

March 17, 2014

Representative John Keenan, House Chair  
Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy  
State House, Room 473-B  
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Benjamin Downing, Senate Chair  
Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy  
State House, Room 413-F  
Boston, MA 02133

**Re:** HB 2935, *An Act to Transition to a Clean Energy Commonwealth*

Dear Chairman Keenan and Chairman Downing:

As coal plants move toward closure in Massachusetts and nationwide, it is time for the legislature to act quickly and decisively to protect communities and workers adversely impacted by coal plant retirements. We urge you to stand up for local and regional economies, workers, public health, clean air, and clean water by supporting *An Act to Transition to a Clean Energy Commonwealth (H.2935)*. H.2935 would responsibly move Massachusetts away from coal-fired power generation by 2020 while establishing a community transition fund to provide support for displaced workers and municipal revenues.

The need for action on this front could not be more urgent. The remaining three Massachusetts plants currently burning coal have announced plans for either closure or de-listing from the power grid by 2017. These plants are hurting our state economically, and costing individuals, families, and the Commonwealth through days lost at work, health damages, and premature mortality. The health costs triggered by pollution from Brayton Point alone, which plans to operate until 2017, are estimated to be \$120.5 to \$294.5 million annually.

Burning coal poses a great threat to both human health and the environment. Nationally, coal is responsible for one third of U.S. carbon emissions and is the main contributor to climate disruption, which contributes to water and food insecurity, droughts, wildfires, and rising sea levels. This costs Americans over \$140 billion annually, with each family's share over \$1,000 per year.<sup>1</sup> Locally, the Clean Air Task Force estimates there are 215 premature deaths and more than 5,000 public health incidents from coal plants in Massachusetts every year.<sup>2</sup> The asthma rate in communities with coal plants is measurably elevated and is one of the leading causes for missed school days, including in Holyoke, where the asthma rate is twice the state average.

As plants retire, they often strand communities and workers in the process. We need a smart transition plan that ensures a responsible retirement of coal-fired electricity generation

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<sup>1</sup> NRDC: High Cost of Doing Nothing <http://www.nrdc.org/globalwarming/climate-disruption-tax.asp>

<sup>2</sup> Clean Air Task Force: Death and Disease From Coal  
[http://www.catf.us/fossil/problems/power\\_plants/existing/map.php?state=Massachusetts](http://www.catf.us/fossil/problems/power_plants/existing/map.php?state=Massachusetts)

and integrates cleaner and safer alternatives while taking into account the needs of workers and local economies. An Act to Transition to a Clean Energy Commonwealth creates such a plan by providing a comprehensive solution to protect the fiscal and physical health of communities across Massachusetts, particularly coal plant communities and neighboring regions. We urge you to report H.2935 favorably from committee.

Sincerely,

Representative Denise Andrews, 2<sup>nd</sup> Franklin  
Representative Cory Atkins, 14<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Ruth Balsler, 12<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative John Binienda, 17<sup>th</sup> Worcester  
Representative Marjorie Decker, 25<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Lori Ehrlich, 8<sup>th</sup> Essex  
Representative Christopher Fallon, 33<sup>rd</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Tricia Farley-Bouvier, 3<sup>rd</sup> Berkshire  
Representative Sean Garballey, 23<sup>rd</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Anne Gobi, 5<sup>th</sup> Worcester  
Representative Jonathan Hecht, 29<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Paul Heroux, 2<sup>nd</sup> Bristol  
Representative Louis Kafka, 8<sup>th</sup> Norfolk  
Representative Kay Khan, 11<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Peter Kocot, 1<sup>st</sup> Hampshire  
Representative Stephen Kulik, 1<sup>st</sup> Franklin  
Representative David Linksy, 5<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Jay Livingstone, 8<sup>th</sup> Suffolk  
Representative Timothy Madden, Barnstable, Dukes, & Nantucket  
Representative Liz Malia, 11<sup>th</sup> Suffolk  
Representative Paul Mark, 2<sup>nd</sup> Berkshire  
Representative Elizabeth Poirier, 14<sup>th</sup> Bristol  
Representative Denise Provost, 27<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Dave Rogers, 24<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Byron Rushing, 9<sup>th</sup> Suffolk  
Representative Tom Sannicandro, 7<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Carl Sciortino, 34<sup>th</sup> Middlesex  
Representative Frank Smizik, 15<sup>th</sup> Norfolk  
Representative Aaron Vega, 5<sup>th</sup> Hampden  
Senator Michael Barrett, 3<sup>rd</sup> Middlesex  
Senator William Brownsberger, 2nd Suffolk & Middlesex  
Senator Cynthia Creem, 1<sup>st</sup> Middlesex & Norfolk  
Senator Sal DiDomenico, Middlesex & Suffolk  
Senator James Eldridge, Middlesex & Worcester  
Senator Marc Pacheco, 1<sup>st</sup> Plymouth & Bristol  
Senator Daniel Wolf, Cape & Islands