



**Town of Arlington
Office of the Town Manager**

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Secretary Kathleen A. Theoharides
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

Dear Madame Secretary,

The undersigned represent chief executive/administrative officers of Massachusetts cities and towns deeply engaged in the battle against climate change. We strongly support the Commonwealth's commitment to achieve net zero emissions by 2050 as well as the interim goals required by this year's "Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy." This and more has to be done. Fires in California, floods in Germany, and record June temperatures at home remind us of the urgency of our situation. As the recent IPCC report on Climate Change in 2021 shows, we are now well past the 11th hour.

The Next Generation Roadmap legislation signed by the Governor in March requires DOER to develop a specialized stretch energy code that includes net-zero building performance standards and a definition of a net-zero building. The statute lays out an ambitious process of public engagement as the Department develops the required code. We welcome the opportunity to participate in this process.

At the outset, we strongly believe that both the statute and practical reality call for a true net zero stretch code. The specialized stretch code is optional. No municipality is required to adopt it, and not everyone will. But for the towns and cities ready to lead the way, the stretch code promulgated by DOER must be strong enough to get the job done. Nothing less than net zero will suffice. The municipalities that opt in are eager to be the Commonwealth's test kitchen. They need bold policies to test.

A true net zero stretch code must cover all residential and commercial buildings. It must foster high performance building envelopes, such as those contemplated by Passive House standards. It must promote electrification, and at the very least provide the municipalities who opt in with clear authority to prohibit on-site combustion in new buildings and major rehabilitation. Moreover, since time is of the essence, any phase-in period must be short and supported by clear and convincing evidence.

There are many ways of reaching our goal and that of the statute. We welcome the chance to engage in discussion about means. As local governments, we understand the importance of pragmatism. It is essential, however, that the path chosen leads to the right destination.

We appreciate your enthusiasm and professionalism and that of your staff. We hope that the process you are beginning will result in a code that will maintain Massachusetts's place as a national leader in the fight against global warming. Other jurisdictions, including California and the District of Columbia, have moved decisively in this direction, and we do not wish the Commonwealth to be left behind. We strongly support the process that is unfolding and look forward to providing any assistance we can.

Respectfully,

Adam Chapdelaine
Arlington Town Manager

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Acton Town Manager

Paul Bockelman
Amherst Town Manager

Michael Herbert
Ashland Town Manager

Patrice Garvin
Belmont Town Administrator

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