



Testimony submitted to the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy (JTU)
H. 3213/S.2178 – An Act relative to Better Buildings
H. 3192/S2144 — An Act relative to Building Energy and Decarbonization
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We are in an “Everything, Everywhere, All at Once” moment for implementation of emissions reductions actions. Actions that must be undertaken to avoid the increasingly dire circumstances of climate change and successfully transition to a clean, renewable, non-combusting energy future. We are behind in our efforts. This is not a time for incremental changes around the edges. We are well aware of the consequences, including cost, health and equity impacts, of doing nothing or too little, as is our history. We are well aware of where we need focus: doubling down on building our supply of local, Class 1 renewable sources of energy and comprehensive decarbonization approaches across all sectors, targeting the largest sources of emissions first as the most rapid way to bring emissions in check. The second largest source of emissions in the Commonwealth is buildings—second only to transportation.

The League has already submitted testimony in support of H.3694 *An Act relative to the clean heat standard*, and H.3203/S.2105 *An Act relative to the future of clean heat in the Commonwealth* (July 12, 2023), which we view as part of the arsenal of tools needed to fully address the issue of building decarbonization. This testimony is submitted in support of two additional, complementary building decarbonization and energy bills on the legislative docket this session: **H. 3213/S.2178 – An Act relative to Better Buildings, and H. 3192/S2144 – An Act relative to Building Energy and Decarbonization.** Together, these bills address both large and small buildings – commercial, residential, academic and medical – new and existing.

Large buildings are responsible for a disproportionate amount of emissions. **H.3213/S.2178** applies to large buildings starting at 20,000 square feet. It will require building performance standards based on either energy use or greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), established by the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) that are consistent with mandated emissions reductions targets for Massachusetts. Failure to meet date specific performance standards will result in either a fee paid by building owners (the Alternative Compliance Fee) or submission of a customized emissions reduction plan subject to DOER approval. The bill also allows cities and towns to establish their own performance standards for large buildings, modeled after Boston’s BERDO.2 (Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance).

Given that approximately 70% of buildings today are expected to be here in 2050, we also need to address smaller existing buildings and new construction, addressed by **H.3192/S2144**. H.3192/S.2144 would establish a new DOER division tasked with building energy and emissions reductions, a building retrofit funding program and an advisory task force. The bill would amend the Mass Save program to require set targets for serving historically underserved communities, maximize climate, environmental, economic and equity benefits aligned with state climate commitments. The bill also provides incentives for municipalities to choose adoption of the specialized energy code with creation of a new tier within the Green Communities program. Very importantly, the bill establishes a grant and loan program for deep energy retrofits for buildings in low- and moderate-income and environmental justice communities. It further amends the Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy program (PACE) and Mass Save to

remove funding for fossil fuels, programs that need to be brought up to date to reflect the current reality and urgent need to decarbonize as quickly as possible.

There are no silver bullets and no time left for delay as we face the truly existential crisis of human induced climate change. We need a multi-faceted, coordinated and accelerated approach across all sectors, squarely focused on the cause of this crisis: the pollution generated by emissions of greenhouse gas emissions. These bills, along with others referenced, tackle one of the largest decarbonization challenges in our society: emissions from buildings, both new to existing.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts and our 44 local Leagues serving over 100 communities from Cape Cod to the Berkshires urge you to report H.3213/S.2178 and H.3192/S2144 favorably, as quickly as possible.