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BROOKLINE

On May 17, 2016 the Massachusetts' Supreme Judicial Court ruled that Massachusetts' 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act requires annual limits on the tons of greenhouse gases emitted by the commonwealth. Put plainly: Massachusetts law requires that we make clear progress each year towards reducing our greenhouse gas pollution in accordance with the schedule described in the GWSA. The question is therefore not if or when we reduce our carbon emissions, but how.

The Massachusetts House of Representatives and Senate have each passed energy bills that are now in conference, in order to produce a compromise bill. Both House and Senate bills (H.4385 and S.2372) improve requirements for fixing gas leaks, and both call for increasing the amount of clean energy in the Massachusetts electricity mix. There are a few key differences in the bills that are worth considering within the context of the SJC's recent GWSA decision.

1. The House bill is silent on allowing Eversource, National Grid, and Unitil to bill electric customers for the construction of a new gas pipeline, something never before done in America. The Senate bill, on the other hand, explicitly precludes this arrangement. Attorney General Maura Healey's office commissioned a study that showed clean energy resources make the gas pipeline projects unnecessary. It goes without saying that burning more natural gas directly conflicts with reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
2. The House bill calls for 1,200 megawatts of offshore wind; the Senate bill calls for 2,000 megawatts. The extra turbines in the Senate bill would result in approximately 1,000 more one-year construction jobs and 300 more ongoing jobs operating, maintaining, and building parts for the offshore wind turbines. Those extra Senate bill turbines would also provide enough additional renewable energy to supply a half-million more homes in Massachusetts than the House bill turbines.
3. To comply with the GWSA requirements, Massachusetts needs to substantially increase its pace in rolling out wind, solar and other green electricity generation. The Senate bill calls for doing exactly that by doubling the state's renewable portfolio standard. The House bill doesn't include this language, and neither bill eliminates the loophole allowing municipal electric utilities to skirt the RPS requirements.
4. Both bills call for importing additional hydroelectricity or a hydro/wind/solar electric mix, but the Senate calls for a bigger procurement than the House, and is more flexible in what

clean resources are permitted. The Senate bill would supply emissions-free electricity to 375,000 more homes than the House bill would.

Both the House and the Senate bills will result in less greenhouse gas pollution, a reduction that has widespread support in Massachusetts. However, the House bill emissions reductions aren't enough to fully comply with the GWSA's long term emission target. If the Senate provisions listed above don't survive the conference committee, the end result will fall short of the reductions we must make in Massachusetts.

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