



Legislation Summary:

An Act relative to the future of heat in the Commonwealth

Initial bill number(s): [H.3203/S.2105](#) (Bill numbers will change as legislation proceeds.)

Sponsors: Senator Cynthia Creem, Representative Stephen Owens

What the bill does, why LWVMA supports or opposes it, and the League position relative to this bill.

Currently, gas utilities are incentivized to expand the gas pipeline network. This bill provides a regulatory and financial structure to transition gas utilities to thermal energy utilities with minimal disruption to the utilities, utility workers and customers, as follows:

- Establishes a regulatory structure through the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to transition gas companies to become thermal energy companies;
- Requires greater transparency into DPU decision making process;
- Permits gas utilities to distribute/sell non-emitting, non-combustible renewable energy and install the necessary infrastructure to support that distribution;
- Mandates gas company plans to transition from gas infrastructure to thermal energy infrastructure and pursue neighborhood-wide electrification projects with input from municipalities and customers;
- Incentivizes installation of thermal energy infrastructure and prohibits depreciation of gas infrastructure past 2050.

Why LWVMA Supports this bill:

Climate laws enacted in the last legislative session mandate reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2050. A recent International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report has warned that countries need to aim for net zero reductions by 2040 because of the ever-accelerating pace of climate change.

In Massachusetts, heating and cooling of buildings represents approximately 30% of heat trapping emissions in the state, second only to transportation. Decarbonizing buildings is a huge challenge. The current gas utility model was designed for a different era and different needs. A systems change that will facilitate the use of renewable, non-emitting energy is needed. Gas utilities have the right of way for the installation of new, thermal energy infrastructure, an expansive customer base and the work force to allow a transition away from fossil fuels without displacing the gas utilities and its workers and without undue disruption and cost to ratepayers.

LWV Position relevant to support of this bill:

P110, Impact on Issues 2022-2024

“LWVUS believes that climate change is a serious problem that requires immediate domestic and international action. The League believes the US government should move ahead immediately, without waiting for other nations, on initiatives to reduce emissions of heat-trapping gases like carbon, methane, and other toxic air

pollutants. Such actions will reduce the threat of global climate change, combat air pollution, increase energy security, and create new jobs.”