July 31, 2026

The Honorable Representative Mark J. Cusack
State House, Room 43
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Aaron M. Michlewitz
State House, Room 243
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Representative Bradley H. Jones
State House, Room 124
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Michael J. Barrett
State House, Room 312-B
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Cynthia Stone Creem
State House, Room 312-A
Boston, MA 02133

The Honorable Bruce E. Tarr
State House, Room 308
Boston, MA 02133

RE: H.5175, *An Act relative to energy affordability, clean power, and economic competitiveness*
S.3166, *An Act to save people money, repair the climate and grow the economy*

Dear Members of the Conference Committee:

As leaders of the largest business associations and public policy organizations in Massachusetts, we write regarding H.5175, *An Act relative to energy affordability, clean power, and economic competitiveness* and S.3166, *An Act to save people money, repair the climate and grow the economy*. As the conference committee works to reconcile the major differences in approaches to energy policy in these two bills, we strongly urge the conferees to reprioritize energy affordability while preserving and strengthening the Commonwealth's energy supply

As you know, Massachusetts is home to some of the highest electricity rates in the nation. Following a winter of exceptionally high energy costs and several years of growing economic competitiveness challenges, Massachusetts cannot afford to miss the opportunity to deliver meaningful rate relief to employers and residents alike. The conference committee has an important opportunity to advance policies that improve affordability while ensuring our energy system remains reliable, safe, and capable of supporting long-term economic growth.

We urge the conference committee to embrace a true "all of the above" approach to the supply constraints that are among the key drivers of energy costs in Massachusetts. The Commonwealth should continue to embrace additional sources of renewable energy, and we welcome many of the provisions in the House and Senate bills that further these industries to diversify and expand our energy supplies over the long term. However, in the meantime, residents and employers need a reliable and affordable energy grid. Energy costs are top of residents' minds when considering affordability, and our high costs continue to drive employers to lower cost states.

An all of the above resource strategy is essential to energy affordability in the Commonwealth, and we stress that this year's energy bill must focus on delivering real rate relief to ratepayers. We urge the conference committee to embrace policies that deliver energy savings to ratepayers, and reject policies that eliminate critical energy resources available to the Commonwealth in any legislation that may emerge from conference. A bill that increases costs to ratepayers or undermines the reliability of the energy grid will only worsen the reality that initiated the need for an energy affordability bill in the first place.

We are particularly concerned that three proposals before you – phasing out Gas System Enhancement Plans, ending a utility's obligation to serve, and allowing for the securitization of large, long-term infrastructure investments – would not only worsen our supply constraints but also impose additional costs on ratepayers.

Gas System Enhancement Plans are essential to maintaining a safe and reliable natural gas system. Without this program, our gas infrastructure becomes vulnerable to more expensive corrective maintenance and longer lead times for repair and replacement work. This, in turn, exacerbates supply constraints by creating bottlenecks and increases costs as maintenance is deferred.

Similarly, ending a utility's obligation to serve existing natural gas customers does not address supply constraints or reduce costs. It eliminates customer choice while forcing ratepayers onto alternative resources that, at present, are also experiencing supply constraints and resulting in higher bills.

Finally, allowing the securitization of large, long-term infrastructure investments is not appropriate for an affordability bill responding to a cost crisis. Securitization would add a new layer of costs and interest payments to ratepayer bills without delivering any short-term relief.

We remain committed to working with the Legislature and the conference committee to find real solutions to the energy cost challenges facing our businesses and residents, and we know the conference committee shares this goal. To that end, we strongly encourage you to seek an independent analysis of the costs and savings each bill promises to deliver. Transparent, evidence-based findings would enable the conference committee to make informed decisions and protect ratepayers from initiatives that would increase, rather than decrease, their costs.

As you work to reconcile these two bills, we respectfully urge you to keep affordability at the forefront by preserving every reliable resource in the Commonwealth's energy mix while avoiding policies that would place additional financial burdens on ratepayers.

Thank you for your work on these critical matters and for your consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

Brooke Thomson, President & CEO
Associated Industries of Massachusetts

J.D. Chesloff, President & CEO
Massachusetts Business Roundtable

James Rooney, President & CEO
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce

Doug Howgate, President
Massachusetts Taxpayers Foundation