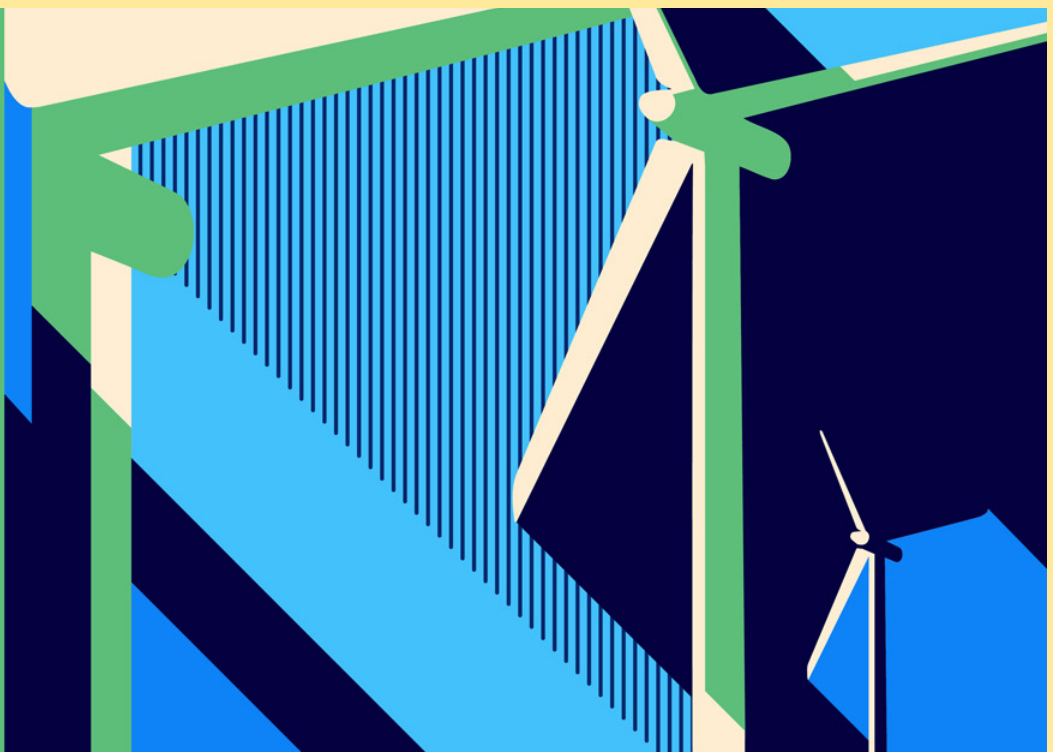


APRIL 17, 2026

The Michigan Model for Siting Renewable Energy:

Policy, Implementation, and Impacts

 UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN



THE MICHIGAN MODEL FOR SITING RENEWABLE ENERGY: POLICY, IMPLEMENTATION, AND IMPACTS

On April 17, 2026, policymakers, regulators, local government leaders, industry representatives, advocates, and researchers gathered at the University of Michigan's Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning to examine how renewable energy siting policy moves from concept to practice.

Using Michigan's experience as a case study with national relevance, the symposium explored how states are balancing the urgent need for clean energy deployment with local governance, community engagement, and practical implementation challenges. Discussions throughout the day highlighted both the promise and complexity of Michigan's evolving siting framework, as well as its growing relevance to conversations taking place nationwide.

graham.umich.edu/project/michigan-model-siting

The Siting Challenge

How can states accelerate clean energy deployment while ensuring communities have a meaningful voice in the process? That question has become one of the defining governance challenges of the energy transition.

The symposium's opening sessions explored this issue from both national and Michigan perspectives, examining the policies, tradeoffs, and decision-making structures that shape renewable energy siting.

The symposium opened with a national perspective from **Nelson Falkenburg of Clean Tomorrow**, who described how renewable energy siting has become a central policy issue shaping what clean energy projects move forward across the United States. His remarks placed Michigan's experience within a broader national conversation around state authority, local decision-making, and infrastructure deployment.

[▶ Watch the recording](#)

The focus then shifted to Michigan's Public Act 233 of 2023 (PA 233). **Michigan Public Service Commission Chair Dan Scripps** reflected on the origins of the law, the challenges that prompted reform, and the policy priorities that shaped the legislation.

