

Dear Energy Efficiency Advisory Council,

I already had concerns about the current 3-year energy plan for our Massachusetts Commonwealth, but the public hearing on 6/15/21 made my fears and concerns much worse.

I echo the words of Senator Barrett and Mike Dyer, a leader at 350 MA, who noted that due to the monumental shift in energy policy given the passage of the Roadmap Climate Bill on 3/26/21, there needs to be an overhaul of this plan.

Given that the new Climate Roadmap Law is legally binding as of this past week, June 25, 2021, we must have a governmental plan that will lead us to net zero emissions.

Our energy goals and benchmarks must be more holistic and comprehensive. Home energy and efficiency both in terms of heating and cooling are a big part of the problem in MA and we need to be having more frequent and inclusive conversations about how to work together to get everyone's homes, no matter one's life circumstances, retrofitted.

This is not an easy task-- even the wealthiest of areas will have trouble with getting wide participation on home renovations-- which is why we need strong leadership to guide us to getting everyone the help and information they need to make the adjustments to their own homes.

We especially need more productive conversations around how to reach low income, non-native English speakers. I have experience working with recent immigrants teaching English and they often have so much going on in their own lives they cannot think about their home energy efficiency.

This is where we need more creativity and collaboration. Can we partner with volunteer ESL organizations like the one I volunteered in before-- Jewish Vocational Services? Can we build more formal partnerships with environmental nonprofits to funnel talented and energetic people into jobs for Commonwealth clean energy programs?

How can we best help and reach these underserved populations?

Also, how can we boost the clean energy economy?

We need to work more closely with heat pump technology companies and installers because they are key in the transition to a clean energy economy and without a partnership akin to the one the Baker administration currently has to the gas companies and gas industry, we cannot successfully and swiftly switch to renewables.

Gas will eventually be a fuel of the past. The swifter we make the transition the better, safer, and more prosperous the entire Commonwealth will be. The longer we drag it out, the more we are just postponing what needs to happen to ensure we have a livable state.

We should not be disbanding the Clean Energy Center's Mass Heatsmart rebate program in 2022, but rather should make it more effective and more robust than it already is and expand it in 2022.

I look forward to staying engaged and being involved in improving our 3 year Commonwealth plan so that it accurately takes into account the shift we are going through in MA.

Best,
Elizabeth Sockwell