



December 15, 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 Environment Massachusetts, the statewide environmental advocacy organization, I am writing to ask that any climate bill passed by the Legislature this session includes key provisions to reduce our total use of energy and increase the percentage of energy that comes from renewable resources like solar and wind.

In recent months, the need to transition Massachusetts — and the world — off of dirty, polluting fossil fuels has become even more apparent. Researchers from the Harvard School of Public Health have found a link between pollution from the burning of fossil fuels and an increased rate of deaths from COVID-19, adding to the long list of negative health consequences associated with dirty energy. Meanwhile, greenhouse gas emissions continue to change our climate. Last year was the second-hottest year on record, contributing to record high temperatures, devastating wildfires, and severe storms.

We believe the “net zero emissions” framework in the House and Senate versions of climate legislation is inadequate. It falls short of what is needed to protect our health and climate, allowing the continued use of fossil fuels in 2050 and beyond. Further action will be required in the 2021–2022 legislative session to transition Massachusetts to 100% renewable sources of energy by 2045 and eliminate harmful pollution from oil and gas.

At the same time, we applaud the inclusion of several provisions in House and Senate legislation that represent important steps toward a healthier and safer future powered by renewable energy.

We urge you to include the following provisions in the final bill reported out of your conference committee:

Appliance efficiency standards (S.2499; H.4933, sections 15L–15CC): By updating efficiency standards for appliances and plumbing fixtures, we can significantly cut energy and water waste in Massachusetts and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

According to the Appliance Standards Awareness Project, if Massachusetts adopts appliance efficiency standards in 2020, we will save enough electricity to power 32,000 Massachusetts homes, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions reductions equal to taking 24,000 cars off of the road each year by 2025. With these standards in place, Massachusetts ratepayers will save \$103 million each year by 2025, increasing to \$282 million a year by 2035.

Since 2018, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Nevada, New York, Vermont, and Washington have updated appliance efficiency standards. Maine, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia are considering new standards as well.

Renewable portfolio standard (RPS) increase (H.4933, section 14A): To reduce Massachusetts' global warming pollution, we must increase the generation of electricity from renewable sources like solar and wind. As the heating and transportation sectors convert to electric power, it is important to take action now to ensure that this additional demand for electricity is met with renewable energy rather than fossil fuels.

The renewable portfolio standard (RPS) is the most important policy to set the rate of growth of renewable electricity. We support increasing the RPS by 3% per year. We also encourage you to phase in the 3% per year increase as soon as 2022, and continue it beyond 2030.

Building energy reporting (S.2500, section 33): More than half of the energy consumed in Massachusetts is used to provide electricity, heating, and cooling for buildings. Reducing the amount of energy used in larger buildings — including office buildings, apartment buildings, and hospital and university campuses — is one of our best opportunities to accelerate Massachusetts' transition away from fossil fuels.

We support requiring the owners of large buildings to disclose their energy use on an annual basis, as a first step toward making those buildings more energy-efficient.

We also support inclusion of the following provisions in the bill adopted by your conference committee:

- Increase offshore wind procurements to at least 5,200 megawatts (H.4933, section 17B)
- Develop a net zero stretch building code (S.2500, sections 30–31)
- Require new buildings to be EV-ready (S.2498, section 5)
- Institute carbon pricing (S.2500, section 10)
- Require solar programs to include a carve-out for low-income customers (S.2500, section 51; H.4933, section 19)
- Exempt solar projects serving on-site demand from the net metering caps (H.4933, section 17)
- Ensure environmental justice communities have a greater voice in decisions (H.4933, sections 15NN–15RR)

- Require the MBTA to transition to electric buses by 2040, and increase the adoption of electric vehicles by state agencies, municipalities and RTAs (S.2498, section 7)

Finally, we ask you to modify the language in section 15 of H.4933 to ensure that wood biomass is not counted as “non-carbon emitting” under the municipal lighting plant (MLP) greenhouse gas emissions standard.

Thank you for your consideration. You may contact me at 914-420-9706 or ben@environmentmassachusetts.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Hellerstein". The signature is stylized and includes a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Ben Hellerstein
State Director
Environment Massachusetts