



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
In support of S.1846/H.2706 An Act Relative to Solar Power and the Green Economy
October 3, 2017**

There is no single solution for climate change, but there is widespread agreement among the scientific community that the increasing use of greenhouse-gas-emitting fossil fuels that began in the Industrial Age fuels climate change while it fuels our homes, businesses, and vehicles.

The good news is that human behavior can change. There is evidence throughout history of behavior changing quickly through implementation of meaningful policy in times of crisis, and climate change is a clear and present crisis.

Massachusetts is a leader--a state willing to change by taking meaningful action to substitute clean, renewable energy for fossil fuels. In addition to involvement in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) to curb emissions from power plants, enactment of the Green Communities Act which garnered a top spot for our state in the nation in energy-efficiency, the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA), and bipartisan landmark legislation to bring off-shore wind energy into our energy mix, Massachusetts is now part of the 13-state Climate Alliance, united behind the tenets and goals of the Paris Agreement.

Many important bills on energy and the environment are being considered by the legislature this session. Key among them is S.1846 and its companion bill in the House, H.2706. In addition to helping us meet legally mandated emissions reduction targets in the GWSA, these bills would significantly advance our efforts to bring clean, renewable energy to the Commonwealth along with its many documented economic benefits: keeping energy dollars within the state economy, stimulating new job and industry development in the renewable energy sector and boosting our energy storage, technology and innovation sector. As a state, we can become an exporter of clean energy in the global energy market, enhancing our stature and economy while achieving emissions reduction goals.

This is not the time to cap solar production, but to unleash it. S.1846/H.2706 eliminates solar net metering caps, establishes a statewide solar target of 25% by 2030, and accelerates the Renewable Portfolio Standard (the "green power" mandate on utilities) by 3 percentage points each year to balance renewable energy demand and supply.

The growth of renewable energy has consistently outstripped all expectations. As the urgency around addressing climate change and the recognition of our role in creating this crisis grow, so does the demand for alternatives. The rapid growth in solar adoption in Massachusetts has led to a chronic issue of net metering caps being met almost immediately after being set, stymying

ongoing development and adoption of solar. The net metering compromise reached last session was understood to be a “short term fix.” Maintaining any net metering cap is no longer justified in light of recent legislation that reduces incentives in keeping with lower, solar technology costs and provides payment mechanism options for the Department of Public Utilities for grid maintenance.

In a recent op-ed, atmospheric scientist and MIT Professor of Meteorology, Kerry Emanuel, an acknowledged expert on the relationship between extreme hurricanes and climate change, pulls no punches: “We must first recognize the phrase ‘natural disaster’ for what it is: a sham we hide behind to avoid our own culpability.”¹

As we get a clearer sense of the enormous dollar and emotional cost of recent extreme storms and with science telling us to expect more and worse, “business as usual” has been replaced by “business as urgent.” We made this problem. We need to fix it. We need to move away from band-aid solutions and temporary, incremental “fixes” that truly fix nothing as the options for effective action narrow and avenues for change close.

LWVMA urges you to pass S.1846/H.2706 as legislation essential to our progress as a state, our commitment to the Paris agreement, and our science and reality-based assessment of climate change and solutions, and, finally, as a model for the nation.

Thank you for your consideration.

¹ Dr. Kerry Emanuel, Why it’s time to stop calling these hurricane disasters ‘natural’. Washington Post, September 19, 2017: https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/energy-environment/wp/2017/09/19/why-its-time-to-stop-calling-these-hurricane-disasters-natural/?utm_term=.9941f0c8c98f.