

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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PRESENTED BY:

***William J. Driscoll***

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*To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:*

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act relative to the clean heat standard.

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PETITION OF:

NAME:

*William J. Driscoll*

DISTRICT/ADDRESS:

*Norfolk, Plymouth and Bristol*

**SENATE . . . . . No.**

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[Pin Slip]

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**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

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**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Fourth General Court  
(2025-2026)**  
\_\_\_\_\_

An Act relative to the clean heat standard.

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

1 SECTION 1. Chapter 21A of the General Laws are hereby amended by adding the  
2 following new section:-

3 Section 29. Clean Heat Standard

4 (a) For the purposes of this section, as well as Sections 29A, 29B, and 29C, the following  
5 words shall have the following meanings:

6 “Clean Heat Credit,” means a tradeable, non-tangible commodity that represents the  
7 amount of greenhouse gas reduction caused by a clean heat measure.

8 “Clean heat measure,” means fuel and technologies delivered and installed to end-use  
9 customers in Massachusetts that reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Clean heat measures shall not  
10 include

11 switching from one fossil fuel use to another fossil fuel use, or the use of Renewable  
12 Natural Gas or Hydrogen. The department may adopt a list of acceptable actions that qualify as  
13 clean heat measures.

14 “The department” or “department,” shall mean the Massachusetts Department of  
15 Environmental Protection. “Default delivery agent,” shall mean the entity designated by the  
16 department to provide services that generate tradeable clean heat credits.

17 “entity” shall mean any individual, trustee, agency, partnership, association, corporation,  
18 company, municipality, political subdivision, or any other form of organization.

19 “Heating fuel” shall mean fossil-based heating fuel, including oil, propane, natural gas,  
20 coal, and kerosene.

21 “Obligated party” shall mean (a) a natural gas utility, whether investor-owned or a  
22 municipal utility, serving customers in Massachusetts; or (b) for other heating fuels, the entity  
23 that makes the first sale of heating fuel into or in the state for consumption within the state.  
24 Electricity suppliers shall not be obligated parties.

25 “Thermal sector” shall mean the residential, non-residential, commercial, and industrial  
26 fuel use sectors.

27 “Energy Burden” shall mean the annual spending on thermal energy as a percentage of  
28 household income.

29 (b) The Clean Heat Standard is hereby established. Under this program, obligated parties  
30 shall reduce greenhouse gas emissions attributable to the Massachusetts thermal sector by

31 retiring required amounts of clean heat credits to meet the thermal sector portion of the  
32 greenhouse Global Warming Solutions Act.

33 (c) By rule or order, the Department shall establish or adopt a system of tradeable clean  
34 heat credits earned from the delivery of clean heat measures that reduce greenhouse gas  
35 emissions.

36 (d) An obligated party may obtain the required amount of clean heat credits through  
37 delivery of eligible clean heat measures, through contracts for delivery of eligible clean heat  
38 measures, through the market purchase of clean heat credits, or through delivery of eligible clean  
39 heat measures by a designated statewide default delivery agent.

40 (e) The department shall establish a system of recognition for clean heat credits pursuant  
41 to this section.

42 SECTION 2. Said Chapter 21N of said General Laws is further amended by inserting the  
43 following new section:

44 Section 29A. Compliance with the Clean Heat Standard

45 (a) Required Amounts:

46 (1) The department shall establish the number of clean heat credits that each obligated  
47 party is required to retire each calendar year. The size of the annual requirement shall be set at a  
48 pace sufficient for the thermal sector to achieve lifecycle carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e)  
49 emission reductions consistent with the building sector sub-sector limits for 2030 and thereafter.

50 (2) Annual requirements shall be expressed as a percent of each obligated party's  
51 contribution to the thermal sector's lifecycle CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions in the previous year with the

52 annual percentages being the same for all parties. To ensure understanding among obligated  
53 parties, the Department shall, in a timely manner, publicly provide a description of the annual  
54 requirements in plain terms.

55 (3) The Department may adjust the annual requirements for good cause after notice and  
56 opportunity for public process. Good cause may include a shortage of clean heat credits or undue  
57 adverse financial impacts on particular customers or demographic segments. Any downward  
58 adjustment shall be allowed for only a short, temporary period.

59 (b) Annual Registration:

60 (1) The Department may adjust the annual requirements for good cause after notice and  
61 opportunity for public process. Good cause may include a shortage of clean heat credits or undue  
62 adverse financial impacts on particular customers or demographic segments. Any downward  
63 adjustment shall be allowed for only a short, temporary period.

64 (2) At a minimum, the Department shall require registration information to include legal  
65 name, doing business as name if applicable, municipality, state, type of heating fuel sold, and the  
66 volume of sales of heating fuels into or in the State for final sale or consumption in the State in  
67 the calendar year immediately preceding the calendar year in which the entity is registering with  
68 the Department.

69 (3) Each year, and not later than 30 days following the annual registration deadline  
70 established by the Department, the Department shall share complete registration information of  
71 obligated parties with the Department of Environmental Protection for purposes of conducting  
72 the Massachusetts Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory and Forecast.

