April 13, 2016

Robert A. DeLeo
Speaker of the House
State House, Room 356
Boston, MA 02133

RE: Protecting Ratepayers and Our Environment

Dear Mr. Speaker,

We are grateful for your commitment to diversifying our energy generation resources, supporting new industry in our region, and moving our state toward meeting its environmental goals. We have an exciting opportunity to replace our aging power generation fleet with renewable energy resources. Not only will doing so bolster our state’s economy by creating thousands of new jobs, but it will also help ensure that Massachusetts transitions to energy resources that are sustainable and aligned with our clean energy future. We look forward to further discussion about those opportunities in the coming weeks.

We write today to express our deep concern about one concept, however, and that is proposed ratepayer financing of gas pipeline infrastructure. We urge you to omit any public support for gas pipeline expansion from omnibus energy legislation.

The proposals to pay for the $5-8 billion cost for new pipelines by assessing a surcharge, tariff or tax on electricity customers are unprecedented. Ordinarily, the natural gas producers would be expected to pay for this infrastructure expansion, if the expected revenue from natural gas sales would justify the cost.¹ The fact that this is not happening means industry players have determined the risk is not worth the reward. Why should the ratepayer shoulder risk when private industry is unwilling to?

Massachusetts is already heavily reliant on gas for electric power generation. Deepening this commitment will create liabilities for Massachusetts ratepayers. In 2014, 59% of our electricity was generated by natural gas and policymakers should be wary of increasing our state’s dependence on a single, imported resource,² particularly since the natural gas market is notoriously volatile. A diversified energy portfolio guards ratepayers against price spikes or fluctuation.

²http://www.eia.gov/state/?sid=MA
Gas pipeline expansion through our region also exposes the public to greater economic risk by enabling gas exports to international markets. A 2015 analysis by the U.S. Department of Energy determined that exposing U.S. customers to a volatile global gas market could raise domestic prices more than 7%.³

Proposed gas pipeline projects impact communities across our state as well as our ability to meet existing legislative mandates. These pipelines would run through private property—diminishing property values—as well as treasured public lands protected by Article 97 of the State Constitution. Moreover, expanding gas pipelines make it impossible for Massachusetts to meet our emissions reductions requirements under the Global Warming Solutions Act.

For all of these reasons, the proposed pipelines have been met with strong opposition from our constituents as well as state and local officials across the Commonwealth. In addition, New England’s bipartisan congressional delegations have also expressed grave concerns about pipeline projects in our region.

We look forward to working with you to support legislation that will create a diversified energy portfolio for our state, and reduce our over-reliance on natural gas. Substantial new pipeline infrastructure is inconsistent with our shared goals. Therefore, we ask you to ensure energy legislation does not commit ratepayers to bearing the cost and risk associated with financing new gas infrastructure. Doing so will create liabilities for the many legislators whose districts are impacted by one or more proposed fossil fuel projects, increase our state’s over-reliance on gas, and saddle ratepayers with significant expenses for years to come. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Stephen Kulik
State Representative
1st Franklin District

Bradley H. Jones, Jr.
State Representative
20th Middlesex District

James Arciero
State Representative
2nd Middlesex District

Bruce Ayers
State Representative
1st Norfolk District

Brian M. Ashe
State Representative
2nd Hampden District

Ruth B. Balser
State Representative
12th Middlesex District

Cory Atkins
State Representative
14th Middlesex District

Christine P. Barber
State Representative
34th Middlesex District

Jennifer E. Benson
State Representative
37th Middlesex District

Donald R. Berthiaume
State Representative
5th Worcester District

Nicholas A. Boldyga
State Representative
3rd Hampden District

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Danielle W. Gregoire  
State Representative  
4th Middlesex District

Mary S. Keefe  
State Representative  
15th Worcester District

Sheila C. Harrington  
State Representative  
1st Middlesex District

James M. Kelcourse  
State Representative  
1st Essex District

Jonathan Hecht  
State Representative  
29th Middlesex District

Kay Khan  
State Representative  
11th Middlesex District

Paula Heroux  
State Representative  
2nd Bristol District

Robert M. Koczera  
State Representative  
11th Bristol District

Bradford R. Hill  
State Representative  
4th Essex District

David Paul Linsky  
State Representative  
5th Middlesex District

Kate Hogan  
State Representative  
3rd Middlesex District

Jay D. Livingstone  
State Representative  
8th Suffolk District

Steven S. Howitt  
State Representative  
4th Bristol District

Marc T. Lombardo  
State Representative  
22nd Middlesex District

Louis L. Kafka  
State Representative  
8th Norfolk District

Jay J. Lyons, Jr.  
State Representative  
18th Essex District

Jay R. Kaufman  
State Representative  
15th Middlesex District

Adrian Madaro  
State Representative  
1st Suffolk District

John J. Mahoney  
State Representative  
13th Worcester District

Elizabeth A. Malia  
State Representative  
11th Suffolk District

Paul W. Mark  
State Representative  
2nd Berkshire District

Paul McMurtry  
State Representative  
11th Norfolk District

James R. Miceli  
State Representative  
19th Middlesex District

Leonard Mirra  
State Representative  
2nd Essex District

Rady Mom  
State Representative  
18th Middlesex District

Frank A. Moran  
State Representative  
17th Essex District

James M. Murphy  
State Representative  
4th Norfolk District
Harold P. Naughton, Jr.
State Representative
12th Worcester District

Shaunna L. O'Connell
State Representative
3rd Bristol District

James J. O'Day
State Representative
14th Worcester District

Keiko M. Orrall
State Representative
12th Bristol District

William Smitty Pignatelli
State Representative
4th Berkshire District

Denise Provost
State Representative
23rd Middlesex District

Angelo J. Puppolo, Jr.
State Representative
12th Hampden District

David M. Rogers
State Representative
24th Middlesex District

John H. Rogers
State Representative
12th Norfolk District

Tom Sannicandro
State Representative
7th Middlesex District

Paul A. Schmid, III
State Representative
8th Bristol District

John W. Scibak
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Frank I. Smizik
State Representative
15th Norfolk District

Todd M. Smola
State Representative
1st Hampden District

Theodore C. Speliotis
State Representative
13th Essex District

Thomas M. Stanley
State Representative
9th Middlesex District

Ellen Story
State Representative
3rd Hampshire District

William M. Straus
State Representative
10th Bristol District

Benjamin Swan
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11th Hampden District

Walter F. Timilty
State Representative
7th Norfolk District

Timothy J. Toomey, Jr.
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26th Middlesex District

Jose F. Tosado
State Representative
9th Hampden District

Paul Tucker
State Representative
7th Essex District

Steven Ultrino
State Representative
33rd Middlesex District

Aaron Vega
State Representative
5th Hampden District

John C. Velis
State Representative
4th Hampden District

Rosalie Vincent
State Representative
16th Suffolk
Chris Walsh
State Representative
6th Middlesex District

Thomas Walsh
State Representative
12th Essex District

Timothy R. Whelan
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1st Barnstable District

Susannah M. whipps Lee
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2nd Franklin District

Donald H. Wong
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