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May 30, 2022

Jeffrey N. Roy, House Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy (TUE)

Tackey Chan, House Chair, Joint Committee Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure

Bradley H. Jones, Jr., House Minority Leader

Michael J. Barrett, Senate Chair, TUE

Cynthia S. Creem, Senate Majority Leader

Bruce E. Tarr, Senate Minority Leader

Submitted to recipients by email

Dear Members of the Climate Conference Committee,

As you deliberate on the pros and cons of the House and Senate climate bills, we would like you to be aware of important priorities of those of us in western Massachusetts. We ask that you include the following provisions in a final climate bill.

1. It is crucial to make biomass burning ineligible for any renewable energy incentives. Woody biomass emits greenhouse gases when burned and should not be considered clean renewable energy. Our residents do not want our renewable energy incentive funds spent to support polluting biomass burning plants anywhere, regardless of when they were built. We support the Senate climate bill language. This is a high priority for us.
2. We urge you to authorize municipalities to require fossil-fuel-free new construction and substantial building renovations. Though we support the description of the demonstration projects found in the Section 65 of the Senate bill, we would like to see the number increased to more than 10, and even better, the inclusion of language from H.4477 that would allow any municipality to require this. Unfortunately, there is no

indication DOER will allow municipalities to require fossil-fuel-free construction in its net-zero opt-in specialized stretch code, thus the legislature must enact this into law.

3. Grid modernization is critical to incorporate more distributed energy, including the large amounts derived from offshore wind, as well as to improve reliability of the electric grid, and provide for increased usage of electricity as we wean ourselves off fossil fuels. Creating a Grid Modernization Consumer Board is important for having a more public process for review of grid modernization plans and budgets.
4. We support the Senate language (Section 61) that directs DOER to develop revised guidance on siting of solar facilities, including avoiding impacts to forests and farms, and providing guidance and incentives for local municipalities to update local land use regulations.
5. Language in Senate bill (Section 59) calling for adjudicatory proceedings prior to accepting any plan pursuant to DPU Docket 20-80 should be retained.
6. We support the House language that would allow municipalities (either those with existing community electricity aggregations or with Municipal Light Plants) to purchase electricity generated by offshore wind. That privilege should certainly not be restricted to Investor-Owned Utilities.
7. Regarding transportation, we urge you to expand the requirement that all public fleets become electric and increase the rebates for electric trucks. Transportation is our biggest source of emissions and provisions to restrict emissions from that sector should be a high priority.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Adele Franks

On behalf of Climate Action Now, Western Mass