

**** new additions since 12/8 bolded below**

VIA EMAIL

December 18, 2020

The Honorable Michael J. Barrett
Senate Chair, Telecommunications, Utilities &
Energy Committee

The Honorable Thomas A. Golden, Jr.
House Chair, Telecommunications, Utilities &
Energy Committee

The Honorable Cynthia Stone Creem
Majority Leader

The Honorable Patricia Haddad
Speaker Pro Tem

The Honorable Patrick M. O'Connor
Senate Minority Whip

The Honorable Bradley H. Jones, Jr.
House Minority Leader

Re: Letter of Support for Environmental Justice in Final Climate Bill

Dear Esteemed Conferees:

The undersigned -- representing business, clean energy companies, environmental organizations, labor, health care, and consumer advocates -- write to express strong support for the environmental justice language in H.4933. We join a chorus of Massachusetts stakeholders, including [major employers and businesses with significant operations in the Commonwealth](#), who previously conveyed similar support.

Additionally, we support removing barriers to solar for low income customers (Section 20K of H.4933) and creating a mechanism to ensure low income customers can benefit from solar savings without being locked into contracts (Section 20K(iii)).

As you work to reconcile important climate legislation before the end of this session, we urge you to include environmental justice provisions in the final bill.

The imperative to anchor climate action in racial justice is no longer a question. This year, the [American Public Health Association declared racism a public health crisis](#). Additionally, there is increasing [recognition of the devastation of climate change on public health](#). In 2020, the convergence of COVID-19, climate change, and racial injustice has made the connection between racial justice and public and environmental health even more pronounced.

Burning of fossil fuels causes climate change and air pollution that has exacerbated the effects of the virus. An [analysis](#) from the Office of Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey

underscores that the devastation wrought by these crises has not been experienced equally because both the pandemic and pollution disproportionately affect people of color and low-income communities in the Commonwealth.

The environmental justice provisions currently before your committee mark an important, and long overdue, first step in acknowledging that environmental justice populations experience disproportionate impacts of pollution and climate change *and* are often excluded from adequate participation in environmental decision-making.

Everyone deserves equal protection against harm caused by environmental pollution. Low-income Bay Staters, as well as Massachusetts residents of color and people with limited English proficiency, many of whom suffer economic, health, and environmental inequities, are not only more likely to live in communities polluted by fossil fuels or where toxic facilities are sited, but are also most vulnerable to extreme weather events and the effects of climate change.

The environmental justice provisions under consideration will remedy longstanding environmental inequities by:

- (1) Codifying a definition of “environmental justice population” in state law that includes race, income, and English language proficiency;
- (2) Enhancing reviews for projects proposed in EJ populations so that they include consideration of potential public health impacts and long-term harms; and
- (3) Ensuring that residents have reasonable access and information to meaningfully engage in the public processes concerning projects in their neighborhoods.

Environmental justice protections must be codified in statute to ensure that *all* populations benefit from the transition to a clean economy and that we work to correct the disproportionate impacts of climate change. The environmental justice provisions in H.4933 will ensure that resources meant to address environmental injustice in the Commonwealth are targeted to the communities most in need.

Environmental justice is essential to any long-term climate strategy intended to establish and achieve an equitable path to net zero emissions. We cannot let this moment pass without setting Massachusetts on course to rise to this challenge. We urge you to include environmental justice in the climate bill that this committee will release.

Sincerely,

[Signatories on the following page]

Rick Dimino, A Better City
Claire Cooper, ABL
Deborah Donovan, Acadia Center
Mike Mattera, Akamai Technologies
Heather Clish, Appalachian Mountain Club
Allison Rose, Autodesk
Krina Patel, Biogen
DeWitt Jones, BlueHub Energy
Alli Gold Roberts, Ceres
Kevin Miller, ChargePoint
Peter Smith, Citizens Energy Corporation
Daniel Goldman, Clean Energy Ventures
Tim Cronin, Climate Action Business Council
Caitlin Peale Sloan, Conservation Law Foundation
Hugh Welsh, DSM North America
Sarah Simon, E2 - New England
Stephen Cowell, E4TheFuture
Bob Rivers, Eastern Bank
Susan Lemont, Extinction Rebellion, Boston
Kai Salem, Green Energy Consumers Alliance
Emily Reichert, Greentown Labs
Eugenia T. Gibbons, Health Care Without Harm
Mike Cusher, Mass Audubon
Mark Sandeen, MassSolar
Sarah Dooling, MCAN
Patrick Herron, Mystic River Watershed Association
Andrea Nyamekye, Neighbor to Neighbor MA
Zaid Ashai, Nexamp
Jeremy McDiarmid, Northeast Clean Energy Council (NECEC)
Ben Underwood, Resonant Energy
Deb Pasternak, Sierra Club Massachusetts
Mark Sylvia, Solar Energy Business Association of New England
Gail Sullivan, Studio G Architects
Jonathan Abe, Sunwealth
Steve Long, The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts
Tedd Saunders, The Saunders Hotel Group
Linda Orel, The Trustees of Reservations
Jonas Kron, Trillium Asset Management
Paula Garcia, Union of Concerned Scientists
Andrew McGeorge, Unitarian Universalist Association
Stephen Roundtree, Jr., Vote Solar