

April 25, 2011

To: The Honorable Robert DeLeo, Speaker of the House  
The Honorable Brian Dempsey, Chair, House Ways & Means  
The Honorable John Keenan, Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications,  
Utilities and Energy

Cc: The Honorable Ben Downing, Chair, Joint Committee on Telecommunications,  
Utilities and Energy

The New England Clean Energy Council is writing to express its concerns regarding several energy-related budget amendments proposed by Representative Keenan. Massachusetts continues to be a global leader in the growing clean energy industry due in large part to forward-thinking policies. The Commonwealth's innovative energy policies and support for the clean energy sector have already attracted new and growing businesses, millions of investment dollars, and thousands of jobs to Massachusetts – all during the worst recession in our lifetimes. If adopted, Representative Keenan's amendments would undermine the Commonwealth's emerging clean energy sector by prioritizing fossil fuels and taking a short-term view of energy costs. **The New England Clean Energy Council urges the House not to adopt these amendments.**

Specifically, Amendments #594 and #623 would significantly damage our ability to develop cleaner energy resources. If adopted, Amendment #594 would handcuff utilities' ability to develop transmission lines for renewable and other cleaner generation options by imposing with a mandate to prioritize existing generation facilities, no matter how dirty or outmoded. Decisions on transmission and generation resources such as these should be left where they are now – with the DPU, which ensures public oversight and involvement, and the market. Likewise, Amendment #623 takes a dangerously shortsighted approach to renewable energy development by prioritizing those resources that are lowest cost over just a short three-year period. This requirement would disadvantage technologies like wind and solar, which have significant up-front costs but harness free sources of energy, making them competitive over time. The proposed amendment could doom renewable energy projects that would serve the state and the region for many years to come.

In addition, Amendment #640 would mandate the development of one specific renewable energy resource – hydropower – by requiring a minimum amount of spending on that technology. Currently, hydropower is supported through programs of the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center in appropriate balance with support for solar, wind, and other clean energy sources. That balance should not be upset by a budgetary mandate.

Less than three years ago the Legislature and the Governor established a comprehensive energy policy prioritizing energy efficiency and renewable energy development through the Green Communities Act. The standards and requirements set by the Green Communities Act and implemented by the DPU are already bearing fruit in energy efficiency savings for consumers, businesses, and municipalities as well as robust development of renewable energy resources like solar and wind power. The economic benefits can be seen as well in private investment, company formation, and job growth. Now is no time to upset this energy policy framework or to send a signal to a new, growing industry that Massachusetts's commitment to clean energy is uncertain. The New England Clean Energy Council urges the House to stay the course to continue to guide the Commonwealth toward a future of clean energy and economic vitality.

Sincerely,



Peter Rothstein  
President  
New England Clean Energy Council