



Testimony on proposed regulations under the Global Warming Solution Act

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Good evening. My name is Meghan Hassett, and I'm the Global Warming Campaign Organizer with the Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center. I would like to thank Commissioner Suuberg and the Department of Environmental Protection for the opportunity to offer our comments today.

The Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center is dedicated to protecting Massachusetts' air, water and open spaces. We investigate problems, craft solutions, educate the public and decision-makers, and help Bay Staters make their voices heard in local, state and national debates over the quality of our environment and our lives.

I'd like to thank the Department for their proposed regulations, which we see as a promising step to cut carbon pollution and meet the Commonwealth's commitments under the Global Warming Solutions Act. But we need to do much more to avoid the worst impacts of climate change and protect our children from dangerous pollution. That's why I urge the Department to strengthen the proposed regulations and accelerate the transition to 100 percent clean, renewable energy.

Strong regulations under the Global Warming Solutions Act are crucial for cleaning up our air, protecting our health, building toward a strong clean energy future, and preventing the worst of climate change. We're already experiencing climate change, from record drought to king tide flooding. 2016 was the hottest on record, and New England is expected to warm faster than the rest of the nation. With officials in D.C. threatening to take us in the wrong direction, it's critical for states like Massachusetts to continue leading the way.

We already know that cutting global warming pollution works and is hugely successful. For example, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has halved power plant pollution in our region. The health benefits just from cutting pollution with RGGI are huge—with over 8,000 asthma attacks prevented and 5.7 billion dollars in health savings in our region. Imagine how much more we can do to address climate change and improve our health

with strong economy-wide emission regulations under the Global Warming Solutions Act. We can and should take advantage of every opportunity to cut emissions and embrace renewable energy.

Recent studies suggest that a future powered by 100 percent clean, renewable energy is within reach. We shouldn't just do the minimum necessary to hit our 2020 emissions targets. Rather, the Department should set out a roadmap for what it will take to achieve 100 percent renewable energy by 2050, and adopt regulations that will greatly accelerate renewable energy deployment in all sectors.

Here are some specific steps the Department can take to strengthen the proposed regulations:

- With regards to transportation, the Departments should require all light-duty passenger vehicles in the state fleet to be zero-emissions vehicles by 2020, and consider implementing a similar requirement for other fleets (for example, ride-share vehicles or taxis). The Department should also work with DOT to expand electric vehicle charging stations to encourage more residents to switch to electric vehicles.
- In terms of gas leaks: We should prioritize repairing “super-emitter” natural gas leaks that are responsible for the largest percentage of methane emissions. There are tens of thousands of leaks across the state, with most of the danger concentrated in Boston. Around 5% of these are responsible for over 50% of the total leakage, making a significant contribution to our greenhouse gas emissions.
- For the proposed Clean Energy Standard, we urge you not to include nuclear energy as a “clean” option. We should prioritize local, truly renewable sources of electric generation such as wind and solar.
- For the proposed emissions cap on in-state electric generating units, the Department should accelerate the rate at which the cap declines each year, by 5% per year rather than 2.5%. The Administration has already expressed support for doubling the strength of the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, with emissions cap reductions of 5% annually, so the Department should tighten the in-state electric generating cap to bring it into line with these proposed changes to RGGI.
- Although this is beyond the scope of today's hearings, we urge the Baker administration to continue its support for strengthening the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI), which will play a critical role in allowing Massachusetts to meet the Global Warming Solutions Act requirements. State leaders should continue to support doubling the rate at which the RGGI emissions caps decline each year, to ensure that we stay on track to meet our climate commitments.

More broadly, the Department should extend the proposed Global Warming Solutions Act regulations beyond 2020. The department should set an interim emissions target of at least 50 percent below 1990 levels for 2030, and propose additional regulations that will put Massachusetts on track to meet emissions targets for 2030, 2040, and 2050. It will take

years to realize significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation and heating sectors. The Department should lay out a roadmap for reducing emissions from those sectors over the coming decades, and establish regulations and programs that will begin to move those sectors away from fossil fuels and towards renewable energy. If we wait until 2020 to start planning for how to meet the 2030 interim target, it will be too late.

When it comes to fighting climate change, Massachusetts has the responsibility to go above and beyond and set an example for the rest of the country to follow. We are poised to lead nationwide on slashing pollution and moving to clean energy, and our example is more important than ever. I urge you to strengthen the proposed regulations, and use your authority under the Global Warming Solution Act to set out an ambitious, achievable roadmap to reach 100 percent renewable energy by 2050.