



MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
GRADUATE STUDENT COUNCIL

Statement in Support of Carbon Pricing and Renewable Energy Mandates

The Graduate Student Council (GSC) of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), which represents MIT's 6,900 graduate students, recognizes the consensus in the scientific community that climate change is primarily caused by human activity. Climate change is a matter of growing public concern, and the GSC commends local, state, national, and global efforts to address climate change. **Therefore, the GSC strongly supports the bills H.2836, *An Act re-powering Massachusetts with 100% renewable energy*, S.1958, *An Act transitioning Massachusetts to 100% renewable energy*, and H.2810, *An Act to promote green infrastructure and reduce carbon emissions*.**

With regressive policy from national leadership on climate change, particularly the rollback of the Clean Power Plan and withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, it is the responsibility of state and local governments to take legislative and/or regulatory action to combat climate change. Massachusetts took the bold pledge to reduce emissions by 25% below the 1990 baseline emission level by 2020, and at least 80% below the baseline by 2050¹. This action is consistent with the imperatives set by IPCC to keep global temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius². To enable Massachusetts to achieve these goals, the GSC particularly supports provisions in both H.2836 and S.1958 that:

- Set legally-binding interim limits for non-renewable energy consumption and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for 2030 and 2040
- Set those legally-binding limits below 100% to allow for flexibility of policy implementation and reliable supply of power
- Pursue electrification as a method to accomplish these goals for economy-wide decarbonization

The GSC also believes that governments should financially support education and professional training for workers transitioning from the fossil fuel industry to new industries. Additionally, special regulations and investments should be taken to protect marginalized communities that are more vulnerable to the effects of pollution and climate change. Thus, the GSC supports the establishment of a clean energy workforce development account at the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center. At least half of the minimum input of \$5 million would be spent on programs and initiatives that primarily benefit fossil fuel workers displaced in the transition to renewable energy or residents of environmental justice communities.

Additionally, H.2810 implements a carbon pricing scheme to reduce GHG emissions. Carbon pricing is advocated for by 27 Nobel Laureates in Economics, four Former Chairs of the Federal Reserve, 15 Former Chairs of the Council of Economic Advisers, and two Former Secretaries of the US Department of Treasury as the most efficient policy instrument to reduce GHG emissions^{3,4}. About 40 national jurisdictions and over 20 cities, states, and regions have already implemented a carbon pricing scheme⁵. By enacting a carbon fee, Massachusetts would champion combating climate change and demonstrate to other states and the federal governments that putting a price on carbon can reduce GHG emissions while enhancing economic output.



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The fee schedule proposed in H.2810 is recognized as the most aggressive yet, ultimately imposing a fee of \$40/ton of CO₂. The GSC supports the carbon pricing scheme, which would steer the Commonwealth towards GHG emissions reductions and benefit the economy. The GSC particularly supports provisions in H. 2810 that:

- Set a price on carbon that rises incrementally to reduce economic shock
- Increases the price to the social cost of carbon

The combination of these bills, H.2836/S.1958 and H.2810, will facilitate a robust economic transition to a clean energy future for the Commonwealth. Simply imposing a price on carbon emissions without public commitment and investment in renewable energy will unnecessarily raise the cost of living on Massachusetts residents.

Climate change is an urgent problem that all levels of government, the private sector, and individuals must work together to solve. In order for Massachusetts to meet its 2050 emissions reduction target, efforts to address GHG emissions across multiple sectors of the economy must be put in place. **The GSC, therefore, urges swift passage of legislation like H.2836, S.1958, and H.2810, to aid the Commonwealth in reaching this emission reduction goal and its transition to a 21st century renewable energy economy.**

References:

1. [Global Warming Solutions Act](#). Massachusetts Legislature (2008).
2. IPCC, 2018: Summary for Policymakers. In: *Global Warming of 1.5°C. An IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty* [Masson-Delmotte, V., P. Zhai, H.-O. Pörtner, D. Roberts, J. Skea, P.R. Shukla, A. Pirani, W. Moufouma-Okia, C. Péan, R. Pidcock, S. Connors, J.B.R. Matthews, Y. Chen, X. Zhou, M.I. Gomis, E. Lonnoy, Maycock, M. Tignor, and T. Waterfield (eds.)]. *World Meteorological Organization, Geneva, Switzerland, 32 pp.*
3. W. D. Nordhaus. “[An Optimal Transition Path for Controlling Greenhouse Gases.](#)” *Science* (1992).
4. “Opinion | Economists’ Statement on Carbon Dividends.” *Wall Street Journal*, January 16, 2019, sec. Opinion. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/economists-statement-on-carbon-dividends-11547682910>.
5. “[States and Trends of Carbon Pricing.](#)” World Bank Group (2016).

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