



CITY OF MELROSE

OFFICE OF PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

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October 13, 2021

Patrick Woodcock, Commissioner
Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1020
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Commissioner Woodcock and Members of the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council;

Below is a statement I provided during the public comment session today prior to the EEAC meeting regarding the draft 2022 – 2024 Three Year Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Plan.

My name is Martha Grover and I'm the Sustainability Manager for the City of Melrose. I've been at this for about ten years and I've come to believe that municipalities are your boots on the ground in the state's effort to reduce emissions over the next 28 years. That's because we have our own buildings and fleets to transition and because we are major influencers with residents and businesses in our communities. Many of us have set ambitious net zero goals and we depend heavily on MassSave to provide us with the tools and financial incentives to make our goals a reality for both the residential and commercial sectors.

I applaud the PAs for making a significant pivot from April to now to draft a plan that is more in line with the Next Gen Roadmap. It gives me hope that the pieces might finally be coming together to assist us with our work. **So here are four ways I think the plan could be even better:**

First, cities need help reaching renters, landlords, and property managers of multi-family buildings to participate in whole-building insulation and electrification. The Plan is light on details but our experience over the last two years working with a few dozen condo owners and a cooperative property manager to access MassSave incentives to convert to heat pumps was far too complicated than it needed to be. We want to do more to reach the 30% of residents who rent in Melrose and we're ready to go if there's a solid program in place.

Second, we need to make gas to heat pump conversions pencil out for homeowners and incentivize conversions from gas at the end of their furnace's life, eliminating any incentives for new fossil fuel heating equipment. And it would be great to know which homes are still on oil and which ones converted to gas so we can target outreach.

Third, Community Partnerships are really important. Melrose participated in 2016 and used some of the funds we earned to write our Net Zero Action Plan. For the huge task ahead of us to electrify about 400 houses a year we need to deploy well-trained energy coaches because every property owner starts from a different place. From our experience running very successful Solarize, home and small business energy, and HeatSmart campaigns, I know that these

conversations and projects are complicated and require ongoing hand-holding. **MassSave partnerships should include training and funding for energy coaches who are located in city and town halls, senior centers, and other organizations where residents seek assistance.**

Finally, as so many of us are Green Communities, we've picked a lot of the low-hanging energy efficiency fruit and we're now left with a **municipal building stock of mid-20th century brick buildings with steam boilers** as big as a locomotive and no funds to replace buildings let alone electrify them anytime soon. **Cities and towns are unique in this respect compared to other C&I customers.** I'd love to see a program geared to municipalities who juggle many and often conflicting funding sources that currently don't allow a comprehensive approach to electrification. **Some pilot municipal VRF projects could really get the ball rolling.**

Thank you.

Sincerely,



Martha S. Grover
Sustainability Manager