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To the editor:

On June 8 the Massachusetts House passed a bill for a clean energy future. It's a good start but falls short in some key areas. I would like to see the Senate step forward with some changes.

The House bill requires that Massachusetts create 1200 megawatts (MW) of offshore wind energy. Again, a good start but this falls short of the magic number of 2000 MW when wind energy becomes cost efficient for consumers.

1200 MW of hydropower were also allocated for in the bill. Although this sounds good it could lock Massachusetts consumers into long term contracts with Hydro-Québec with negative consequences. The drawbacks of hydropower include environmental displacement, high costs, risks of flooding and construction of major new transmission lines. It is important that the Senate understand these risks and demand more reliable, sustainable and local sources of energy such as wind and solar power. We still have unused local capacity.

A significant positive amendment to the bill requires companies to repair gas leaks when doing construction. This is a huge step in curbing some of the hazards of natural gas.

The bill includes some important steps but I would like to see the clean energy champions in the Senate produce a bill that would be a stronger environmental plan for the future.

- Elizabeth Davey