August 31, 2020

The Honorable Michael J. Barrett  
Senate Chair, Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy Committee

The Honorable Thomas A. Golden, Jr.  
House Chair, Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy Committee

The Honorable Cynthia Stone Creem  
Majority Leader

The Honorable Patricia Haddad  
Speaker Pro Tem

The Honorable Patrick M. O’Connor  
Senate Minority Whip

The Honorable Bradley H. Jones, Jr.  
House Minority Leader

Re: Alliance for Clean Energy Solutions Coalition Comments to the Climate Bill Conferees

Dear Chair Barrett, Majority Leader Creem, Minority Whip O’Connor, Chair Golden, Speaker Pro Tem Haddad, and Minority Leader Jones:

Thank you for your collective leadership on climate change and clean energy. Both chambers of the Legislature have passed versions of a Climate Bill that would make meaningful progress in addressing the Commonwealth’s contributions to climate change. We are writing to ask that you take into account the urgency of the climate crisis and promptly deliver an integrated climate bill to the Governor’s desk. Below, we share the ACES Coalition’s support for comprehensive climate legislation, and further comments on specific provisions within the bills.

The undersigned are members of the Alliance for Clean Energy Solutions (ACES), a coalition comprised of business groups, clean energy companies, environmental organizations, labor, health, and consumer advocates who are dedicated to advancing clean energy in the Commonwealth. Each legislative session, we support policy priorities that are critical to the economic, energy and environmental future of the Commonwealth and to ensuring Massachusetts national leadership in the clean energy sector. Our recent focus includes: increasing the state’s renewable portfolio standard, modernizing the electricity grid, and promoting the growth of energy efficiency, solar, and electric vehicles.
The ACES Coalition Urges Passage of a Climate Bill with a Net-zero Emissions Commitment and Environmental Justice Provisions

Net-zero Emissions Commitment (Section 3 of S.2500, Section 6 of H.4933)

We applaud both the Senate and the House for including net-zero by 2050 commitments in both versions of the Climate Bill. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (“IPCC”) makes it clear that, in order to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, we must reach net-zero emissions no later than 2050. Both chambers’ bills recognize that time is of the essence, and the ability for Massachusetts to not only do its part in the fight against climate change, but to be a national and global leader blazing the path for others. We also note that both bills reflect the essential need for near-term, interim emissions reduction targets and timely promulgation of regulations to achieve those targets which should be part of any final bill. We strongly urge the Conference Committee to recognize the urgency of the climate crisis and expeditiously pass a bill with a net-zero by 2050 commitment.

Environmental Justice (Sections 15NN through 15RR of H.4933)

As our society continues to grapple with the CoVid-19 pandemic and systemic racism, we are more fully recognizing that environmental justice communities experience disproportionate impacts of pollution and climate change and often lack resources to adequately participate in environmental decision-making. We support the inclusion of environmental justice provisions because it is essential that frontline communities and low-wage workers benefit from the Commonwealth’s transition to a low-carbon economy. We commend the House for including environmental justice protections in H.4933, and we urge the adoption of edits that ensure consistency with existing state policy—in particular, with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act. The Environmental Justice Legislative Table has detailed these edits. Environmental justice is a necessary piece in our long-term climate strategy.

The ACES Coalition Further Supports the Following Provisions

Building Back Better in Public and Low-Income Housing (Sections 14 and 20K(iii) of H.4933)

The ACES coalition supports this provision that will improve public housing residents and low-income customers’ equitable access to energy efficiency and solar incentives.

Appliance Efficiency Standards (S.2499 and Sections 15L through 15CC of H.4933)

ACES supports updated standards that will allow Massachusetts to continue to lead on energy efficiency and ensure that customers are presented with efficient options when choosing new appliances.

Natural and Working Lands (Sections 1 and 10 of S.2500 and Sections 4A and 10 of H.4933)

We support requiring the Commonwealth to reduce carbon emissions and increase sequestration on our lands by setting a baseline and goal, creating a plan and integrating it into policy.
Net Metering (Section 17 of H.4933)

We support removing the caps on net metering for distributed generation projects that serve on-site load and acknowledge that a number of solar organizations have proposed improvements and recommend the conferees adopt the proposed changes.

Workforce Development (Sections 11 and 12 of H.4933)

The ACES Coalition supports the enhancement of programs at the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) to grow this element of the clean energy workforce. However, we cannot support the diversion of energy efficiency funds to fill funding gaps or pay for new programs.

Net Zero Stretch Building Code Implementation (Sections 30 and 31 of S.2500)

ACES supports the adoption of a net-zero stretch building code in a timely fashion. Giving municipalities the option to opt-in to a net-zero stretch code is essential to promoting the construction of buildings that are designed to assist in the achievement of our climate commitments.

Offshore Wind Procurement (Section 17B of H.4933)

ACES supports this provision in order to maintain our standing among the national leaders in offshore wind, we need to authorize additional offshore wind procurement than is currently contemplated.

The ACES Coalition Opposes the Following Provision

Utility Ownership of Solar (Section 15H of H.4933)

ACES opposes this provision because it is a step backwards for the Commonwealth and introduces an anti-competitive environment that would be harmful both to consumers and to the solar industry.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and for your continued leadership on this critically important issue. We urge expeditious passage of a Climate Bill this year, and ask the Committee to ensure that the ultimate provisions in this bill do no harm towards future decarbonization efforts. The commitments laid forth in a Climate Bill will provide the foundation for future policies and legislation that will be needed to achieve the commitments, and we look forward to continuing to work with the General Assembly.

Signatories on the following page
Sincerely,

Deborah Donovan  
Acadia Center (ACES Co-Chair)

Jeremy McDiarmid  
Northeast Clean Energy Council (ACES Co-Chair)

Rick Dimino  
A Better City

Stephen Conant  
Anbaric

DeWitt Jones  
BlueHub Energy

Meredith Elbaum  
Built Environment Plus

John Carlson  
Ceres

Kevin George Miller  
ChargePoint

Sarah Simon  
E2 New England

Stephen Cowell  
E4TheFuture

Eugenia Gibbons  
Health Care Without Harm

Heidi Ricci  
Mass Audubon

Sarah Dooling  
Massachusetts Climate Action Network

Deb Pasternak  
Sierra Club Massachusetts Chapter

Robin Dutta  
SunPower

Steve Long  
The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts

Paula García  
Union of Concerned Scientists

Stephan Roundtree, Jr.  
Vote Solar

cc: The Honorable Karen Spilka, Senate President  
The Honorable Robert Deleo, Speaker of the House