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Good afternoon. My name is Bronte Payne, and I'm the Clean Energy Associate representing Environment Massachusetts. I would like to thank Chairman Downing, Chairman Golden, and the other members of the committee for the opportunity to offer our testimony today.

Environment Massachusetts is a statewide, grassroots environmental advocacy organization. We work to protect clean air, clean water, and open space, and secure a greener future for the people of Massachusetts.

Our message today is simple: The smartest energy strategy is to take advantage of the clean, renewable resources at our fingertips. Solar, wind, and energy efficiency are already helping to reduce our carbon emissions, and they enjoy broad public support. Rather than sink billions of dollars into the dirty, outdated technologies of the past, let's charge ahead towards a 100% clean energy future.

Massachusetts has long been a leader in efforts to fight global warming. Back in 2001, Massachusetts was the first state in the nation to adopt mandatory limits on carbon pollution from power plants. Now, fourteen years later, a similar policy known as the Clean Power Plan has been adopted on the national level. The Clean Power Plan will lead to major emissions reductions across the country, and it's the cornerstone of President Obama's groundbreaking international climate agreement with China. And it all started with a law we passed here in Massachusetts.

Our experience shows that what we do here in Massachusetts can inspire action on a national and even global scale. As we continue to experience the effects of climate change in our communities, and as we fast approach the point where global warming could tip towards catastrophe, we have the obligation to continue to lead the way towards solutions.

The good news is that these solutions are at our fingertips. We can get at least 20% of our electricity from solar by 2025. The winds off our coasts can similarly provide

20% of our power by 2030. And new ideas in energy efficiency and building design can significantly reduce energy consumption in our homes and offices.

All of these solutions will help to create jobs and keep our energy dollars local. By comparison, building a new gas pipeline is like building a fast lane for energy dollars to leave the state. The smart thing is to use the resources we have at hand.

We should embrace ideas like Representative Haddad and Representative Cabral's offshore wind carve-outs and Chairman Downing's Renewable Portfolio Standard increase. The Community Empowerment concept developed by Vineyard Power is a promising way for local communities to finance renewable energy projects while stabilizing their energy costs.

And just as the Governor has suggested, we should take immediate action to lift the solar net metering caps in order to avoid a major contraction in the state's booming solar industry. The Next Generation Solar Framework developed by Acadia Center and others will fully and fairly compensate solar owners for the value they provide, while ensuring a reliable electric grid for the future. Senate Bill 1770 and House Bill 2852, introduced by Representative Calter, Representative Mark, and Senator Eldridge, as well as House Bill 2911 from Representative Smizik provide a promising way forward.

As you may remember, more than 350 city and town officials and 560 small business owners, along with thousands of ordinary Massachusetts residents, have asked our state's leaders to commit to an ambitious but achievable solar goal of 20% solar by 2025. This summer, Environment Massachusetts toured 10 cities and towns across Massachusetts to talk with local leaders about their communities' plans to go solar, and how the net metering caps are holding them back. We can say confidently that there's a strong demand for clean energy in all corners of the state. Community leaders and ordinary citizens are eager for the Legislature to keep clean energy growing.

Unfortunately, some of the ideas on the table today could take us in the wrong direction. Provisions in Governor Baker's solar legislation would make it more difficult for many people to access solar — including low-income families, renters, and homeowners who can't install solar panels on their roofs.

And spending billions of dollars on new or expanded gas pipelines would make it harder for us to meet the commitments of the Global Warming Solutions Act. It would divert valuable public and private resources that could otherwise go towards clean energy development.

While hydro is cleaner than gas, we have concerns that if not done right, hydro could supplant cleaner, more local renewable energy that would provide greater environmental and economic benefits for Massachusetts. Moreover, recent analyses show that hydro is likely to cost more than predicted.

We're proud to be part of Mass Power Forward, a coalition of more than 100 environmental organizations, community groups, businesses, and faith groups pushing for bold action to cut carbon emissions. Together with our coalition partners, we urge the members of the committee to embrace Massachusetts' legacy of leadership on clean energy and put forward a bill that will move us as quickly as possible towards a 100% clean energy future.

Feel free to contact me with any questions. Thanks again for the opportunity to offer our testimony today.