



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS
THE GENERAL COURT
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**Joint Statement of State Sen. Mike Barrett and Rep. Thomas A. Golden, Jr.,
Senate and House Chairs, respectively,
of the Conference Committee on Climate
of the Massachusetts General Court**

On behalf of our legislative colleagues and the people of the Commonwealth, we are pleased to report that the branches we represent have reached agreement.

We are proud to release *An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy* (S.2995). Profound gratitude to the climate champions who served with us on the conference committee -- Senator Cindy Creem, Senator Patrick O'Connor, Representative Pat Haddad, and Representative Brad Jones. Our next step, collectively, is to submit the recommended compromise to our respective chambers for their consideration and approval.

This bill is a climate toolkit, assembled over the course of months, to protect our residents, and the beautiful place we call home, from the worsening of an existential crisis. Its particulars owe much to the advocacy of thousands of citizen activists in Massachusetts. To these activists, we say thank you. We heard you.

The NextGen Roadmap bill will step up the pace of our collective effort to slow climate change. This is the strongest effort of its kind in the country.

The tools we've selected integrate seamlessly with the state's Global Warming Solutions Act, which receives its first major update since its enactment in 2008. One significant change: We give the force and durability of law to a greenhouse gas limit for 2050 of "net zero" emissions.

Three other changes: We set statewide emissions limits every five years instead of every ten, require a "comprehensive, clear, and specific" plan for reaching each limit, and commission regular reports on what each plan is actually accomplishing.

To accelerate the switch to green electricity, we double down on offshore wind, remove roadblocks standing in the way of solar for low-income populations and businesses, ratchet up the renewable portfolio standard, revive the Commonwealth's foundering effort to lead the nation in clean and innovative R & D; promote equity in developing the clean energy workforce; and require municipal lighting plants to achieve a "net zero" electricity portfolio by 2050.

We codify environmental justice, providing new tools and protections for affected neighborhoods, and make sure we have a future that is job-positive for everyone in Massachusetts.

Some tools go to the state, some to the private sector, and some to cities and towns. The projects and buildings municipalities approve for construction this year will still be up and going strong in 2050, when the entire economy of Massachusetts, in all its aspects, must put out "net zero" emissions. So we give the force of law to the creation of a "net zero stretch energy code," with flexibility for communities to opt in when they're ready.

Other tools are for agencies and public-private partnerships that have had to operate without recent guidance from the Legislature on how we want them to revamp their missions.

We direct the Department of Public Utilities, regulator of our natural gas and electric power companies, to give equal weight to greenhouse gas reductions and system safety alongside the traditional -- and imperative -- attention to affordability and stability of supply.

We refocus the popular MassSave energy efficiency program, to ensure that the improvements made are ones that contribute more measurably to curbing the greenhouse gases that threaten us all.

We strengthen the gas safety laws of the Commonwealth and increase fines for violations.

We set Massachusetts appliance efficiency standards according to California precedents and future federal standards.

Reducing emissions to net zero is the contribution Massachusetts must make to the nation's, and the world's, larger climate effort. No question, doing our part is a big lift. With the tools the Legislature brings together here, we can construct the response we need and provide a blueprint to other states.

The toolkit approach is not a vision statement. It is not abstract or general. It is detailed. It is concerned with the practical. It focuses relentlessly on the work of reducing greenhouse gases, creating jobs, and protecting the vulnerable. It's about the "how" of it, as in "Here's how we get this done, one step at a time, starting now."

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