

January 13, 2014

Richard K. Sullivan, Jr., Secretary
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street
Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114

CC: Members of Coal Plant Revitalization Task Force

Re: Planning for Energy and Economic Transition

Dear Secretary Sullivan:

The Bay State and the Ocean State share far more than a border. Regional economic growth and struggles, workforce challenges, and power decisions affect the health and wellbeing of residents of communities from Rhode Island to Southeastern Massachusetts, Boston and beyond. From natural beauty to marine commerce, our waters provide enormous benefits and opportunities. Our public and private transportation networks send people to work across state lines. We share hubs of innovative technology and academic brilliance, strong university systems and a growing clean technology sector. And now more than ever, we share a need to revitalize old, industrial communities with industries of the future.

We write today because we see great urgency and great opportunity as changes in our energy grid force a rethinking of power decisions. We thank the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs for stewarding a deep examination of coal plant transition, its impacts and the policies needed to support the growth of thriving communities. As representatives of neighboring districts, we have grave concerns about the continued burning of coal for power, and see great promise in planning for a healthier and more resilient future.

What choices we make today for our power grid and our economies will affect many, for many years. Each policy, transmission line, pipeline or redeveloped plant is part of a large and shifting infrastructure, revisions to a 1950s and 1960s energy grid. In New England and in the United States, our energy supply currently relies on fuels that pose an immense threat to public health and serious concern to our future. Coal plants in particular stand out, with a single plant in the region sending thousands of pounds of toxic pollution and even larger quantities of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere every year. We must collaborate to find a better solution for meeting our communities' needs.

Rhode Island has had its own share of power struggles. In the capital, the once coal-fired South Street Power Station has been a site of many visions. A current plan for this site would create a mixed-use redevelopment, including a state-of-the-art nursing school, residential complex, restaurant space and hub for tech start-ups. It's one possibility for a site that has long sat vacant, but represents the vision and spirit of collaboration necessary

to move our region beyond coal, and the potential of historic sites to charter a new history for New England.

Understanding the complexities of power generation, ratepayer impact, economic development, public health and climate change, we ask you to:

- *Phase out the burning of coal.* Coal is a deadly fuel, whose fading profits and great costs place an incredible burden on residents of New England. Massachusetts has an opportunity to improve the health of all New Englanders while setting a model for economic redevelopment.
- *Incubate technologies and industry of the future.* New England has done incredible work in this regard already, but we have not yet devoted the resources or time necessary to truly expand clean, renewable energy at the rate that is necessary. We can take advantage of the revitalization and transformation of old industries to advance clean and innovative technology and create jobs that will sustain our future.
- *Adopt strong protections and transition plans for plant workers, who may reside in neighboring communities and across state boundaries.* Regional job loss, or job creation, affects workers who hail from across the region. These workers deserve our respect and forward-thinking policies that will maximize their future opportunities.

At this critical juncture, we thank you for the opportunity to comment on the future of power.

Sincerely,

Representative Raymond Gallison, Jr. (Bristol)

House Speaker Gordon Fox (Providence)

Representative Nicholas Mattiello, Majority Leader (Cranston)

Representative John Edwards, Senior Deputy Majority Leader (Tiverton)

Representative Deborah Ruggiero, Deputy Majority Leader (Jamestown)

Representative Scott Slater, Deputy Majority Leader (Providence)

Representative Joy Hearn, Deputy Majority Leader (Barrington)

Representative Frank Ferri, Deputy Majority Leader (Warwick)

Representative Jan Malik (Warren)

Representative Linda Finn (Middletown)

Representative Helio Melo (Providence)

Representative Teresa Tanzi (Wakefield)

Representative Arthur Handy (Cranston)

Representative Marvin Abney (Newport)

Representative Mia Ackerman (Cumberland)

Representative Edith Ajello (Providence)

Representative Joseph Almeida (Providence)

Representative Maria Cimini (Providence)

Representative Robert Craven, Sr. (Saunderstown)

Representative Spencer Dickinson (Wakefield)
Representative Larry Valencia (Wyoming)
Representative Scott Guthrie (Coventry)
Representative Raymond Johnston, Jr. (Pawtucket)
Representative Raymond Hull (Providence)
Representative Cale Keable (Pascoag)
Representative John Lombardi (Providence)
Representative Jeremiah O'Grady (Lincoln)
Representative J. Patrick O'Neill (Pawtucket)
Representative Donna Walsh (Charlestown)
Representative Lisa Tomasso (Coventry)
Senator Donna Nesselbush (Pawtucket)
Senator David Bates, Minority Whip (Barrington)