



Northeast Hearth, Patio, and Barbecue Association

PO Box 28, Sudbury, MA 01776 . 978-443-0344 . nehpba.org

November 16, 2020

Senator Michael J. Barrett
Room 109
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Patrick M. O'Connor
Room 419
Boston, MA 02133

Senator Cynthia Stone Creem
Room 312-A
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Patricia A. Haddad
Room 370
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Thomas A. Golden, Jr.
Room 473B
Boston, MA 02133

Representative Bradley H. Jones, Jr.
Room 124
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Conferees:

Northeast Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association (NEHPBA) is a trade association representing more than 300 individual member retail and related companies throughout the Northeast. These are our region's chimney sweeps, installers, maintenance companies, and any other entity having a commercial interest in the hearth, patio and/or barbecue industry, including—but not limited to—gas utilities, publications, testing laboratories, insurance agencies, financial institutions, business systems providers, advertising agencies, public relations firms, and so much more. Specifically, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, we have over 60-member companies—the vast majority of them independent “mom and pop” small businesses.

Our member businesses are community contributors. They sponsor local little leagues; they are members of school boards and PTAs; they provide a sense of vibrancy to Main Street, not Wall Street; they know the towns and cities they represent because they live there; and the local impact they're making in the economy is needed, now more than ever during the COVID-19 pandemic, where so many of our small businesses are already being pushed to the limit—from North Adams to Natick and Springfield to Salisbury.

NEHPBA recognizes the changing landscape of the energy and fossil fuel industry. We are committed to working with government officials and regulators at all levels to increase access to more sustainable and climate centric fuel sources throughout our homes and businesses. That being said, we cannot be so quick to think that by moving immediately to a Net-Zero model, our electric grid will have the capacity to sustain this increased volume in output. While unintended, it could result in skyrocketing electric rates and potentially inhibit access to more affordable sources of fuel and power—negatively affecting the most vulnerable among us.

In the Commonwealth of Massachusetts:

- 50.6% of homes (1.3 million individual households) heat with natural gas; and
- 27% (700,000+ households) heat with oil.

We must promote access to diverse sources of fuel for our residents, not only as a means to bolster affordable alternatives for powering our homes and businesses, but also because if we place too much dependence on our electric grid, we risk the chance of monopolizing control within one industry which would ultimately burden the ratepayers of our state by limiting the choices they have available.



Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association Affiliate



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As the conference committee considers H.4933 and S.2500 we hope you will consider our comments, specific to S.2500 below:

- NEHPBA disagrees with the language in section 11.7 line 2 allowing persons under the age of 18 to be part of the commission. Participation should be among adults with a background and expertise in the areas prescribed by the legislation.
- NEHPBA would like clarification from the legislature on why the Building Board is not part of the Climate Policy Commission but the Climate Policy Commission is part of the Building Board. The way the section is written is allowing the Climate Policy Commission to weigh in on what policies will work for Net Zero building codes, however the Climate Policy Commission does not have a place on their team for someone coming from Building Board of Regulations.
- NEHPBA would like clarification from the legislature on how the energy efficiency program will trace social values of greenhouse gas emissions reductions in section 16-18-line 27-29.
- NEHPBA believes the legislation needs to clarify if building and stretch code will be combined. Stretch code is not mentioned in section 94 of chapter 143 in the Mass General Laws.
- NEHPBA disagrees with the language in Section 30-31, Clauses 12,13 and 14 and would prefer the commission leave the building codes to the BBRS and not get involved with building stretch codes.
- NEHPBA has a concern with section 40-41 allowing the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to have consultative powers on the building code. By allowing the DOER to consult on building code, we would essentially be allowing the building code to become an energy code.
- NEHPBA does not agree with Section 45-46 lines 55-75 regarding price changes. They believe the language reads prices can change despite having a contractual agreement.
- NEHPBA is concerned with adoption of the stretch energy code language in Section 54 line 65. They would like to know whether stretch energy code must be adopted.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (978) 443-0344 or via email at karen@NEHPBA.org with any questions.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Luther

Karen L. Luther
Executive Director
Northeast Hearth, Patio & Barbecue Association