

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 their commitment to reduce carbon emissions by 80% by 2050, 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.

To help achieve this, we have 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 must be addressed to ensure that all our communities share in the benefits of 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 that solar power producers can receive for the solar power they generate -- referred to as "net-metering caps." We also need to make sure that the solar revolution reaches everyone in our state with energy policies that strengthen incentives for the development and accessibility of community and low-income projects that benefit low-income homeowners, renters, and residents of higher-density housing. **We support legislation that accomplishes these goals. We oppose H3854.**
- 2. Invest in robust off-shore wind development:** We support development of clean, local, renewable off-shore wind as a valuable, sustainable energy source for Massachusetts. **We support the policies that invest in robust off-shore wind development in H2881 (Rep. Haddad) and H2851 (Rep. Cabral),** particularly in communities that have suffered from the siting and closing of coal-fired power plants.
- 3. Maximize energy efficiency programs and ensure that they are serving all communities in MA:** Improving energy efficiency is the most cost-effective means to maintain reliability in our energy grid and reduce carbon emissions, as demonstrated by the recent energy study commissioned by Attorney General Maura Healey's office. We support an energy policy that both improves incentives and subsidies for making homes and buildings more energy-efficient *and* that ensures that incentives and subsidies are accessible to low- and moderate-income communities, renters, and non-English speakers. **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. The recent study commissioned by Attorney General Maura Healey's office makes it clear that we do not need new natural gas infrastructure to maintain reliability and affordability in our energy grid. **We oppose a recent decision by the MA Dept. of Public Utilities that sanctions a tariff to pay for new gas pipeline. We support H2494 (Rep. Ehrlich), which would prohibit a tariff, tax, or fee to fund natural gas pipelines that connect with a liquefied natural gas storage terminal.**