developer should determine scores for these locations as well.

During the local consolidated local permitting process, municipalities could use the score to determine permit conditions or institute requirements. The score for each criterion, the Criteria-Specific Suitability Score, can be taken into account separately as well as collectively. For example, if a project receives a high score for climate resilience but low scores for other criteria, the permitting authority could use that score to require resilience measures in the project design.

EFSB plans to require use of a separate Route/Site Scoring Tool with its applications that integrates Cumulative Impact Analysis and other factors. EFSB would use the Site Suitability scoring results in conjunction with the EFSB-specific Route/Site Scoring Tool and give due consideration to each set of results in its decisions.

The guidance will include recommendations on implementing the mitigation hierarchy in permitting processes using the site suitability methodology. The mitigation hierarchy is an approach to addressing potential environmental impacts, prioritizing avoidance, then minimization, followed by mitigation of any negative consequences. The guidance will make the following recommendations on using the mitigation hierarchy in permitting energy infrastructure.

- **Avoid:** The site suitability methodology will be used to help developers avoid areas in which infrastructure development would result in high adverse environmental and social impacts. Additionally, certain particularly sensitive areas may be classified as ineligible areas and projects located in those areas will be ineligible to receive a permit. Large and small clean transmission and distribution infrastructure facilities can apply for a waiver if located in these areas if they can demonstrate no other suitable route or location exists.

- **Minimize:** The site suitability methodology will also be used to encourage developers to minimize the project footprint's overlap with sensitive areas. Permit conditions or requirements could be instituted based on the project's Total Site Suitability Score or Criteria-Specific Suitability scores.
- **Mitigate:** If the project's overlap with unsuitable areas cannot be avoided or minimized, the project could be required to take mitigation actions and/or to pay a mitigation fee. Alternatively, the permitting agency could require a mitigation plan. More information on the mitigation fee concept and process is outlined in the section below.

VI. Mitigation Fees and EEA Trust Fund

To allow the assessment, collection, and disbursement of mitigation fees for energy infrastructure, EEA is proposing to establish a mitigation trust fund. The trust fund would be managed by EEA and would collect mitigation fees assessed by the EFSB and DOER. The funds would be disbursed to host municipalities and EEA agencies for conservation, biodiversity, or climate resilience projects.

Currently, DOER is proposing to assess mitigation fees to certain eligible projects that receive SMART incentives through SMART 3.0. Rather than assessing mitigation fees only to solar projects in the SMART program, mitigation fees could instead be assessed to all types of energy infrastructure through the new consolidated permitting processes at the state and local levels. This would create more uniformity to mitigate impacts across all clean energy infrastructure types and ensure solar projects are not charged twice for mitigation. SMART 3.0 could assess mitigation fees for small solar generation facilities until the EFSB and DOER siting and permitting regulations are in effect.

In its site suitability guidance, EEA would determine the criteria for assessing and calculating mitigation fees. After being assessed by the permitting authority, the funds would flow into the EEA trust. A portion of the funds could be allocated to the municipality or municipalities hosting the energy project, and a portion to EEA. Providing some or most of the funds to the host municipality would provide host communities real benefits for hosting projects and help to offset any local environmental impacts.

EEA and/or EFSB and DOER would set requirements for use of funds by a municipality, which could include conservation, biodiversity, site mitigation, or resilience projects identified in the municipality's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) or Open Space and Recreation plan. Funds allocated to EEA could be used for conservation and resilience purposes, at either EEA or its agencies. EEA would also determine guidelines for the use of these funds.

EEA, in coordination with the regulatory agencies, would complete analysis to determine the estimated amount of funds and consideration that should be given to affordability impacts, especially with mitigation fees levied on utility infrastructure. Additionally, EEA, in coordination with the regulatory agencies, would complete analysis to determine maximum and minimum levels of mitigation fees that would discourage siting in unsuitable areas while not discouraging clean energy development.

Additional legislation may be needed to provide statutory authority so that EFSB and municipalities or DOER can assess mitigation fees. Additionally, EEA may need statutory authority to set up the trust fund used to collect and distribute the fees received.

VII. Questions for Stakeholders

EEA welcomes comments on any or all of the contents of the straw proposal above, as well as any or all questions below:

Site Suitability Criteria

1. Are the proposed evaluation criteria appropriate? Are there criteria that should be applied to certain types of infrastructure and not others?
2. Are there other criteria that should be added (e.g., public health, safety, or welfare-related metrics)? Please provide proposed metrics and data sources to assess any recommended criteria.
3. EEA proposes to assess social and environmental burdens by screening areas for existing burdens, proximity to vulnerable populations, and impacts of specific infrastructure types.
 - a. Is this the right way to assess social and environmental burdens?
 - b. Would this be duplicative of the cumulative impact analysis requirements?
 - c. Should the site suitability methodology consider whether an area hosts a disproportionately large amount of specifically energy infrastructure?
4. Should EEA assess social and environmental benefits by adding points if a project would provide certain benefits, like siting facilities on brownfields or landfills, siting on the built environment, providing habitat benefits, creating local jobs, or displacing an emitting resource?
 - a. Are these the right ways to assess social and environmental benefits, or are there different benefits or metrics we should consider?
5. Is the proposal to use riverine and sea level rise exposure scores to assess climate resilience, focusing on flooding risks the right way to assess climate resilience?
 - a. Should other climate risks be considered?
 - b. Do different types of energy infrastructure face different risks?
 - c. Additionally, should EEA consider not just climate risks the energy facility may face, but also how the facility may exacerbate climate impacts in the surrounding area?
6. The site suitability methodology is required to consider “development potential” by law and grid alignment is proposed as the metric for considering development potential for generation and storage projects. Is this the right way to evaluate development potential for these types of projects?
 - a. For transmission and distribution projects, could development potential be considered by measuring the amount of load projected for that area in the future by the ESMP load projections or EEA’s planned building electrification load projection analysis, and/or by overlap with designated areas of development as

defined by Chapter 40R (Smart Growth zoning), the MBTA Communities Act, or other already designated areas?

