

Meeting Minutes
Senate Environment, Energy, and Transportation Committee

153rd General Assembly
Wednesday March 25, 2026
Senate Chambers/Virtual
12:25 p.m. – 12:41 p.m.

Senate Committee Recording

Committee Members Present:

Senator Stephanie L. Hansen, Chair
Senator Russell Huxtable, Vice-Chair
Senator Elizabeth “Tizzy” Lockman
Senator Ray Seigfried
Senator Brian G. Pettyjohn

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Committee Members Absent:

Senator W. Charles “Trey” Paradee
Senator Spiros Mantzavinos
Senator Eric Buckson

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Staff:

Brandon Williams, Senate Majority Caucus
Anna Shields, Senate Majority Caucus
Brontë Pepper-Hicks, Senate Majority Caucus

I. Introduction:

Senator Hansen commenced the meeting at 12:25 p.m. by stating the in-person and online meeting protocol. Senator Hansen called roll and noted that Senator Paradee, Senator Mantzavinos, Senator Seigfried, and Senator Buckson were absent at the time of roll. A quorum was not met at the start of the meeting.

Senator Hansen began to introduce HB 269 w/ HA 1, but acknowledged Senator Seigfried being present at 12:27 p.m., therefore meeting a quorum.

II. Approval of minutes from January 28, 2026 [12:27:34]

Senator Hansen entertained a motion to approve meeting minutes from January 28, 2026.

Senator Pettyjohn initiated the motion, which was seconded by Senator Seigfried. The minutes were approved with no objection.

III. Approval of minutes from March 11, 2026 [12:27:52]

Senator Hansen entertained a motion to approve meeting minutes from March 11, 2026

Senator Pettyjohn initiated the motion, which was seconded by Senator Huxtable. The minutes were approved with no objection.

IV. HB 269 w/ HA 1 (Burns): AN ACT TO AMEND TITLE 26 OF THE DELAWARE CODE RELATING TO NET-METERING AND INTERCONNECTION RULES [12:28:15]

Synopsis: This Act requires that an electric supplier's interconnection rules, for purposes of net-metering, align with the most recent version of the Interstate Renewable Energy Council's Model Interconnection Procedures (Procedures) within 12 months of the Procedures' latest publishing date.

Senator Hansen introduced HB 269 w/ HA 1 by stating the process for connecting community solar projects to the Delmarva electric grid is slow. She explained this has resulted in a lot of commentary from the solar business community and received coverage in a news article in an online trade magazine that stated, "Delaware's interconnection standards now rate among the worst in the country." Senator Hansen explained this is a direct result of Delaware not keeping up with standards and procedures for streamlining the review process of applications and improving transparency for interconnection applicants and utilities. She stated these improvements are addressed in updated versions of the Interstate Renewable Energy Council's (IREC) model interconnection procedures. The model includes expedited approvals which weed out projects that do not require prolonged study to assess whether they're safe to connect to the grid, comprehensive timelines that reduce the time allowed for project studies which currently results in multi-year delays, and a reduction in the number of speculative projects that take up valuable review time.

Senator Hansen continued to explain that that is where HB 269 is incorporated. Senator Hansen thanked Representative Frank Burns for addressing this issue and sponsoring this bill. HB 269 w/ HA 1 requires Delmarva Power to adopt IREC's model interconnection procedures within 12 months of the procedure's latest publishing date. Senator Hansen further explained the substance of the bill is in HA 1 to HB 269, which states "any deviation from the Procedures must be affirmatively approved by the utility's regulatory body in a formal proceeding" (Lines 6-7). She clarified that the Public Service Commission (PSC) would be the utility regulating authority, and they may establish, monitor, and enforce mandatory interconnection application processing timelines and project milestones within its interconnection rules. She stated that Delmarva Power may recover prudently incurred implementation costs and administrative fees, back-office technology upgrades, and customer system investments necessary to decrease overall project execution timelines and ensure projects are brought online within the prescribed timelines.

Senator Hansen affirmed that adopting IREC's procedures and continuing the adoption process in accordance with updated standards, will allow projects to achieve interconnection a lot quicker. She expressed that this is a tremendous problem due to multiple companies contacting her specifically regarding their inability to connect to the grid. Senator Hansen stated she reached out to former President of Delmarva Power Phil Vavala to increase projection progression, but that did not result in changes. She continued by emphasizing the importance of addressing interconnection time delays. Senator Hansen stated the Coalition for Community Solar Association (CCSA) has been speaking with Delmarva Power and the PSC surrounding this issue due to their previous involvement. Senator Hansen stated there are concerns from these conversations regarding HB 269 inhibiting their respective progression. Senator Hansen then called on Dexter Hendricks to explain CCSA's concerns on HB 269 w/ HA 1.

Dexter Hendricks, Senior Manager of Interconnection Policy with CCSA, started off by stating support for the intent of the legislation, particularly the reliance on the nationally recognized best practices exemplified from IREC. Senior Manager Hendricks explained that IREC is a long-time national leader in interconnection best practices, and this model plays a critical role in improving transparency, timelines, and consistency across jurisdictions. However, he stated CCSA has concerns with implementing HB 269 w/ HA 1, which could

undermine the bills' effectiveness and ongoing work that is currently underway in Delaware. He expressed the importance in understanding that the IREC model is not "plug and play" and while the IREC model presents a strong framework, it is not directly transferable without state-specific adaptation.

