



Testimony in support of the 100% Clean Act (H.3288, S.2136)

Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
Tuesday, December 14, 2021

Thank you to the chairs and members of the committee for the opportunity to offer our testimony today. My name is Ben Hellerstein and I am the state director for Environment Massachusetts, the statewide environmental advocacy organization. Environment Massachusetts works to protect clean air, clean water, and open spaces together with our thousands of citizen members and supporters across the Commonwealth.

I am here today to offer Environment Massachusetts' testimony in support of the 100% Clean Act (H.3288, S.2136), filed by Rep. Marjorie Decker, Rep. Sean Garballey, and Sen. Joe Boncore.

In March, thanks in large part to the work of your committee, the Legislature passed a climate bill that included a number of important steps to reduce Massachusetts' global warming pollution and expand renewable energy, such as setting energy efficiency standards for appliances, increasing the renewable portfolio standard (RPS), and expanding our offshore wind procurements. The bill also set statewide emissions goals and required the administration to come up with a plan to meet those goals.

Goals and plans are good, but those goals and plans must lead to action. And action is where the Baker administration is sometimes coming up short, delaying the steps needed to transition Massachusetts from fossil fuels to clean energy.

My message today is this: We're supporting the 100% Clean Act because this is an action bill. It's designed to help the Commonwealth meet and surpass the climate goals you set in March, ensuring a safer, healthier future for all of us.

The 100% Clean Act commits Massachusetts to achieve 100% clean electricity by 2035 and 100% clean heating and transportation by 2045. The bill is focused on those three sectors because they account for the vast majority of carbon emissions in Massachusetts, and because the technologies needed to power those sectors with clean energy are on the market today, or will be soon.

For each sector, the 100% Clean Act sets out specific policies to ensure that these targets are met — for example, increasing the RPS, requiring new buildings to be built fossil-fuel-free, and

requiring all new car sales after 2035 to be electric vehicles. And while the bill includes strong mandates for renewable energy growth, it also provides some flexibility to incorporate non-polluting sources of electricity that may not be classified as "renewable" under Massachusetts law.

The 100% Clean Act also includes language to ensure that all communities, including environmental justice communities, have a seat at the table, and workers in affected industries can participate in the transition to renewable energy.

Today, I encourage you to report favorably on the 100% Clean Act for three reasons:

First, it is urgently needed. Every day we delay the transition to renewable energy is another day we expose our communities to harmful pollution linked to asthma, heart attack, strokes, pre-term birth, stillbirth, and a host of other health problems. Every day we keep using fossil fuels is another day we increase the impacts of climate change. It's time to set our sights on a 100 percent clean energy future. This bill establishes a vision and timeline for the clean energy transition, and it takes important steps in the short term to set us off in the right direction.

Second, it is achievable. The goals set out in this bill are ambitious, but they are within reach. Massachusetts has ample clean energy resources. With offshore wind alone, we could generate more than 20 times as much electricity as the state currently uses each year. The costs of clean energy technologies like solar panels, battery storage, and energy-efficient lighting have declined by 70, 80 or even 90 percent over the last decade. Already, nine states have passed 100 percent clean electricity commitments into law, and the Biden administration has set a national target of 100 percent clean electricity by 2035. If they can do it in so many states, and if they can do it nationally, we can do it here in Massachusetts, too.

Third, it is broadly supported. So far, 88 of your colleagues in the House and Senate have signed on as cosponsors for the bill. More than 60 environmental, civic, and public health organizations have endorsed the bill.

To conclude: A cleaner, healthier, safer future is within reach. This bill will help us get there. Please report favorably on the 100% Clean Act to set Massachusetts on a path to clean electricity, heating, and transportation.

You may contact me with any questions at ben@environmentmassachusetts.org or 914-420-9706. Thank you for your consideration.