



Contact:

Rebecca Morris
Director of Communications
MA Campaign for a Clean Energy Future
Ph: (617) 513-1080
rmorris@rebeccamorris.org

Cindy Luppi, Coordinator
MA Campaign for a Clean Energy Future
Ph: (617) 338-8131, x208
cluppi@cleanwater.org

Carbon Pricing Coalition Praises House Majority Co-Sponsoring Bill to Put a Price on Carbon Pollution

Boston, MA. (February 1, 2019, 3:30 p.m.) – The coalition of more than 60 organizations that support carbon pollution pricing today praised the 93 representatives – significantly more than a majority of the 160-member House – and 11 Senators who have signed on to co-sponsor HD.2370, which puts a price on carbon pollution, rebates revenues to households and businesses, and provides revenues for investment in clean energy and climate resilience. (Additional co-sponsors may sign on before the end of today).

The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Jennifer Benson (D-Lunenburg), “has done a masterful job of drafting legislation that will reduce carbon pollution, center equity considerations, and provide revenues and tools for communities in a clean energy future,” said Cindy Luppi, Coordinator of the coalition, the Massachusetts Campaign for a Clean Energy Future.

“In the Legislature, we’re building on the momentum from last session,” Benson said. “We have more than 90 cosponsors, including a majority in the House of Representatives. My colleagues are hearing from their constituents that they want carbon pricing in Massachusetts, and they want it this session.”

The Senate approved carbon pricing legislation last year, and Sen. Michael Barrett (D-Lexington) has filed a new bill this session, SD.1817. In this session, the coalition initially will focus attention on the House.

Quotes

Clean Water Action, Cindy Luppi, New England Director (and Coordinator, Massachusetts Campaign for a Clean Energy Future): “Economists and other experts have long noted that carbon pollution pricing is the single most effective policy for reducing emissions, both directly and because it boosts the effectiveness of other clean energy policies. In addition, we can’t keep paying the high and growing cost

of climate change. Carbon pollution pricing helps create a fair, equitable, reliable new energy foundation for the Commonwealth's economy. Instead of sending nearly \$20 billion out of state every year to pay for fossil fuels, we can keep more of that money here to grow our own businesses and jobs. Carbon pollution pricing also will help Massachusetts meet its legal mandates, under the Global Warming Solutions Act, to cut carbon dioxide emissions up to 25 percent below the 1990 level by 2020, and at least 80 percent below 1990 by 2050, Luppi said.

Acadia Center, Jordan Stutt, Carbon Programs Director: "Representative Benson's bill offers a thoughtful, people-centered approach to addressing our economic and climate challenges. Investments from the Green Infrastructure Fund will create jobs, reduce pollution, and help cement Massachusetts as a hub of the region's growing clean energy economy."

Environmental League of Massachusetts, Nancy Goodman, Vice President for Policy: "With record heat in Australia and freezing temperatures in the Midwest causing deaths and disruption of daily life, we need to accelerate our response to climate change. Bold measures such as Rep. Benson's carbon pollution pricing bill are needed. We already are paying for climate change — whether rebuilding damaged infrastructure, missing work, or losing businesses due to floods or fires. Economists widely agree that putting a price on carbon pollution can be a powerful tool to combat climate change. We need to pass Rep. Benson's bill this session."

Climate XChange, Michael Green, Executive Director. "As the nation turns its eye towards state-level action, Massachusetts must become a bold leader in tackling climate change. With an economy-wide carbon price, we become a leader in mitigating the impacts of climate change while incentivizing innovation and job growth — sending a clear signal to the clean energy market that Massachusetts is open for business."

Climate Action Now, Kit Sang Boos, Volunteer, Carbon Fee and Rebate Working Group: "More and more people are seeing that climate change is real and happening. The data and evidence are telling us that we are at a crisis point and need to act now. Coalitions in Massachusetts have been working tirelessly to put a price on carbon pollution so that it reflects the true cost to the environment and to our health. With Rep. Benson's bill, we now have an important and more viable tool to meet the goals of the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act. We will mitigate climate change, with the assurance of environmental justice along the way."

Mothers Out Front, Sue Swanson, Legislative Team: "Putting a price on carbon emissions is one of the best ways to protect our children's health and reduce the effects of greenhouse gases. As a grassroots organization fighting for a safe and healthy climate for all children, we are thrilled to be a part of this initiative, working with dedicated legislators and activists to make this possible."

350 Massachusetts for a Better Future, Andrew Gordon, Legislative Manager — "This bill prioritizes the substantial green investment that our communities desperately need to equitably adapt to climate

change. That's why 350 Massachusetts and the Mass Power Forward coalition have prioritized this legislation and we are happy to see that so many of Rep. Benson's colleagues in the House have joined us in doing so. I commend Rep. Benson for her commitment to working with us to make this bill even better and for her continued role as a champion on this issue."

League of Women Voters of Massachusetts, Mary Ann Ashton, President: "The latest climate reports tell us it is time to move past words to action. Putting a price on carbon is the most effective action for averting the worst impacts of climate change. We have no time to lose."

Massachusetts Climate Action Network, Janet Hartke Bowser, Board President: "The Massachusetts Climate Action Network is committed and excited to be working with other grassroots organizations in the Clean Energy Future Coalition towards passing carbon pricing legislation. It is critical that Massachusetts put a price on carbon in order to meet our emissions reduction goals and ensure a safe and sustainable future for all residents."

Citizens' Climate Lobby of Massachusetts, Jim Mulloy, MA State Coordinator: "We are thrilled to be part of the very broad and diverse coalition championing HD.2370. There is a palpable sense of momentum as teenagers and grandparents, laborers and doctors, business leaders and union members, from communities across the state unite behind Rep Benson's bill. This bill expertly combines the power of the marketplace with rebates to protect lower and middle income families. The inclusion of a Green Infrastructure Fund empowers municipalities to move forward on clean energy and clean transport while creating thousands of new jobs."

Massachusetts Interfaith Power & Light, Vince Maraventano, Executive Director: "285 Clergy and faith leaders have signed a call urging the legislature to enact 'a price on carbon that reflects its cost to the climate, public health and the economy.' Passing a carbon pricing law is the right thing to do and the right time to do it is now. We urge the legislature to answer this call to care for God's creation."

What will the legislation do?

HD.2370, "An Act to promote green infrastructure and reduce carbon emissions," with a total of 104 co-sponsors, charges fossil fuel importers a fee for every ton of carbon dioxide pollution their fuels generate, starting at \$20 per ton and increasing to \$40 per ton over five years. Of the revenues from the fee, 70 percent will be rebated to households and employers, with higher rebates for low- and moderate-income households which, on average, will come out ahead (i.e., they will get back more in rebates than they will pay in any price increases). Higher refunds also will go residents in communities that tend to drive more, and to business sectors that face strong competitive pressures from companies outside the state, while additional funds will go to recipients of fuel assistance.

The remaining 30 percent will establish a Green Infrastructure Fund, with money available to state agencies and municipalities for clean transportation, resiliency, and renewable energy projects that

reduce carbon pollution, protect communities from climate change impacts, and produce energy savings. At least 40% of funds must be used for projects that benefit low-income households and communities.

The northeast U.S., including Massachusetts, already imposes such a fee on carbon pollution from power plants via the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI) – and for this reason, the electricity sector is exempted from the Barrett and Benson bills. Massachusetts is part of the regional Transportation and Climate Initiative (TCI), a group of states working to develop a cap-and-invest program for the transportation sector; if and when that program is in place, the price on transportation emissions in the Benson bill would be reduced to avoid double counting.

//End

Attachment: List of co-sponsors for HD.2370