



December 21, 2020

Dear Rep. Tom Golden, Rep. Patricia Haddad, Rep. Bradley Jones, Sen. Michael Barrett, Sen. Cynthia Creem, and Sen. Patrick O'Connor,

On behalf of our organizations, we respectfully ask you to include energy reporting requirements for large buildings (S.2500, section 33) in any climate bill passed this session.

Our buildings are responsible for a large share of Massachusetts' global warming pollution. Burning oil and gas for heating, hot water, and cooking produces 32% of our greenhouse gas emissions, and electricity is responsible for an additional 19%.¹ To achieve our climate goals and protect public health, we need to reduce the amount of energy consumed in our buildings, while transitioning away from polluting sources of energy, like oil and gas, toward clean, renewable resources.

Making our larger buildings – including office buildings, apartment buildings, and hospital and university campuses – more energy-efficient is one way we can move toward a zero-emissions future. Improving the efficiency of one large building can have the same energy reduction benefits as implementing similar measures in several single-family houses. These energy efficiency measures can also reduce utility bills for tenants, including renters and small businesses.

The first step toward reducing the amount of energy consumed in large buildings is to gather more data on the ways that these buildings are using energy. Local policies in Boston and Cambridge require the owners of large buildings to report their energy use on an annual basis. Passing a similar policy on the state level would extend the benefits of this program to smaller cities and towns that may not have the resources to manage their own municipal-level energy disclosure policy. Once energy use data is available statewide, local governments, state officials, and regional planning agencies can use the data to identify the most cost-effective opportunities for reducing energy consumption in large buildings, and create programs to support building owners in making these energy efficiency improvements.

Section 33 of S.2500 would require the owners of buildings with more than 35,000 square feet of floor area to report the amount of energy used in their buildings on an annual basis, through an energy benchmarking tool provided by the Department of Energy Resources. The data collected under this section would be made available to

¹ "Massachusetts Annual Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory: 1990-2017, with Partial 2018 & 2019 Data," <<https://www.mass.gov/lists/massdep-emissions-inventories#greenhouse-gas-baseline,-inventory-&-projection>>.

state and local officials and the public. Section 33 would also require the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs to use the data to identify opportunities for energy reduction and recommend specific action steps to strengthen state energy efficiency programs.

Please include the language in section 33 of S.2500 in any climate bill reported out of your conference committee, with the provision ensuring that municipal-level energy benchmarking programs or energy performance standards are not preempted by this bill.

Sincerely,

Ben Hellerstein
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Environment Massachusetts

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