

Health Professionals for 100% Renewable Energy Statement of Support

February 4, 2020

Dear state officials,

As health professionals, including physicians, nurses, public health officials, environmental health researchers, epidemiologists, respiratory therapists, and medical trainees, we ask you to pass the 100% Renewable Energy Act filed by Representatives Decker and Garballey (H.2836) to protect public health, particularly for children and other vulnerable populations.

Our reliance on burning fossil fuels is harming our health. Pollution from the combustion of fossil fuels is linked to a wide range of health problems, including asthma, cardiovascular disease, and premature death. These effects are felt by the most vulnerable members of our community, including children and the elderly.

Burning fossil fuels is also contributing to rising temperatures, which are linked to an increased rate of hospitalizations for life-threatening conditions like kidney failure and respiratory exacerbations. A warming environment also leads to an increased prevalence of vector borne diseases like West Nile Virus and Eastern Equine Encephalitis. Within the lifetime of a child born today, sea levels in Boston Harbor could rise by 7–10 feet, and the city of Boston could experience up to 90 days each summer with temperatures above 90 °F, unless we move quickly to reduce carbon emissions and transition to renewable energy.

As professionals working in the healthcare field, we recognize that health care facilities consume a lot of energy. The healthcare industry can lead the movement toward renewable energy and efficient building practices. Several institutions, including Partners Healthcare and Boston Medical Center, are moving quickly to reduce energy consumption and transition to renewable sources of energy.

We encourage you to do everything in your power to advance the 100% Renewable Energy Act, including:

- A commitment to source 100% of Massachusetts' electricity from clean and renewable resources by 2035, and an acceleration of the renewable portfolio standard (RPS) to achieve this target.
- A commitment to phase out the use of fossil fuels for other sectors, including heating and ground transportation, by 2045, and a mechanism to require annual reductions in the use of fossil fuels for those sectors.
- The establishment of an inter-agency council to coordinate the transition to 100% renewable energy.

By enacting this legislation, Massachusetts can take the steps necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, while building safer and healthier communities.

Sincerely,

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