



Monday July 29, 2024

Via Email

The Honorable Karen Spilka
President
Massachusetts Senate

The Honorable Ronald Mariano
Speaker
Massachusetts House of Representatives

The Honorable Michael Barrett
Massachusetts Senate

The Honorable Jeffrey Roy
Massachusetts House of Representatives

The Honorable Cynthia Creem
Massachusetts Senate

The Honorable Richard Haggerty
Massachusetts House of Representatives

The Honorable Bruce Tarr
Massachusetts Senate

The Honorable Bradley Jones Jr.
Massachusetts House of Representatives

Dear President Spilka, Speaker Mariano, and Honorable Conferees:

Thank you for your leadership in advancing important climate legislation. As the clock winds down on the legislative session, we are reaching out to emphasize the urgency and necessity of passing a climate bill this session that not only advances the Commonwealth's climate goals but also provides a path to much-needed clean energy infrastructure to power our economy.

Siting and permitting reform is absolutely necessary if we are to have any chance of transitioning to a clean energy economy and meeting our climate mandates under Chapter 21N. Massachusetts' economic future hinges on a robust, clean, and reliable electric system to meet the increasing demand for energy from new housing, more manufacturing, electric transportation, and a rapidly decarbonizing building sector.

Unfortunately, clean energy deployment has lagged in recent years as permitting timelines stretch into multiple years for even small projects, and as the buildout of new grid infrastructure to enable clean energy deployment has similarly gotten bogged down in an outdated and overly complicated permitting process. Streamlining this process is imperative, and the proposed permitting reform package must pass this session to have any impact on our ability to achieve the Commonwealth's 2030 clean energy targets. After a bill is enacted there will be a regulatory process to implement

the reforms, meaning that the soonest we could permit projects under the new regime is 2026. We cannot afford to wait until the next legislative session and push this date out two more years.

The language included in both House and Senate bills is a compromise proposal based on extensive participation from all stakeholders. Recognizing the urgency of the issue, the Governor established the Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting Commission, which over the course of several months worked diligently to identify the key barriers to building the resources and infrastructure needed in the commonwealth to decarbonize. The Commission utilized the broad participation from all impacted stakeholders to find elegant solutions to balance accelerated clean energy development with municipal autonomy, community engagement, environmental stewardship, and equity. We have a unique opportunity to pass major reforms that are supported by all sides, but this consensus may not hold if we delay action.

We urge you to quickly reach an accord and pass a climate bill that includes many of the key priorities as agreed upon by the House and Senate, with this essential permitting reform package central to the Commonwealth's progress on ambitious emission reduction goals.

Signed,

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CC:
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Undersecretary Michael Judge
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs