

MA Interfaith Coalition for Climate Action

Priorities for Energy Legislation

Massachusetts congregations and faith organizations have come together to work for a **clean and just energy future for our Commonwealth!** We want our legislators to live up to the commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 25% by 2020, as outlined in the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008, and we want an energy transition that lifts and includes all our communities. We support the **MA Power Forward** agenda for an overall energy plan that relies on local renewable energy sources and energy efficiencies.

We have also identified five specific priorities that our interfaith coalition will champion as a necessary part of any future energy plan for Massachusetts. These priorities underscore the important moral and social justice challenges that we believe must be addressed to ensure that all our communities have a share in a clean and just energy future.

- 1. Lift the caps on solar energy and expand community solar:** We support lifting current MA limits on the amount of credit solar power producers can receive for the solar power they generate. We also need to make sure that the solar revolution reaches everyone in MA, with energy policies that strengthen incentives for development and accessibility of community and low-income projects that can benefit low-income homeowners, renters, and residents of higher-density housing. **We support S1770 (Sen. Eldridge) and H2852 (Reps. Calter and Mark).**
- 2. Invest in robust off-shore wind development:** We support development of clean, local, renewable off-shore wind, particularly in communities that have suffered from the siting and closing of coal-fired power plants. **We support the policies that invest in robust off-shore wind development in H2881 (Rep. Haddad) and H2851 (Rep. Cabral).**
- 3. Ensure that energy efficiency programs are serving all communities in MA:** Incentives and subsidies for making homes and buildings more energy efficient must be accessible to low- and moderate-income communities, renters, and non-English speakers. We support an energy policy that requires utility companies to provide data on the reach of their current programs to ensure maximum impact and accessibility for all our communities. **We support H2912 (Rep. Smizik) and strengthening related provisions in the Green Communities Act.**
- 4. Fix existing natural gas leaks:** There are about 20,000 potentially dangerous natural gas leaks in MA—many located in densely populated neighborhoods. Consumers pay millions for this wasted gas; the most affected communities suffer health and safety consequences; and a massive amount of methane is sent into our atmosphere, contributing to global warming. In 2014, legislators enacted an important public safety bill related to gas leaks but it didn't go far enough. **We support H2870 (Rep. Ehrlich), which will protect consumers from paying for lost gas and encourage timely repairs and H2871 (Rep. Ehrlich), which requires utilities to coordinate with municipalities and fix leaks when roads are being repaired.**
- 5. Reject rate-payer funding for new natural gas pipelines:** Consumers should *not* have to pay for new pipelines when energy efficiency measures, renewables, and fixing existing leaks would allow us to meet our state's energy needs, lower greenhouse gas emissions, and grow our local economies. **We oppose a recent decision by the MA Dept. of Public Utilities which sanctions a tariff to pay for new gas pipeline and support H2494 (Rep. Ehrlich) which would prohibit a tariff, tax or fee to fund natural gas pipeline that connects with a liquefied natural gas storage terminal..**

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