7. How should the site suitability methodology be integrated with the cumulative impacts analysis proposal(s) that will be proposed by OEJE and the EFSB? If yes, please provide specific recommendations on how this may be best achieved.

Unique Infrastructure Types

8. How should this framework consider the suitability of where undersea transmission cables are sited? Note that this framework applies only to projects under state jurisdiction, which includes the portions of undersea transmission cables in state waters (i.e., 3 nautical miles or less from the shoreline).
9. Should this methodology be applied differently to linear infrastructure (e.g., transmission lines and distribution feeders) as opposed to non-linear infrastructure (e.g., generation facilities, energy storage, and substations)? If so, please provide specific examples of how these types of facilities should be evaluated differently.

Site Suitability Scoring

10. What weights should be assigned to each criteria for the purposes of scoring?
11. Should the site suitability methodology include “ineligible areas,” with the ability for utility infrastructure to apply for a waiver?
 - a. Are the potential ineligible categories proposed appropriate?
 - b. Should any of these land categories be implemented into the site suitability methodology as criteria rather than as ineligible areas?
 - c. Are there other categories of land we should consider as “ineligible areas?”
12. Which data sources and metrics should be used for scoring each criterion?
13. Should any of the criteria scoring metrics vary for different types of energy infrastructure? If so, how?
14. How should project footprint, or the boundaries of a project’s footprint, be measured?
 - a. Should the definition of project footprint vary for different types of energy infrastructure, or for different site suitability criteria?

Guidance

15. What kinds of requirements or permit conditions should a permitting agency be able to institute based on a project’s site suitability score to ensure project developers avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate environmental impacts?

Mitigation Fees

16. If they are ultimately implemented, what should be the minimum and maximum levels of mitigation fees to discourage siting in less suitable areas while not being excessive?
17. What kinds of projects should mitigation fee funds be used for?
 - a. Should they be used for general conservation and resilience projects throughout the state, or for host community-specific mitigation projects?
 - b. How should community benefits agreements interact with mitigation fees?

VIII. Appendices

Relevant Datasets, Resources and Policies

- Relevant policies
 - [DOER SMART Land Use Proposal](#)
- Existing relevant geospatial analyses
 - [Technical Potential of Solar Study](#)
 - [Growing Solar, Protecting Nature](#)
- Relevant datasets/layers/tools
 - [BioMap](#)
 - [National Forest Carbon Monitoring System](#)
 - [MassGIS prime farmland soils map](#)
 - [UMass Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System, Index of Ecological Integrity](#)
 - [Climate Resilience Design Standards Tool](#)
 - [MassEnviroScreen tool](#)
 - Utility hosting capacity maps³

Relevant Statutory Language

G.L. c. 21A § 30

Section 30. The executive office of energy and environmental affairs **shall establish and periodically update a methodology for determining the suitability of sites** for clean energy generation facilities, clean energy storage facilities and clean transmission and distribution infrastructure facilities in newly established public rights of way.

The **methodology shall include multiple geospatial screening criteria to evaluate sites** for: (i) development potential; (ii) climate change resilience; (iii) carbon storage and sequestration; (iv) biodiversity; and (v) social and environmental benefits and burdens.

The executive office shall require facility development project proponents to avoid or minimize or, if impacts cannot be avoided or minimized, mitigate siting impacts and environmental and land use concerns.

The executive office shall develop and periodically update guidance to inform state, regional and local regulations, ordinances, by-laws of and permitting processes on ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate impacts on the environment and people to the greatest extent practicable.

St. 2024 c. 239 § 130

SECTION 130. The executive office of energy and environmental affairs shall coordinate and convene a stakeholder process with the agencies and offices under its jurisdiction and any other

³ The hosting capacity maps for each Massachusetts investor owned-utility are available here: [National Grid](#), [Eversource](#), and [Unitil](#)

relevant local, regional and state agencies with a permitting role in energy related infrastructure to establish the methodology for determining the suitability of sites and associated guidance required by section 30 of chapter 21A of the General Laws not later than March 1, 2026.

G.L. c. 25A § 21(b)

Section 21. (b) The department shall establish standards, requirements and procedures governing the siting and permitting of small clean energy infrastructure facilities by local governments that shall include:.... (iv) standards for applying site suitability criteria developed by the executive office of energy and environmental affairs pursuant to section 30 of chapter 21A to evaluate the social and environmental impacts of proposed large clean energy infrastructure project sites and which shall include a mitigation hierarchy to be applied during the permitting process to avoid or minimize or, if impacts cannot be avoided or minimized, mitigate impacts of siting on the environment, people and goals and objectives of the commonwealth for climate mitigation, carbon storage and sequestration, resilience, biodiversity and protection of natural and working lands to the extent practicable.

SECTION 74. (b) The board shall establish the following criteria governing the siting and permitting of large clean energy infrastructure facilities: ... (iv) standards for applying site suitability criteria developed by the executive office of energy and environmental affairs pursuant to section 30 of chapter 21A to evaluate the social and environmental impacts of proposed large clean energy infrastructure project sites and which shall include a mitigation hierarchy to be applied during the permitting process to avoid or minimize or, if impacts cannot be avoided or minimized, mitigate impacts of siting on the environment, people and goals and objectives of the commonwealth for climate mitigation, carbon storage and sequestration, resilience, biodiversity and protection of natural and working lands to the extent practicable...

G.L. c. 164, §§ 69T, 69U, 69V.