



Massachusetts Catholic Conference
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Hon. Representative Jeffrey Roy
State House
24 Beacon Street
Room 43
Boston, MA 02133

July 6, 2022

Dear Representative Roy,

My name is James F. Driscoll, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Catholic Conference. I represent the four Roman Catholic Bishops of Massachusetts on matters related to public policy, particularly as they relate to legislation being considered by the Great and General Court.

I am writing to urge the Conference Committee on Climate to do everything in its power to advance legislation that will put Massachusetts at the forefront in the United States of addressing the global climate crises.

The Bishops are certainly grateful for the passage of the *Next Generation Climate Roadmap Act* last session. The law sets emission reduction requirements to bring the Commonwealth to ‘Net Zero’ by 2050. The law certainly will be transformational, but only if we have the tools to achieve the desired result.

The Conference Committee has a monumental task. It must discern the best way to move our Commonwealth toward secure, affordable, accessible, and equitable energy without harming the environment or creating more hardship for the poor and vulnerable. The bill crafted by your Committee is the one remaining opportunity this legislative session to establish programs that would address our “Net Zero” goals in a significant and comprehensive way.

As Catholics, we believe that we must prioritize the needs of the poor and protect all that sustains life on our common home for future generations. Pope Francis stated: “*There is an urgent need to develop policies so that..., the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for*

example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. (26) Reducing greenhouse gases requires honesty, courage and responsibility, above all on the part of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most.” (Pope Francis in Laudato Si’169)

We encourage you to produce a climate bill that:

- Expands and incentivizes clean energy (wind, solar, geothermal).
- Reduces emissions by restricting fossil fuels in the built environment and promotes a rapid transition to all-electric transportation.
- Prioritizes the needs of environmental justice communities.

Climate change has already had a negative impact in Massachusetts - from flooding in the Boston and Quincy waterfronts, to severe summer “heat islands” in our poorest cities, to the declining health of our lobster and clam populations. The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report from the United Nations underlines the urgency of comprehensive programs to limit and adapt to climate change on a global scale. Our direct action to combat this multi-layered issue must advance forward with a strong public policy roadmap set by the Massachusetts legislature.

On behalf of the Roman Catholic Bishops of Massachusetts, I urge you to find common ground in the days that follow and enact a bill that is vital in providing for a healthy future for all our residents and the generations that will follow.

Very truly yours,

James Driscoll
Executive Director