

July 1, 2026

Senator Karen Spilka, President
Senate
State House, Room 332
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Michael Rodrigues, Chair
Senate Committee on Ways & Means
State House, Room 212
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Senate President Spilka and Chair Rodrigues,

On behalf of the Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce and our 1,200 members, I write to offer comments on S.3143, *An Act to save people money, repair the climate and grow the economy*. We thank the Senate for rightly focusing on the difficult policy choices around energy affordability in the Commonwealth and the impacts on residents and businesses.

The Chamber supports the Commonwealth's long-term goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. We count among our membership clean energy developers and technology companies that will contribute to climate solutions, members that will build the infrastructure and buildings of the future to become more efficient, and the energy electric and gas distribution companies that keep the lights on during and after the transition to cleaner forms of energy – a necessity to the everyday economy. However, we must also grapple with the practical realities of costs, development timelines, and unforeseen federal barriers that placed Massachusetts in different circumstances today.

Unfortunately, while S.3143 makes some welcome reforms around the deployment of clean energy, overall it fails to meaningfully address several critical cost drivers that make Massachusetts home to the highest energy rates in the country. And in several particular areas, the Senate bill will further drive higher costs, undermine energy delivery and critical system reliability programs, and add unnecessary complexity and impractical mandates on top of the Commonwealth's already aggressive climate goals. We therefore urge the Senate to adopt critical amendments that will sustain a reliable, cost-effective energy system across the Commonwealth, and look ahead to conference committee negotiations to adjust its approach to prioritize energy affordability.

Public Policy Concerns with S.3143

Access to a safe, reliable energy grid for all ratepayers is paramount to a strong economy. Despite the Commonwealth's long-term goals (which, again, the Chamber supports), currently there is not enough clean energy deployed in the Commonwealth to serve all of its needs. It is why an "all of the above" energy strategy is still necessary to power and heat our homes and businesses.

This includes access to natural gas for both heating and power generation needs while the economy continues its transition to renewable energy. At the moment, efforts to greatly expand offshore wind energy have stalled due to federal interference, there are no concrete plans to expand access to additional hydropower or nuclear energy, and solar power continues to slowly grow but faces cost, access to available land, and consumer adoption bottlenecks. At the same time, our energy demand will likely grow, especially as we attempt to electrify our heating, transportation, and industrial sectors over time. Even our natural gas system is constrained by lack of pipeline capacity to sufficiently power our state in the cold, winter months.

We need more energy, not less, and taking any available source off the table, which S.3143 seeks to do, will only lead to the burning of even dirtier fuel like oil. This undermines our emission reduction goals and makes energy more expensive for all.

A utility's obligation to serve both residents and businesses – meaning that access to energy is guaranteed – does not just benefit our utilities, but also every ratepayer that can depend on an accessible energy grid. To fundamentally alter this relationship, contemplated but not spelled out in detail in this bill, requires a far more thoughtful and comprehensive conversation between policymakers, utilities, residents and businesses to determine how to effectively generate and deliver power to everyone. The worst-case scenario for our economy is one where energy is not readily available to our homes and businesses.

Concerningly, the legislation also revives the concept of transition costs and anticipates our natural gas systems will be deemed stranded costs and decommissioned in the near term. In reality, our current system is constrained, not underutilized. S.3143 then adopts a rate reduction bond proposal, which ties these transition costs to the securitization of borrowing to lower ratepayer bills in the short term (and increasing costs in the long-term). Putting aside the question of who would purchase such bonds and legality of this type of mechanism, this adds yet another charge on ratepayer bills and makes energy bills even more confusing, costly, and untransparent. Other aspects of S.3143 call for transparency and simplicity in consumer bills – these provisions are contradictory to those efforts.

This bill also makes unnecessary revisions to the state's successful energy efficiency programs without saving any money for ratepayers. In fact, more costs will be added by directing the program away from cost effective energy efficiency and instead towards "building decarbonization." This is an unnecessary change and clearly does not recognize the long transition many homes and businesses will contemplate between now and 2050.

We urge the Senate to rethink its approach on these topics and we stand ready to collaborate on way to reduce costs for the people and businesses of the Commonwealth without jeopardizing reliable access to critical energy resources.

Amendments

Support: Amendment 125 (Senator Julian Cyr)

We support S.3143's efforts to streamline permitting and establish a state-led offshore wind pre-development and project acceleration program. The deployment of offshore wind projects over time will be critical to the Commonwealth's ability to meet its net-zero goals by 2025. The Chamber urges the Senate to adopt amendment 125 that would add onshore real estate that is vital to the interconnection of offshore wind projects to the eligible objectives of the program. As you know, these projects need to acquire the real estate necessary to receive permits and interconnect with our electric distribution systems, and therefore an important factor in accelerating future projects.

Support Amendment 182 (Senator John Velis)

The Chamber supports Amendment 182, striking Section 40 of S.3143, which would undermine our electric and gas utilities' ability to continue to serve ratepayers across the state and allow for competing service within service territories. While this may seem like a minor change, Section 40 critically alters our distribution companies' role in providing reliable energy to the state without thoroughly contemplating the consequences, creating major uncertainty for the business community. Adopting Amendment 182 is crucial for a reliable energy system.

Support Amendment 102 (Senator Brendan Crighton)

Section 33 of S.3142 creates a large central procurement process that allows the Department of Energy Resources and the Department of Public Utilities to issues solicitations for large long term contracts of the environmental attributes for clean energy generation. However, this section fails to

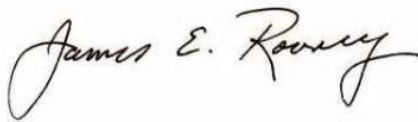
recognize the role of necessary transmission components for delivering clean energy to our electric distribution grid, and therefore the necessary role of our utility companies in each and every clean energy generation project. Amendment 102 clarifies this role and ensures utilities can recover any costs of necessary transmission that provides clean energy to our grid. The Chamber urges the Senate to adopt this amendment.

Oppose Amendment 26

Amendment 26 would effectively ban any expansion of natural gas facilities across the Commonwealth, regardless of the need, use, or economic value of the access to this critical energy resource. A blanket ban without a project evaluation, consumer cost/benefit analysis, or review of job creation and economic impact could undermine economic growth and the Commonwealth's ability to attract employers to the region. This is a key competitiveness concern, and we urge the Senate to reject this amendment.

Please reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



James E. Rooney
President & CEO