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December 14, 2023

Jason Marshall, Co-Chair  
James M. Van Nostrand, Co-Chair  
Clean Energy Transmission Working Group

Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: Clean Energy Transmission Working Group Draft Report

Dear Co-Chairs Marshall and Van Nostrand,

The Berkshire Regional Planning Commission (or “BRPC”) is pleased to submit comments on the Clean Energy Transmission Working Group (or “CETWG”) Report. BRPC applauds efforts made by the Commonwealth to plan for the modernization transmission and distribution of electricity, especially given grid capacity constraints in the Berkshires. The following are comments prepared in response to the draft report:

***Transmission and Distribution Planning, Siting, and Permitting***

- BRPC supports utilizing existing utility corridors and opportunities for upgrading existing lines wherever practical. Regardless of location BRPC requests that municipalities be notified of proposals and the provision of a local hearing to allow for constructive feedback. Local municipalities find that the public hearings for utility pole placement within locally controlled right-of-way often identify common-sense solutions that often benefit property owners and that can be easily overlooked when the opportunity for local feedback is not provided.

***Workforce Development***

- BRPC supports building capacity of educational institutions in the Commonwealth for training and educating the workforce needed to implement the goals of the report and wishes to acknowledge the potential for our local community colleges to provide support for these efforts as well. BRPC also wishes to highlight that the work outlined in this report will require linesmen and other trades that our technical high schools, trade schools, and community colleges are well positioned to provide support. Lastly, BRPC wants to ensure adequate financial commitments to all tiers of educational institutions that will be needed in order to implement short- and long-term planning.

BRPC wishes to conclude that acknowledging the necessity of additional networks and capacity also requires acknowledging the need to provide a voice for residents throughout the Commonwealth, especially environmental justice and rural communities. To accomplish this goal, BRPC recommends the inclusion of representatives of organizations such as the Rural Policy Advisory Committee, the Massachusetts Municipal Association, the Massachusetts

Select Board Association, and/or the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies.

These comments were approved by the BRPC Regional Issues Committee at its meeting on December 13, 2023. Thank you for the opportunity to review and provide comments on the CETWG Report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Thomas Matuszko".

Thomas Matuszko, AICP  
Executive Director

Cc: Senator Paul W. Mark, Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin, and Hampshire District  
Representative Smitty Pignatelli, 3<sup>rd</sup> Berkshire District  
Representative Tricia Farley Bouvier, 2<sup>nd</sup> Berkshire District  
Representative John Barrett, 1<sup>st</sup> Berkshire District