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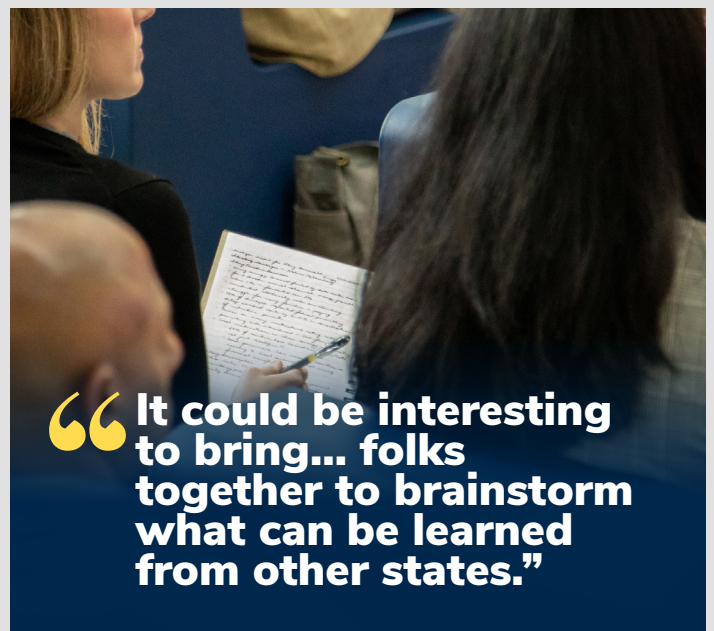
Madeleine Krol from the **University of Michigan's Center for EmPowering Communities** then outlined the mechanics of Michigan's siting framework, including the law's three primary permitting pathways for utility-scale renewable energy projects. The discussion also highlighted the important role of state-provided financial incentives for local governments that permit renewable energy projects locally.

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Together, these sessions framed the Michigan model as an attempt to balance statewide clean energy goals with local participation, predictability, and community engagement.

Key Speaker Themes

- Balancing state and local authority
- Creating clear pathways for project approval
- Supporting local governments through incentives and guidance
- Building trust and transparency in renewable energy development
- Understanding implementation challenges in real time



Learning from Michigan

The symposium concluded with a panel discussion featuring **Sarah Mullkoff of the Michigan Public Service Commission**, **Laura Sherman of the Michigan Energy Innovation Business Council**, and **Catherine Kaufman of Bauckham, Thall, Seeber, Kaufman & Koches PC**. Moderated by **Liesl Clark of the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability**, the discussion brought together regulatory, industry, and local government perspectives on Michigan's evolving renewable energy siting framework.

Panelists reflected on how expectations surrounding Public Act 233 compare with the realities emerging through implementation. The conversation highlighted both areas of alignment and ongoing tension. Panelists discussed the importance of community benefits, the evolving relationship between developers and local governments, and the practical complexities of translating statewide policy into workable local processes.

Audience feedback

Participants consistently highlighted the value of convening government, industry, advocacy, and research leaders to dialogue about implementation. They also stressed the importance of hearing directly from those shaping the law. They emphasized relationship-building, transparency, and practical problem-solving as Michigan's framework evolves.

Key Audience Takeways

- Michigan's framework is attracting national attention despite being in its early stages.
- Relationships and trust remain central to successful siting outcomes.
- Local governments, developers, and state agencies continue to navigate questions of flexibility, negotiation, and authority.
- Stakeholders across perspectives share a strong interest in ensuring communities benefit from renewable energy development.

Taken together, the morning sessions highlighted Michigan's role as an important example in the national conversation on renewable energy siting, policy implementation, and local engagement.





Afternoon Practitioner Workshop

Following the public symposium, 51 invited guests participated in a closed-door workshop focused on the implementation and implications of Michigan’s renewable energy siting framework.

Participants represented a wide range of perspectives from Michigan and across the United States, including state policymakers and regulators, local government leaders, advocacy organizations, industry representatives, and researchers engaged in renewable energy siting policy and practice.

The workshop was designed to explore the Michigan model in greater depth: what shaped it, how it functions in practice, and what lessons may inform siting conversations in other states. Participants reflected on the morning symposium to identify priority topics and engage in smaller group discussions focused on practical implementation challenges, policy design, governance, and community engagement.

Deep-Dive Discussion Topics

- Workable Ordinance
- MPSC Review
- Fair Share Provision
- Renewables Ready Communities Award (RRCA)
- Information & Capacity Needs
- Politics Window & Viability
- Public Sentiment

The afternoon discussions reinforced the growing national interest in Michigan’s approach to siting renewable energy. They also highlighted the importance of continued cross-sector dialogue as states navigate the complexities of renewable energy deployment.



“We discussed a specific topic with people from various perspectives.”



“It was incredibly valuable to have the Michigan siting policy experts at our workshop table.”