June 29, 2026

The Honorable Karen Spilka
President, Massachusetts Senate
State House, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael Rodrigues
Chair, Senate Committee on Ways and Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael Barrett
Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
State House, Room 312-B
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Comments on S. 3143

Dear Madam President, Chairman Rodrigues, Chairman Barrett, and Members of the Senate:

On behalf of the Massachusetts Coalition for Sustainable Energy (MCSE), representing nearly two dozen of the Commonwealth's largest business, employer, housing, labor, Chamber, and trade associations, we are writing to urge you to reconsider the Senate's approach to addressing energy affordability in S. 3143.

While we appreciate the complexity of the issue, we are deeply concerned that the bill the Senate produced is missing an opportunity to make meaningful reforms that lower energy costs – and follow the lead of other climate leaders across the country who have balanced climate innovation with the ability of residents to afford the transition. Specifically, the bill doubles down on a strategy other states are walking away from that has failed to realize its promise of abundant clean and affordable energy. The members of the Coalition are deeply concerned that several sections of this bill increase the cost of energy in Massachusetts.

The impetus for tackling affordability began last winter when costs skyrocketed – and ratepayers, including families and businesses, expected swift action to provide immediate relief before the next winter. Unfortunately, instead of addressing underlying costs, including public policy programs, the legislation introduced by the Senate relies on illusory savings incurred by abandoning a natural gas system inside of four years and financing schemes that hide the true cost of our climate transition.

As a result, it leaves the Commonwealth dependent on an untested, all-electric energy system which still may not reduce emissions. Most importantly for a so-called "affordability bill," ratepayers will not see a single penny's worth of savings from this bill next winter – or perhaps ever.

The Senate Is Failing to Address Affordability

The Senate had been clear that it wanted to "meaningfully" cut energy costs by balancing our climate leadership with "common-sense reforms" and by taking a closer look at practices and policies that need to be modernized.

As we have written previously, public policy costs now comprise an estimated 30% of ratepayer bills. These include charges unrelated to the supply and delivery of energy to homes and businesses – such as EV charges, solar incentives, residential assistance and, Mass Save, which has grown so rapidly as its mandate has shifted to decarbonization that its cost now rivals what the Commonwealth pays for the University of Massachusetts system. Collectively, these public policy costs approach the annual budget for the entire City of Boston.

Addressing these costs would have been the clearest and most direct way to find meaningful savings for ratepayers. Unfortunately, the Senate decided to go in a different, more ideologically driven direction.

While the bill purports to save ratepayers $14 billion over the next decade, the reality is that these savings are all incurred for investments the Commonwealth hasn't yet made.

This is seen most clearly in Section 46, where $7.1 billion of savings—more than half of the bill's total estimated savings—are for electric grid system modernization programs (ESMP) and others related to gas system transition. Those costs that have not yet begun to even appear on ratepayer bills – and there has been no visibility into what those cost increases will be. As such, it is impossible for our Coalition to understand how that $7.1 billion of savings in this bill was calculated. Members of the Coalition, residents and businesses across the Commonwealth are asking for transparency into what those costs will be.

One thing this bill makes clear, however, is that electric and gas ratepayers will see no savings in the winter ahead from this bill as costs continue to climb.

Decommissioning the Natural Gas System is Irresponsible

Rather than addressing the root causes of rising energy bills, the Senate bill chose to decommission the natural gas system. It does so in a number of ways:

First, it sunsets the pipe repair system ("Gas System Enhancement Program" or GSEP) by 2030. In less than four years' time, the legislation ends the funding mechanism for repairing broken pipes that will still be delivering gas to homes and businesses by the end of the decade.

Secondly, it removes the "Obligation to Serve" requirement that utilities must provide gas service to consumers who want it. If passed into law, this effectively would end natural gas service in the Commonwealth. Indeed, the bill even taxes providers and consumers who do not move expeditiously enough to transition off of natural gas.

Individually and collectively, we believe these steps are hugely irresponsible and put the safety of the Commonwealth at risk. While we understand and share the desire to speed our energy transition wherever possible, we believe it is dangerous to do so by undermining the reliability of a system used by a majority of households and businesses.

Decommissioning the state's natural gas infrastructure before reliable and affordable alternatives are available also contradicts Governor Healey's "all-of-the-above" approach to energy at a time when the Governor has openly been advocating for new natural gas supply in Massachusetts.

The Senate Bill Ensures Renewable Energy Costs Will Continue to Soar

While the Senate bill ignores the Commonwealth's reliance on a safe and reliable gas system—which, as even opponents acknowledge, will exist for "decades" to come—it also opens the door for the State to spend billions of dollars on more clean energy and notably allows renewable energy developers to renegotiate contracts at more expensive terms for ratepayers.

Specifically, this bill increases the cost of public policy including a new public policy program to incentivize storage developers, proliferation of virtual power plants while also creating additional funding for research and development just to name a few. Additionally, it expands the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) at a significant cost and gives them the ability to procure energy it deems to be "clean" at virtually any price. Further, as Section 83C details, any developer who has already negotiated a price per kWh for clean energy can request an increase in the contractual price – and DOER is not required to demonstrate rate savings to receive approval from the Department of Public Utilities (DPU).

Allowing developers to renegotiate an agreed-upon price isn't affordability – it's extortion. Further, after 20 years of ratepayer subsidies, clean and renewable energy has proven it is not cost effective. Today, renewables still only comprise about a quarter of Commonwealth energy. As we were reminded yet again this past month when Canadian hydropower was paused, the growth of our clean energy supply has consistently fallen short of expectations.

Other Climate Leading States are Changing Course

While the Senate bill presses ahead with decarbonization and refuses to confront the issues impacting energy affordability and reliability, policymakers and regulators from other states are increasingly taking a more commonsense approach. In the face of rising energy costs and an administration in Washington that is hostile to clean energy efforts, New York, which had some of the most ambitious climate laws in the nation, recently took practical steps to reevaluate its

2030 emissions goals. Others, including Rhode Island's governor and regulators in California have taken or are considering similar actions.

While these actions reflect the reality of the current environment—and limitations of our ability as a state to overcome those barriers singlehandedly—we do not believe they signal a retreat on long-term climate obligations as some have suggested. Rather, they are acknowledgements that climate progress must go hand-in-hand with affordability and economic development.

The Wrong Moment to Double Down on Decarbonization

The Senate's ill-advised decision to prioritize decarbonization over affordability at this moment could have disastrous consequences for the Commonwealth. At a time when ratepayers are already facing the highest electricity costs in the continental US, the combination of decommissioning the natural gas system and cost of decarbonization will cost ratepayers tens of billions more in the years to come.

Equally as concerning is the lack of transparency into energy cost drivers and the public policy programs included in this bill. While these costs impact everyone in Massachusetts, they disproportionately affect middle class households and small businesses – the very same populations that are struggling the most to live—and stay—in Massachusetts.

Our coalition has always supported a responsible clean energy transition – and continues to. But decommissioning our gas system before alternatives are available, ceding virtually all of the Commonwealth's leverage to constrain energy costs and avoiding any of the difficult decisions to rein in costs is not only a mistake – but also a serious misreading of the public sentiment.

Families and businesses are expecting relief from their elected representatives. As such, we strongly urge the Senate to reconsider this approach. Our coalition still believes that there is an opportunity to find meaningful cost savings that doesn't put the reliability of our energy infrastructure and economy at risk.

Sincerely,

MASS COALITION for sustainable energy

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