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HOUSE . . . . . No. 4642

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

In the Year Two Thousand Ten

An Act TO LIMIT CARBON DIOXIDE EMISSIONS FROM RENEWABLE AND ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES (see House, No. 4458).

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

The initiative petition, HB 4458, places severe emission restrictions on a broad range of renewable energy plants, including electric biomass and waste-to-energy plants, limiting our energy choices, harming our state's economy, and preventing the state from meeting our renewable energy goals. Although this initiative petition is well intentioned--limits on emissions from biomass plants are crucial in protecting our environment--the committee believes that the language of this particular petition is too broad, preventing the development of innovative technologies such as anaerobic digestion, which efficiently converts organic waste (such as food and agricultural waste) to energy.

The Committee notes that the Department of Energy Resources is currently analyzing the life cycle greenhouse gas emissions of electric biomass facilities, inclusive of the forest's role in carbon sequestration, and will review the Department's report when it is available. If the report's findings indicate to the Committee that action needs to be taken on this issue, it will take steps to enact the necessary restrictions at that time.

This overly broad initiative petition would prevent the development of many forms of renewable energy by cutting off their access to essential incentives. The Committee recognizes that, in order to address the Commonwealth's economic, energy, and climate challenges, all renewable energy technologies must be responsibly considered.

Therefore, we, the majority of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, recommend that the Initiative Petition HB 4458 OUGHT NOT TO PASS [Representative Ehrlich of Marblehead, dissenting].