

March 18, 2022
Department of Energy Resources (DOER)
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1020
Boston, MA 02114
Attention: Nina Mascarenhas

Re: **Stretch Code Straw Proposal Comments**

Dear Commissioner Woodcock, Director McCarey, Msrs. Finlayson and Ormond,

"When you find yourself in a hole--stop digging."

In light of the urgent need to decarbonize our society, the lack of an option for communities to ban fossil fuel infrastructure in new construction is a major obstacle in achieving the emission reductions required by Climate Roadmap legislation. **An "Opt-In Net Zero Code" should be just that! No fossil fuels.**

Any construction heated by natural gas or oil will create climate-warming emissions for decades, and we can't afford this. We no longer have the certainty of hydropower from Canada, and TCI is scaled way back, so we must rely much more on reductions in the built environment to decarbonize.

I am very concerned that the straw proposal would only avoid *half* of the emissions the Clean Energy and Climate Plan assumed from buildings. Where will the rest come from? One possibility is to **include major renovations in your plan**. In Lexington this type of renovation is common.

In my town, Lexington, 60% of our emissions is from buildings. And new construction is booming. **We need the option to build fossil-free ASAP.** Our community is ready, as several Town Meeting votes have shown and we have a home rule petition that is being considered in TUE right now.

In addition, **your decision has moral implications**. What we decide in Massachusetts has ripple effects in environmental justice communities around the globe. As Pope Francis states in his letter to the world, *Laudato Si'*: On Care for our Common Home, "There is an urgent need to develop policies so that... the emission of carbon dioxide and other highly polluting gases can be drastically reduced, for example, substituting for fossil fuels and developing sources of renewable energy. (26) Reducing greenhouse gases requires honesty, courage and responsibility, above all on the part

of those countries which are more powerful and pollute the most." Let's approach our new building code with honesty, courage and responsibility.

You have a golden opportunity to rapidly move Massachusetts in the direction of a clean energy future by taking a firm stand on providing an option for towns that want to eliminate fossil-fueled buildings in new construction, and in major renovations.

The IPCC report warns us of a RED ALERT and that the window of opportunity to keep warming to 1.5°C is CLOSING rapidly. Seize this chance to make Massachusetts a leader in climate mitigation.

Fran Ludwig
Lexington MA

Chair, Boston Catholic Climate Movement