73 (4) The Department shall maintain, and update annually, a list of registered entities on its  
74 website that contains the required registration information, except that the public list shall not  
75 include heating fuel volumes reported.

76 (5) For any entity not registered, the first registration form shall be due 30 days after the  
77 first sale of heating fuel to a location in Massachusetts.

78 (6) Clean heat requirements shall transfer to entities that acquire an obligated party.

79 (c) Equitable distribution of clean heat measures:

80 (1) The Clean Heat Standard shall be designed and implemented to enhance social equity  
81 by minimizing adverse impacts to low-income and moderate-income customers and those  
82 households with the highest energy burdens. The design shall ensure all customers have an  
83 equitable opportunity to participate in, and benefit from, clean heat measures regardless of  
84 heating fuel used, income level, geographic location, or homeownership status.

85 (2) A substantial portion of clean heat credits retired by each obligated party shall be  
86 sourced from clean heat measures delivered to low-income and moderate-income customers. The  
87 portion of each obligated party's required amount needed to satisfy the annual Clean Heat  
88 Standard requirement shall be at least 20 percent from low-income customers and 20 percent  
89 from moderate-income customers. The definitions of low-income customer and moderate-  
90 income customer shall be set by the Department in consultation with the Equity Advisory Group  
91 and in alignment with other existing definitions

92 (3) The Department may consider frontloading the credit requirements for low-income  
93 and moderate-income customers so that the greatest proportion of clean heat measures reach  
94 lowincome and moderate-income customers in the earlier years.

95 (4) In order to best serve low-income and moderate-income customers, the Department  
96 shall have authority to change these portions and the criteria used to define low-income and  
97 moderateincome customers for good cause, after notice and opportunity for public process.

98 (5) In determining whether to exceed the minimum percentages of clean heat measures  
99 that must be delivered to low-income and moderate-income customers, the Department shall take  
100 into account participation in other government-sponsored low-income and moderate-income  
101 weatherization programs.

102 (6) A clean heat measure delivered to a customer qualifying for a government-sponsored,  
103 low-income energy subsidy shall qualify for clean heat credits required by subdivision (2) of this  
104 subsection.

105 (d) The Department shall designate the default delivery agent. The default delivery agent  
106 shall be a single statewide entity capable of providing a variety of clean heat measures and  
107 contracted for a multiyear period through a competitive procurement process. The entity selected  
108 as the default delivery agent may also be a market participant but shall not be an obligated party.

109 (1) By rule or order, the Department shall adopt annually the cost per clean heat credit to  
110 be paid to the default delivery agent by an obligated party that chooses this option. In adjusting  
111 the default delivery agent credit cost, the Department shall consider the default delivery agent's  
112 anticipated costs to deliver clean heat measures and costs borne by customers, among other

113 factors determined by the Department. Changes to the cost of credits shall take effect not less  
114 than 180 days after adopted.

115 (2) All funds received from noncompliance payments pursuant to subsection (e)(2) of this  
116 section shall be used by the default delivery agent to provide clean heat measures to low-income  
117 customers.

118 (e) Enforcement: (1) The Department shall have the authority to enforce the requirements  
119 of this section and any rules or orders adopted to implement the provisions of this section. The  
120 Department may use its existing authority under this title. As part of an enforcement order, the  
121 Department may order penalties and injunctive relief.

122 (2) The Department may order an obligated party that fails to retire the number of clean  
123 heat credits required in a given year, including the required amounts from low-income and  
124 moderate-income customers, to make a noncompliance payment to the default delivery agent.  
125 The per-credit amount of the noncompliance payment shall be three times the amount established  
126 by the Department under this section for timely per-credit payments to the default delivery agent.

127 (3) Any statements or other representations made by obligated parties related to  
128 compliance with the Clean Heat Standard are subject to the Department's enforcement authority,  
129 including the power to investigate and assess penalties, under this title.

130 (f) The Department shall establish requirements for the types of records to be submitted  
131 by obligated parties, a record retention schedule for required records, and a process for  
132 verification of records and data submitted in compliance with the requirements of this section.



133 (g) After the adoption of the rules implementing this section, the Department shall submit  
134 a written report to the joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy detailing  
135 the efforts undertaken to establish the Clean Heat Standard pursuant to this section. On or before  
136 August 31 of each year following the year in which the rules are first adopted under this section,  
137 the Department shall submit to the standing committees a written report detailing the  
138 implementation and operation of the Clean Heat Standard. This report shall include an  
139 assessment on the equitable adoption of clean heat measures required by this section, along with  
140 recommendations to increase participation for the households with the highest energy burdens.

141 SECTION 3. Said Chapter 25A of said General Laws is further amended by inserting the  
142 following new section:

143 Section 29B. Tradeable Clean Heat Credit

144 (a) By rule or order, the Department shall establish or adopt a system of tradeable clean  
145 heat credits that may be earned by reducing greenhouse gas emissions through the delivery of  
146 clean heat measures. While credit denominations may be in simple terms for public  
147 understanding and ease of use, the underlying value shall be based on units of carbon dioxide  
148 equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e). The system shall provide a process for the recognition, approval, and  
149 monitoring of the clean heat credits. The Department shall perform the verification of clean heat  
150 credit claims.

