



The F.U.T.U.R.E. Act (H.2849/S.1940)

An Act For a Utility Transition to Using Renewable Energy

Senator Cynthia Creem

Rep. Lori Ehrlich & Rep. Christina Minicucci

CREATING A PATH TO THE FUTURE WE WANT

Massachusetts is a national leader in responding to climate change, currently committed to an 80% reduction in emissions by 2050.¹ Our electric utilities have been moving toward this goal for decades, increasing their purchase of local, clean renewable energy every year. This transition has resulted in 11,500 new jobs and more than \$5 billion in new investment in the Commonwealth's economy.² Our gas utilities and workers have been left out of this transition. No more.

The FUTURE Act maps a path to a safer renewable energy future, addresses the safety challenges of the current, neglected gas system, and addresses changes needed for the Department of Public Utilities.

WHERE WE ARE NOW:

- We saw the gas system collapse, igniting fires in the Merrimack Valley in September 2018.
- MA utilities reported 27,731 gas leaks in 2017, with 15,829 of the leaks unrepaired at year's end.
- We know gas system leaks are accelerating climate change much faster than previously estimated.
- It will take decades to replace all the leaky gas pipes under our streets.
- Replacing gas pipes will cost gas customers over \$9 billion for pipes that will be outdated by 2050.

WHAT IS NEEDED:

1. We need to keep our communities safe now.
2. We need to invest in modern renewable energy infrastructure for this century, not last century.
3. We need to ensure the public and our communities have a voice in planning our future.

WHAT IS POSSIBLE:

Renewable thermal technology is ready now to provide safe, clean and affordable home heating. It will keep money in our local economy and provide good jobs through heat pumps, thermal storage, solar thermal and heat delivered through modern district energy systems.³

IMPORTANT BENEFITS:

- **Jobs:** Creates green jobs that are easily transferable to existing pipeline workers.
- **Equity:** Provides utility-scale renewable heat which gives equal access to clean, non-explosive energy to all.
- **Resilience:** Balances energy sources in MA and cuts electric system peaks. In addition, pipes are secure underground and therefore reliable during extreme weather events such as storms and floods.

¹ We support the bills asking the Commonwealth to continue to lead the nation by aiming for 100% reduction by 2050 (from 1990 levels).

² Solar Energy Industries Association, <https://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/massachusetts-solar>.

³ District Energy distributes thermal energy to buildings through underground pipes. It is used on the Harvard & MIT campuses, as well as in cities such as Stockholm and Paris, and in countries such as Denmark.

HOW THE FUTURE ACT

➤ **WORKS TO KEEP OUR COMMUNITIES SAFE NOW**

- Improves coordination for gas leak repair between gas companies and cities or towns.
- Prevents paving over gas shutoff valves, so gas can be quickly shut off in emergencies.
- Mandates that gas leaks within the root zone of a tree, within 10 feet of a building, or within 150 feet of a school zone be fixed within 6 months.
- Makes gas companies notify the local fire chief within an hour of finding a dangerous leak.
- Requires that gas companies be audited annually for safety, performance, and leak reports.

➤ **CREATES A GAS SYSTEM PATH TO TRANSITION TO RENEWABLE ENERGY**

- Allows gas companies to pipe renewable thermal energy to our homes, not just gas.
- Allows gas companies to replace leaky gas pipes with modern renewable thermal pipes.
- Includes a small fee, matching that on electric bills, to fund renewable energy projects.
- Requires gas companies to add more renewable thermal energy each year, moving our gas system and its workers towards a modern energy system with good, safe jobs.
- Ensures that new fossil fuel infrastructure can't be billed to ratepayers past 2050.

➤ **REFORMS OUR DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES (DPU)**

- Gives a voice and power to towns, legislators, and gas customers at the DPU.
- Requires that the Governor consult with the Attorney General on DPU appointees.
- Allows people and towns to claim property damage from gas leaks, including for trees.
- Improves transparency by sharing maps, costs, and plans with towns and the public.

If gas is a bridge fuel, we are at the end of the bridge, and the FUTURE is now.

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⁴ GAS LEAKS ALLIES: Arise for Social Justice, Boston Climate Action Network, Boston Park Advocates, Brookline GreenSpace Alliance, Clean Water Action, Climate Action Now–Western Mass., Climate Reality Project – MA Chapter, Community Labor United, Conservation Law Foundation, Consumers for Sensible Energy, Emerald Necklace Conservancy, Friends of the Public Garden, Garden Club of the Back Bay, Gas Safety Inc., Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility, Green Committee-Neighborhood Association of Back Bay, HEET, Longmeadow Pipeline Awareness Group, Dr. Margaret Cherne-Hendrick of Fresh Energy, Mothers Out Front, Prof. Nathan Phillips of Boston University, SAFE-Salem Alliance for the Environment, Sierra Club-MA Chapter, Springfield Climate Justice Coalition, Toxics Action Center, 2degreesatgreenneighbors.earth, 350MA