

SB 218 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Senate Committee On Energy and Environment

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Meeting Dates: 2/26

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

The measure would require the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to study the impacts of waste from solar or wind renewable energy facilities and directs DEQ to submit findings to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to the environment not later than September 15, 2026.

Detailed Summary:

Requires the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) to study the impacts of disposing waste materials generated by solar or wind renewable energy facilities on the state. Requires DEQ in conducting the study to: determine the average useful life of equipment before disposal; identify the volume and type of materials expected to be discarded; identify the size and number of sites needed to dispose of discarded materials; recommend locations for disposal sites; and estimate the costs of disposing of discarded materials and evaluate which persons are best suited to cover those costs prior to a disposal site being established; and evaluate the risks of short-term and long-term toxic environmental hazards created by disposal sites. Directs DEQ to submit findings to the interim committees of the Legislative Assembly related to the environment not later than September 15, 2026.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

According to the U.S. Department of Energy, the estimated operational lifespan of solar photovoltaics is approximately 30-35 years and the majority of installations have occurred since 2017. The International Renewable Energy Agency estimates that the cumulative end-of-life PV waste in the United States in 2030 is projected to be between 0.17 and 1 million tons. The U.S. Department of Energy estimates that the operational lifespan of wind turbines is approximately 30 years and that as of 2022 there are over 70,000 land-based wind turbines in the U.S.