



Today the Conference Committee on Climate is pleased to issue its report, *An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy (S.2995)*.

State Sen. Mike Barrett and State Rep. Thomas A. Golden, Jr., Conference Co-Chairs:

This bill is a climate toolkit. Reducing emissions to net zero is the contribution Massachusetts must make to the nation's, and the world's, larger climate effort. No question, doing our part is a big lift. With the tools the Legislature brings together here, we can construct the response we need and provide a blueprint to other states. The toolkit approach is not a vision statement. It is not abstract or general. It is detailed. It is concerned with the practical. It focuses relentlessly on the work of reducing greenhouse gases, creating jobs, and protecting the vulnerable. It's about the 'how' of it, as in "Here's how we get this done, one step at a time, starting now."

Excerpt from the joint statement of Sen. Mike Barrett and Rep. Tom Golden, Senate and House Chairs, respectively, of the Conference Committee on Climate of the Massachusetts General Court, Jan, 3, 2021.

The bill recommended by the conference committee --

- Keeps our attention riveted on the climate, by setting **statewide emissions limits every five years instead of every ten**; compiling "**comprehensive, clear, and specific**" **roadmap plans** for reaching each limit; and producing **regular reports on how well the plans are doing**.
- Drills down from the general to the specific, by mandating **emissions sublimits for six high-priority sectors of the economy: electric power, transportation, commercial and industrial heating and cooling, residential heating and cooling, industrial processes, and natural gas distribution and service**.
- Writes **environmental justice** into Massachusetts law, defining environmental justice populations and providing new tools and protections for affected neighborhoods.
- **Requires each roadmap plan to improve or mitigate economic, environmental, and public health impacts** on environmental justice populations and low- and moderate-income individuals.

- **Codifies the statewide greenhouse gas limit for 2050 at "net zero" emissions**, provided also that gross emissions must fall at least 85% below 1990 levels. Stipulates that **the statewide emissions limit for 2030 shall be at least 50 per cent below the 1990 level**, and that **the limit for 2040 shall be at least 75 per cent below the 1990 level**.
- **Raises offshore wind** to another level, requiring utilities to purchase an additional 2,400 megawatts of generation. Builds on previous legislation action and increases the state's total authorization to 5,600 megawatts, a substantial portfolio.
- Boosts demand for renewable energy by raising the **Renewable Energy Portfolio Standard (RPS)** by 3% each year for 2025-2029, ensuring that at least 40% of the state's electric power will be renewable by 2030.
- Directs the **Department of Public Utilities (DPU)**, regulator of the state's electric and natural gas utilities, to balance priorities going forward: system safety, system security, reliability, affordability, equity, and, significantly, reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Bolsters the finances of the Mass. Clean Energy Center**, by providing \$12 million in new annual funding for clean energy workforce development for minority-owned and women-owned small businesses, environmental justice communities, and fossil fuel workers.
- Mandates promulgation of a **local option "net zero stretch energy code," including a definition of "net zero building."** Authorizes cities and towns to adopt such a code.
- To get the net zero stretch energy code written, **shifts responsibility for energy code development to the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and away from the Board of Building Regulations and Standards (BBRS).**
- **Adds four new seats to the BBRS**, to help with its other important duties. New seats go to an expert in commercial building energy efficiency, an expert in residential building energy efficiency, an expert in advanced building technology, and the Commissioner of DOER or her designee.
- Instructs EEA to set **explicit emissions reduction goals for each three-year plan formulated by MassSave**, the state's energy efficiency program. At the conclusion of each plan, requires the DPU to report on reductions actually achieved.

- To further align MassSave with climate policy, **requires utilities to include an explicit value for greenhouse gas reductions** when they calculate the cost-effectiveness of a MassSave offering.
- To aid in achieving limits and sublimits, sets **numerical benchmarks for adoption of electric vehicles, charging stations, solar technology, energy storage, heat pumps, anaerobic digestors, and other breakthrough solutions.**
- **Updates solar policy and advances solar equity:**
 - ✓ Loosens net metering caps by ending "load zone" restrictions, allowing an owner of a new solar facility to award duly-earned solar credits to customers of a given utility "regardless of which ISO-NE load zone the customers are located in....";
 - ✓ Mandates the DOER to prioritize low-income communities in the SMART solar program and in the design and operation of any other "new solar incentive program" created under the same legislative authorization;
 - ✓ Further increases opportunities for low-income individuals to participate in SMART and other future solar initiatives by allowing them to enroll without signing complicated contracts;
 - ✓ Establishes a new solar energy grant program for nonprofits that address food insecurity, homelessness, the need for emergency shelter, and other needs;
 - ✓ Writes into law a long-awaited compromise between local tax assessors and developers on the tax status of clean energy installations;
 - ✓ Closes a gap in the net metering law to enable small municipal buildings to host rooftop solar;
 - ✓ Exempts businesses and other large customers from the solar net metering cap to allow them to install solar systems larger than 25 kilowatts on their premises, to help them offset their electricity use and save money; and
 - ✓ Allows utilities to own solar projects if they're located on utility-owned land within a municipality that gives its approval and is at high risk from the effects of climate change. Gives preference to municipalities with environmental justice populations. Requires utilities to conduct outreach efforts in municipalities with such populations.
- **Gives a boost to hydrogen power** by exempting fuel cell systems from local property taxes.
- **Enriches state climate policy by promoting and protecting "natural and working lands," sources of carbon sequestration.**

- Creates a first-time greenhouse gas emissions standard for municipal lighting plants, requiring them to purchase 50% non-emitting electricity by 2030 and get to “net zero” emissions by 2050. **Imposes a moratorium on wood-to-energy facilities of the kind contemplated in Springfield, MA, preventing them from qualifying as “non-carbon emitting” resources for five years.** Directs EEA to conduct a new study of the impact of biomass on greenhouse gas emissions and public health.
- **Nudges natural gas utilities to get into new lines of work**, by authorizing them to pilot "renewable thermal energy sources, systems or technologies capable of substituting for fossil-fueled natural gas" -- geothermal heating and cooling on a district-wide scale.
- To help drive down emissions from common household and commercial appliances, **sets Massachusetts appliance efficiency standards according to California precedents and future federal standards.**
- **Addresses natural gas safety:**
 - ✓ Requires the DPU to issue new regulations relative to training and certifying utility contractors;
 - ✓ Instructs the DPU to set standards for maintaining gas distribution maps and records;
 - ✓ Directs gas companies to report "disruptions in the provision of electronic data" as a service quality metric;
 - ✓ Extends whistleblower protection to utility employees who report violations of law by their employers;
 - ✓ Increases the penalties for failure to restore service after emergencies;
 - ✓ Raises the cap on civil penalties for gas pipeline safety violations, allowing for fines in excess of those set by federal law;
 - ✓ Requires all written complaints regarding gas service to be investigated and responded to in a timely manner, and directs the DPU to establish a publicly-accessible database of such complaints; and
 - ✓ Strengthens gas company plans to address aging and leaking infrastructure, by setting interim targets for reducing gas leak rates and authorizing the DPU to levy fines for non-compliance.

- **Mandates transparency with respect to the inputs, outputs, assumptions, and modeling involved in the formulation of state climate policy.**

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