151 (b) Clean heat credits shall be based on the lifecycle CO<sub>2</sub>e emission reductions that result  
152 from the delivery of eligible clean heat measures to end-use customer locations into or in  
153 Massachusetts. For clean heat measures that are installed, the value of the clean heat credits in

154 each year shall be the lifecycle CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of the heating fuel avoided by the installation of  
155 the measure, minus the lifecycle CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions of the energy that is used instead.

156 (c) To promote certainty for obligated parties and clean heat providers, the Department  
157 shall, by rule or order, establish a schedule of lifecycle emission rates for heating fuels and  
158 eligible clean heat measures. The schedule shall be based upon the best available science and  
159 determined subsequent to notice and an opportunity for public comment. Clean heat measures  
160 eligible to meet the standard shall include air- and water-sourced heat pumps, ground-source heat  
161 pumps, networked geothermal systems, heat pump water heaters, induction stoves, and heat  
162 pump clothes dryers.

163 (d) Clean heat credits shall be “time stamped” for the year in which the clean heat  
164 measure is delivered as well as each subsequent year during which the measure produces  
165 emission reductions. Only clean heat credits with the current year time stamp, and credits banked  
166 from previous years, shall be eligible to satisfy the current year obligation.

167 (e) Clean heat credits can be earned only in proportion to the deemed or measured  
168 thermal sector greenhouse gas emission reductions achieved by a clean heat measure delivered in  
169 Massachusetts. Other emissions offsets, wherever located, shall not be eligible measures.

170 (g) All eligible clean heat measures that are delivered in Massachusetts shall be eligible  
171 for clean heat credits and may be retired and count towards an obligated party’s emission  
172 reduction obligations, regardless of who creates or delivers them and regardless of whether their  
173 creation or delivery was required by other State policies and programs. The Department shall  
174 determine whether the total value of a clean heat credit for an installed measure shall be claimed  
175 in the year it is installed or whether the annual value of that credit shall be applied each year of

176 the measure's life. The Department shall determine whether to require a certain portion of clean  
177 heat credits be acquired each year from weatherization projects in order to further the State's  
178 building efficiency goals. The Department shall recommend legislative changes, if needed, to  
179 accomplish this.

180 (h) The Department shall create a registration system to lower administrative barriers to  
181 individuals and businesses seeking to register qualified actions eligible to earn clean heat credits  
182 and to facilitate the transfer of credits to obligated parties. The Department may hire a third-party  
183 consultant to evaluate, develop, implement, maintain, and support a database or other means for  
184 tracking clean heat credits and compliance with the annual requirements of obligated parties. The  
185 system shall require entities to submit the following information to receive the credit: the  
186 location of the clean heat measure, whether the customer or tenant has a low or moderate  
187 income, the type of property where the clean heat measure was installed or sold, the type of clean  
188 heat measure, and any other information as required by the Department

189 SECTION 4. Said Chapter 25A of said General Laws is further amended by inserting the  
190 following new section:

191 Section 29C. Clean Heat Standard Equity Advisory

192 (a) The Department shall establish the Clean Heat Standard Equity Advisory Group to  
193 assist the Department in developing and implementing the Clean Heat Standard in a manner that  
194 ensures an equitable share of clean heat measures are delivered to low-income and moderate  
195 income consumers, and that low-income and moderate-income consumers who are not early  
196 participants in clean heat measures are not negatively impacted in their ability to afford heating  
197 fuel. Its duties shall include: providing feedback to the Department on strategies for engaging

198 low-income and moderate-income consumers in the public process around development of the  
199 Clean Heat Standard, supporting the Department in assessing whether customers are equitably  
200 served by clean heat measures and how to increase equity in this area, identifying actions needed  
201 to provide better service to and mitigate the fuel price impacts calculated in section 8125 of this  
202 title on low-income and moderate-income customers, assisting the Department in defining low  
203 income and moderate income customers, recommending any additional programs, incentives, or  
204 funding needed to support low-income and moderate-income customers, and organizations that  
205 provide social services to Consumers, in affording heating fuel and other heating expenses,  
206 providing feedback to the Department on the impact of the Clean Heat Standard on the everyday  
207 experience of low-income and moderate income Consumers, and providing information to the  
208 Department on the challenges renters face in being equitably served by clean heat measures and  
209 recommendations to ensure that renters have equitable access to clean heat measures.

210 (b) The Clean Heat Standard Equity Advisory Group shall consist of up to 10 members  
211 appointed by the Department. SECTION 5. If any provision of this section or its application are  
212 held invalid or in violation of the Constitution or laws of the United States or Massachusetts, the  
213 invalidity or the violation shall not affect other provisions of this section that can be given effect  
214 without the invalid provision or application, and to this end, the provisions of this section are  
215 severable.

216 SECTION 6. Within 90 days following the enactment of this act, the Department shall  
217 commence any necessary proceedings to implement this act.

218 SECTION 7. This act shall take effect on passage.