

Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

Joshua Schauer 271-3077

SB 590-FN, relative to electric aggregation plans.

Hearing Date: January 13, 2026

Time Opened: 9:01 a.m.

Time Closed: 9:22 a.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Avard, Pearl, McConkey, Watters and Rosenwald

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill authorizes municipalities to use revolving funds to support energy services under approved electric aggregation plans.

Sponsors:

Sen. Fenton

Sen. Lang

Sen. Avard

Sen. Rosenwald

Sen. Pearl

Sen. Watters

Rep. Moffett

Rep. W. Thomas

Who supports the bill: 34 individuals signed in support. Contact Joshua.Schauer@gc.nh.gov for further details

Who opposes the bill: 0 individuals signed in opposition.

Who is neutral on the bill: 1 individual signed in opposition. Contact Joshua.Schauer@gc.nh.gov for further details

Summary of testimony presented:

Senator Donovan Fenton, District 10

- Senator Fenton introduced the bill and said that it was a request of the Town of Peterborough.
He explained that the bill is simple and practical. It allows municipalities to give back to local businesses. Permits towns with a pre-approved plan to establish a revolving fund.
- The legislation enables towns to make investments, which ultimately decreases energy bills, reduces the strain on the energy system, and provides towns with

greater flexibility by avoiding the need for town meeting approvals for every individual project.

- Senator Fenton clarified that the amendment specifies that no new tax funds may be used to establish or support the revolving fund. He emphasized the principles of local flexibility and fiscal responsibility that will come from passage of the bill.

Senator Rosenwald asked whether municipalities that place cash reserves into a public pool could deposit returns from those investments into the revolving fund to support electric aggregation. She questioned whether this would be considered a tax investment or revenue.

Senator Fenton responded that he did not believe so but deferred to others with more expertise.

Rep. Wendy Thomas, Hillsborough 12

- Representative Thomas spoke in support of the bill and said that electric aggregation empowers local energy choice with a potential to lower costs.
- She added that it expands renewable options and encourages innovation, resilience, and stability
- She claimed that this legislation will deliver cost savings to ratepayers. It will give towns flexibility to achieve lower energy costs.
- She also expressed confidence that the bill will pass in the House.

Bruce Tucker, Peterborough

- Mr. Tucker testified in support of the legislation as a resident of Peterborough.
- He highlighted the benefits of SB590 which will help towns set their local electric rates and contribute to renewable energy projects.
- He said that funding projects that previously lacked sufficient resources can use discretionary reserves to complete the funding which is beneficial to towns. It increases flexibility and helps decrease costs.

Deana Dennis & Mark Bohlinger, Community Power Coalition (CPC)

- Ms. Dennis and Mr. Bohlinger testified in support of the bill as long as the clarifying amendment was also passed.
- They said that the bill provides municipalities a strong tool to invest non-tax revenue in a revolving fund for already authorized energy projects. It also provides support for local energy projects that reduce costs.
- Ms. Dennis said that the amendment reinforces existing law, preserves the legislative intent, and removes ambiguity as noted by Senator Fenton.
- They requested the committee vote Ought to Pass with amendment on the legislation.

Senator Rosenwald questioned whether community power has become more expensive since enactment in Nashua, one of the first cities to be a part of the CPC.

Ms. Dennis responded that it was true that Nashua was an early adopter and initial rates were lower than utility rates. However, she said the rates are not guaranteed to always be lower and as of February 1, Nashua's rates will be higher than all three utilities in the State. She noted some challenges including the difficulty innovating and the outstanding collections, particularly in the Liberty energy area. There is approximately a \$3 million balance awaiting approval from the PUC.

Nick Paul, Clean Energy NH

- Mr. Paul spoke in support of SB 590 and the amendment. He described the bill as a simple and familiar tool that allows for the use of revolving funds to finance projects.
- He said the benefits include improved power performance, easier reinvestment of funds, and better planning and continuity. This also encourages clean and transparent funding mechanism, particularly helpful for smaller towns.
- He explained that this legislation is not a mandate program, it expands, rather than creates, an existing program.

Chris Ellms, Deputy commissioner of Department of Energy

- Deputy commissioner Ellms said that the Department of Energy does not regulate municipal aggregation plans, however he noted the longstanding legislative intent that residents who opt out should not bear program costs .He said that the amendment aligns with and reinforces that intent.
- He added that the Department is neutral on the bill.