May 19, 2026

Dear Senator,

Governor Healey recently commissioned a Massachusetts Roadmap for Advanced Nuclear and Fusion Energy, and the Massachusetts Senate is preparing to vote on legislation that would clear the path for development of new nuclear power in Massachusetts as part of an energy affordability bill. We are groups and individuals concerned about climate change and public health, and we strongly oppose development of nuclear energy in Massachusetts.

Framing nuclear expansion as improving "affordability" is misleading. Nuclear power remains among the most expensive forms of energy, while the costs of wind, solar, and battery storage have fallen dramatically over the past decade [1].

Nuclear energy is not climate-neutral. Fossil fuels are consumed at every stage of the nuclear fuel cycle—from uranium mining through waste disposal—resulting in substantially higher greenhouse gas and air pollutant emissions per kilowatt-hour than renewable energy sources [2].

Proposals to expand nuclear energy increasingly rely on Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). However, **SMRs are an unproven technology** and are unlikely to be operational at scale until the end of this decade [3,4]. They cannot meet near-term energy demand or address the urgent need to transition off fossil fuels. Emerging evidence shows that SMRs produce significantly more radioactive waste per unit of electricity than conventional reactors [5], compounding long-term environmental and public health concerns. Some SMR projects—such as the recently canceled Carbon-Free Power Project in Utah—reached projected levelized costs of electricity above $200 per MWh before being terminated due to rising development costs and lack of subscriber interest.

Nuclear power poses health risks across the entire fuel cycle. Uranium and its decay products are radioactive and are linked to lung, bone, and thyroid cancers, as well as leukemia; no level of radiation exposure is considered completely safe [6,7]. Additional risks include cardiovascular disease, immune dysfunction, reproductive harms, and cataracts. Workers and surrounding communities may be exposed during mining, fuel processing, reactor operation, and decommissioning. These risks may be heightened by recent federal actions that have reduced safety oversight and weakened regulatory protections [8].

Nuclear energy raises concerns regarding environmental justice. Uranium mining and waste disposal disproportionately affect Indigenous and marginalized communities. In

Massachusetts, the recent controversy surrounding disposal of radioactive wastewater from the Pilgrim Nuclear Station highlights the ongoing local relevance of these risks [9].

Nuclear power carries the potential for rare but catastrophic events, as demonstrated by Chernobyl, Fukushima, and Three Mile Island. Climate change further increases vulnerability by intensifying heat waves, droughts, and flooding that can compromise reactor safety and cooling capacity [10]. Rogue actors can weaponize nuclear plants or divert nuclear fuels to create weapons of mass destruction.

Nuclear power is an unwise investment, and Massachusetts has shown that we have viable alternatives. The Commonwealth is a global leader in renewable energy technology and jobs and is home to the nation's first operational utility geothermal network [11].

For these reasons, we urge you to reject legal provisions that would advance new nuclear development in Massachusetts, including the proposed repeal of Chapter 503 of the Acts of 1982. Investing in renewable technologies will better protect public health, reduce emissions, and ensure economic stability without introducing the long-term risks associated with nuclear power.

Sincerely,

Organizations:

Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility

Cape Ann Climate Commission Organizing Committee

Cape Downwinders

Citizens Awareness Network

Clamshell Alliance

Climate Code Blue

Massachusetts Peace Action

Massachusetts Climate Action Network

Sierra Club Massachusetts

The Enviro Show

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