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**McKEON/CHIVUKULA/COUTINHO BILL PROMOTING
CLEAN ENERGY IN LOCAL LAND-USE DECISIONS ADVANCES**

Measure Would Deem Wind, Solar as 'Inherently Beneficial'

(TRENTON) – Legislation Assemblymen John McKeon, Upendra Chivukula and Albert Coutinho sponsored to promote the use of alternative energy systems by deeming the technology as “inherently beneficial” when considered by local planning and zoning boards was released today by an Assembly panel.

State court decisions have said a proposal “universally considered of value to the community” and that “serves the public good and promotes the general welfare” – such as a hospital, school, child care center or group home – presumptively satisfies the criteria for the granting of a land-use variance. The measure (A-3062) would codify that precedence in law while also similarly deeming wind- and solar-energy-producing facilities as inherently beneficial.

“Local planning needs to recognize the inherent benefits from providing clean, sustainable energy that can protect and preserve our natural resources,” said McKeon (D-Essex). “Responsibly designed renewable energy projects should be given every possible consideration.”

“Planning and zoning board decisions have an impact that can last for years,” said Chivukula (D-Somerset), the panel’s chairman. “The least we can do is ensure the positive communitywide impacts that can come from self-sufficient, renewable energy production.”

“Planning and zoning boards need to see projects that make sense for a community not just now, but will continue to pay dividends for years to come,” said Coutinho (D-Essex), a former member of Newark’s planning and zoning boards. “Green energy solutions meet the highest standard of providing that long-term communal benefit.”

The measure was recently released 6-0 by the Assembly Housing and Local Government Committee. It now goes to the Assembly Speaker, who decides if and when to post it for a vote.

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