



**Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
In support of H.3298/S.2148: An Act Relative to the Future of Heat in the Commonwealth
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The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts offers this testimony in support of H.3298/S.2148 as essential to the energy transformation we are called to make by recently-enacted law—S9 An Act creating a next-generation roadmap—and by science, as rapidly and efficiently as possible.

As you know, there is no single bill that will get us where we so urgently need to go. But bills that change systems are especially important to jumpstart and sustain the changes needed. The Future of Heat is such a bill. It is a ticket to transforming an antiquated system that served us in the past but that must change so we can move forward to a safer, cleaner, healthier, and more prosperous future for us and for the gas utilities and those who work in the gas industry.

You'll be hearing about the Future of Heat bill and An act relative to eliminating gas leaks during the hearing, bills that are about triage and transition. We need both. The gas leaks bill is about triage for the current system. Triage to stop, for example, the never-ending and expensive game of whack-a-mole leak repair that sends pipe into a dead end at rate-payer expense. The focus of the League's testimony is on the Future of Heat and transition. Transition because it incentivizes gas utilities to deliver thermal energy and allows utilities to ramp up their supply of thermal energy annually as we strive to achieve 100% clean, renewable energy in the Commonwealth for a livable future at less cost to ratepayers.

Specific incentives and mechanisms supporting this change include:

- Authorizes the use of pipeline replacement funds for non-emitting, non-corroding, renewable energy infrastructure;
- Authorizes securitization financing for geothermal and other non-emitting renewable thermal energy technologies;
- Requires consideration of public health impact in the DPU decision-making process;
- Requires that the cost of new fossil fuel infrastructure cannot be billed to ratepayers past 2050;
- Assesses per-therm charge to fund energy innovation and renewable energy programs;
- Provides training for gas workers to work in the new clean heat economy;
- Assists customers in upgrading appliances and buildings so safe, clean, renewable thermal energy is available to all;
- Prohibits "double dipping" from landlords by preventing landlords from charging tenants for reimbursed costs.

The changes proposed are not radical or far-fetched; they are tried and true technology and represent a boon to the gas utilities rather than a threat. We have this technology available to us today. Delays in moving this transition forward are truly inexcusable since we know the cost to individuals and the chances for a livable future. This bill provides an incredible opportunity for gas utilities to move from



an old and dangerous technology to a new industry. They can be partners in building a safer, sustainable future, one that resists the pull of status quo and short-term thinking that ties us down and prevents forward movement. It's time for a change, a system change. And the Future of Heat is a critical element in that change.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, representing 47 local Leagues from Cape Cod to the Berkshires, urges this Committee to embrace this change and secure its legacy of leadership by giving its full support to passage of H.3298/S.2148.

Thank you for your consideration.