Re: Omnibus Energy Legislation Priorities

Dear Chairman Golden:

We thank you for your hard work to develop comprehensive energy legislation that keeps ratepayer energy bills reasonable and predictable while placing the Commonwealth on track to meet its greenhouse gas emissions reductions requirements. This is a complex piece of public policy with many long term consequences for the economic and environmental health of the Commonwealth about which our constituents care deeply. Your efforts and that of your team are very much appreciated.

As you craft the House energy bill, we ask you to prioritize the following:

1. **No Publicly Funded Gas Pipeline Projects**
   As Representative Kulik and Minority Leader Jones’ recent letter made clear, a majority of the House opposes authorization of utility financing arrangements that require electric ratepayers to subsidize long-term gas pipeline expansion capacity contracts. Publicly funded gas pipeline expansion projects will greatly hinder the Commonwealth’s ability to meet its greenhouse gas reduction requirements, expose ratepayers to billions of dollars of risk, and are not needed to meet our energy demand and keep ratepayer energy bills reasonable and predictable.

2. **Meaningful Offshore Wind Energy Development**
   The House bill should require our electric utilities to enter into long-term contracts to purchase at least 8.5 TWh (2000 MW) of offshore wind energy by 2030. Doing so will facilitate the creation of large-scale offshore wind energy development and bring thousands of clean energy jobs to Massachusetts. In Europe, there are 75,000 jobs related to the offshore wind industry.

3. **Fix Our Leaking Gas Distribution System**
   Massachusetts’ utilities have allowed tens of thousands of gas leaks in our state’s gas distribution system, with some leaks decades old. This inaction is a result of a combination of powerful disincentives and lax requirements that hinder repair. Not only is this irresponsible but it’s wasteful, dangerous, and expensive. Natural gas, or methane, is highly explosive, contributes significantly to our greenhouse gas emissions, and a Harvard University study estimates that the annual cost of lost gas in Greater Boston alone is $90 million each year. That cost is borne by gas customers and is enough to provide heat to 200,000 homes annually. Disincentives should be reversed and requirements should be strengthened, especially at a time when utilities are seeking a vast expansion of their pipeline infrastructure.

4. **Consumer and Environmental Protections in Large-Scale Hydropower Procurement**
   The Governor has proposed to import a significant amount of hydropower, equal to one-third of our state’s electricity consumption. To protect ratepayers and the environment, any such large-scale energy procurement should:
• Ensure that a minimum percentage of procured energy comes from RPS eligible renewable energy resources (i.e. onshore wind from Maine and New York);
• Require environmental best practices for transmission projects to avoid and minimize the impact on our region’s environmental and cultural resources; and,
• Prohibit utility self-dealing in the selection of transmission projects.

Thank you for being willing to take our priorities and those of our constituents into consideration as you prepare this bill to be released from committee.

Sincerely,

Lori A. Ehrlich  Tricia Farley-Bouvier  Denise Provost
State Representative  State Representative  State Representative
8th Essex District  3rd Berkshire District  27th Middlesex District

Paul W. Mark  Dave M. Rogers  Aaron Vega
State Representative  State Representative  State Representative
2nd Berkshire District  24th Middlesex District  5th Hampden District

Jay D. Livingstone  Mary S. Keefe  Paul R. Heroux
State Representative  State Representative  State Representative
8th Suffolk District  15th Worcester District  2nd Bristol District

Chris Walsh  Jose F. Tosado  Carlos Gonzalez
State Representative  State Representative  State Representative
6th Middlesex District  9th Hampden District  10th Hampden District

Frank I. Smizik  Marjorie C. Decker  Kenneth I. Gordon
State Representative  State Representative  State Representative
15th Norfolk District  25th Middlesex District  21st Middlesex District

Elizabeth A. Malia  Benjamin Swan  Ruth B. Balser
State Representative  State Representative  State Representative
11th Suffolk District  11th Hampden District  12th Middlesex District

Gailanne M. Cariddi  James M. Murphy  Ellen Story
State Representative  State Representative  State Representative
1st Berkshire District  4th Norfolk District  3rd Hampshire District
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