



Climate Scorecard: Commonwealth Failing to Meet Targets *Massachusetts Behind on GWSA Pollution Requirements*

BOSTON — The Commonwealth is continuing to fall short of meeting critical 2020 clean energy goals, according to the Global Warming Solutions Project’s latest Clean Energy and Climate Scorecard. The report found the Commonwealth will fall short of the 25 percent pollution reduction statutorily required under the Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA).

Passed in 2008, the GWSA represents commitments the Commonwealth made to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels, curbing pollution and the effects of climate change to protect Massachusetts residents. This is the second Climate Scorecard by the Global Warming Solutions Project, an interdisciplinary coalition tracking climate action. The first Scorecard issued in 2014, focused on the final year of the Patrick administration and found we would miss the 25% reduction target, reaching only 20% by 2020. This second Scorecard, focused on the first year of the Baker administration suggests we have still not closed the gap.

The Scorecard indicates limited and competing concerns. While both the Patrick and Baker administrations have pursued Canadian hydro to close the gap, this importation remains speculative. In addition, efforts to expand solar capacity and off-shore wind are opposed by the utilities and remain stalled in the legislature. According to the report, all of these new, clean energy sources need to be pursued, not only to meet our 2020 statutory obligations, but also to meet our 2050 requirements of an 80% pollution reduction. The report includes 10 policy recommendations that the administration can take this year to close the gap in emissions reduction and maintain Massachusetts’ leadership on climate change and clean energy.

In direct conflict with these pollution reduction goals is the imminent closing of the Pilgrim nuclear power plant, and potential increase of additional fossil fuels via new, massive natural gas pipelines. This would increase the Commonwealth’s reliance on natural gas from roughly 55% to 70%, ultimately increasing our greenhouse gas emissions.

“We need a change in strategy, and quick,” said Josh Craft, Project Director for the Environmental League of Mass. (ELM). ELM coordinates the Global Warming Solutions Project. “Hydropower alone and expanded gas pipelines will not get us to our goals. In fact, gas pipeline expansion will take us backward. That’s why we’ve continued to push for a diversified energy portfolio – with more hydropower, more offshore wind and more solar. We need action from the Governor and the Legislature.”

While the Commonwealth continues to do well in categories such as energy efficiency, the commitment to renewable energy continues to rely too heavily on Canadian hydropower alone to close the gap.

The House and Senate must come together and pass a comprehensive energy bill this session that includes reasonable incentives for hydro, solar, off-shore and on-shore wind. “The Governor earlier indicated support for a so-called energy ‘combo platter’ “. ELM President George Bachrach noted. “We need to make that happen.”

The Global Warming Solutions Project (GWSP) is a multi-year initiative supporting a network of diverse stakeholders, each wanting to help the Commonwealth honor its climate commitments by meeting the greenhouse gas reductions mandated by the Global Warming Solutions Act. Each year, the GWSP releases its Energy and Climate Scorecard, an analysis of current efforts within the Commonwealth and recommendations for the Legislature and Governor’s Administration to advance climate leadership and to promote our economy.

For more information about the 2016 Clean Energy and Climate Scorecard, please contact Josh Craft at jcraft@environmentalleague.org or 617-742-2553.

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