Senior Manager Hendricks expressed that meaningful implementation would require a stakeholder process to tailor provisions to Delaware's regulatory structure, utility practices, and market conditions. He stated that in his experience, that process could take a year or more. He explained HB 269 w/ HA 1 should explicitly recognize the need for deliberative stakeholder processes rather than requiring immediate or automatic adoption. Senior Manager Hendricks continued to explain that the outlined timeline for implementation is infeasible based on the latest IREC release date. He stated in order to avoid duplicative regulatory effort, the legislation should clarify that any adoption requirement aligns with the next version of the IREC model rather than the previous 2023 version. He continued to explain that over the past year, stakeholders, including CCSA and Delmarva Power, have been engaged in a detailed, consensus driven, redline process to improve Delaware's existing interconnection regulations. Senior Manager Hendricks affirmed the process is nearly complete and they believe the updated regulations are sufficient to meet the current standards. He explained that by requiring immediate adoption of an earlier IREC version, it would force the Commission to revisit and potentially unwind that work, creating an unnecessary delay and administrative burden. Senior Manager Hendricks added that the IREC model lacks robust enforcement mechanisms. He stated in contrast, the amendment appropriately contemplates timelines and consequences for noncompliance. He expressed that to ensure effectiveness, the bill should explicitly direct the Commission to establish enforceable standards including clear penalties or remedies for failure to meet interconnection timelines.

Senior Manager Hendricks concluded that there are potential conflicts with Executive Order 18's priorities. Executive Order 18 directs state agencies to streamline the permitting of projects, eliminate redundancies, and prioritize clearing backlogs with a specific directive to clear the interconnection queue. He stated HB 269 currently could create tensions with these objectives by diverting resources from clearing the existing queue. Senior Manager Hendricks added that introducing overlapping or duplicative regulatory processes may conflict with the new emphasis on decreasing administrative burden and accelerating project times. Senior Manager Hendricks stated that any changes should be carefully sequenced to support rather than disrupt the State's current effort to increase interconnection efficiency and reduce backlogs. He concluded by stating the CCSA recommends implementing the next IREC model update and ensuring consistency with Executive Order 18's focus on queue management and administrative streamlining. He expressed that with these adjustments, HB 269 could build on IREC's leadership while reinforcing Delaware's current progress towards a more efficient and effective interconnection framework.

Senator Hansen asked Matt Hartigan from the PSC's opinion on the presented concerns from CCSA, with HA 1 seemingly having a more substantial impact than anticipated.

Matthew Hartigan, Executive Director of the PSC, expressed agreement with a majority of the comments from CCSA. He explained, however, that HA 1 gives the Commission the necessary authority to implement this in the way that CCSA suggests. Director Hartigan stated that beginning last October, the PSC Staff initiated a process to update interconnection standards and expect to have recommendations to present to the PSC Board within the next month. He explained the recommendations go further than what CCSA and Delmarva agreed to in the docket and include an enforcement mechanism that the Commission can oppose. He concluded stating HB 269 w/ HA 1 is fine to go forward and the PSC believes it is complementary to the work that has been done regarding interconnection standards.

Senator Hansen asked if there is anything in the bill that is going to cause an unwinding of the discussions between CCSA and Delmarva regarding interconnection. She stated Delaware does not want to be in last place

and wants effective measures established. Senator Hansen stated she did not want to wait another year for the stakeholder process to conclude before passing this bill, as suggestions from the Energy Stakeholders Group have already been incorporated in HA 1. She asked Director Hartigan if he believed HA 1 would address the concerns that CCSA has raised concerning regression from previous conversations? She expressed concern that this potential regression would cause Delaware to fall even further behind in the interconnection queue.

Director Hartigan stated if the bill passes in its current form with the amendment, he anticipates that PSC staff, CCSA, or Delmarva Power, could petition the PSC and state that the current work should not be undone and attempt to revert back to 2023 to comply with those standards. He stated his understanding is that IREC is coming out with new standards in the next year or so and PSC can at that point return to the process. Director Hartigan stated that, in the interim, staff are leading the effort to try to strengthen the interconnection standards for Delmarva Power to move forward with community solar projects. He affirmed that he believes the PSC currently has enforcement authority, which is what the PSC is going to recommend to the Commission in the next month or so.

Senator Hansen asked if there were any other questions from committee members. There were none. Senator Hansen moved to public comment [12:41:15]

Brontë Pepper-Hicks noted there was no one signed-up for in-person public comment. Marley Fishburn noted there were no public commenters online.

HB 269 w/ HA 1 was reported out of committee: 5 Favorable; 0 On Its Merits; 0 Unfavorable

Senator Hansen entertained a motion to adjourn, which was initiated by Senator Pettyjohn and seconded by Senator Seigfried. The committee meeting adjourned with no objection at 12:41 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Brontë Pepper-Hicks, Legislative Fellow, 3/25/26

Appendix

Appendix A: *Members of the public pre-registered for the webinar and in-person sign-in sheet attendees.*

Dexter Hendricks, Senior Manager of Interconnection Policy with CCSA
Matthew Hartigan, Executive Director of the Public Service Commission