

INTRODUCTION TO THE FUTURE ACT

States and municipalities are leading the way to safer more resilient communities, cleaner air, and a stronger economy powered by renewable energy.

The FUTURE Act—Massachusetts [House 2849](#) / [Senate 1940](#), “An Act for Utility Transition to Using Renewable Energy (FUTURE)” is another step to achieve those goals. FUTURE requires the gas companies to focus on their most serious safety and infrastructure problems now, while helping them build a future with the distribution of renewable energy as we lessen our dependence on natural gas. Simply put, FUTURE addresses the dual challenge of our over dependence on natural gas and the neglected, decrepit gas distribution system.

The risks accompanying natural gas just increase.

The FUTURE Act, with 53 Democratic, Republican, and unenrolled co-sponsors to date, builds on legislation passed in each of the last three state legislative sessions. Town support has been critical in passing that legislation but that has not been enough to stem the problemⁱ as we advance to a clean energy future.ⁱⁱ

- [Ch. 149, Acts of 2014, An Act Relative to Natural Gas Leaks](#), a safety bill, has compelled gas companies to report the location and date of the more than 20,000 gas leaks statewide.
- [Ch. 188, Acts of 2016, An Act to Promote Energy Diversity](#), directs the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to close environmentally significant gas leaks.
- [Chapter 227, Acts of 2018](#), Section 19, requires gas companies to measure how much gas is leaking and provides regulatory waivers so they can spend money to innovate and develop new ways to reduce methane emissions.

More than 27,000 gas leaks were reported in 2017. As many new leaks are found as were repaired, and we ratepayers pay for that leaked gas.^{iii iv} Disasters, like the explosion in the Merrimack Valley, can happen in any town with any gas company. Leaking gas observes no boundaries, above or below the ground. It suffocates trees, and we and towns pay to remove and replace them. We end up as captive spectators to the damage leaked methane does to our climate. Every town has an interest in reducing gas emissions, including the 93 that have no gas service. All of us bear these risks.

The gas leaks in your town!

[HEET](#), a leader in gas leaks research, has made the invisible visible by providing gas leaks maps of nearly every Massachusetts community served by a gas company. **A map of Somerville’s history of gas leaks as well as may be found here: [Somerville](#).**

OUR ASK OF YOU!

Your elected officials can help by passing a resolution supporting the FUTURE Act.

What does the FUTURE Act do?

The FUTURE Act benefits our communities by:

- providing gas companies with incentives and opportunity to offer renewable energy.

- enabling towns to manage road construction and public safety by working with the gas companies more effectively in repairing and monitoring gas leaks.
- strengthening the voice of towns at the Department of Public Utilities (DPU).
- providing towns with financial recourse for trees killed by gas.
- permitting towns to develop local renewable energy services and infrastructure.

The FUTURE Act also explicitly requires the (DPU) and the DOER to address the fundamental issues regarding gas:

- public health,
- public safety, and
- greenhouse gas reduction, as mandated by the [Global Warming Solutions Act](#).

The FUTURE Act also creates jobs and is good for our economy:

- Renewable energy has already created 11,500 new jobs and made possible more than \$5 billion in new investments in Massachusetts.^v
- Safe, clean, affordable, and renewable home heating is available now and keeps money in our local economy and creates more well-paid jobs.^{vi}
- Renewable thermal technology can replace our decaying gas system with affordable heat pumps, thermal storage, solar thermal, and modern district energy systems.^{vii}

We need our gas utilities to help Massachusetts build a clean, safe, healthy, and sustainable renewable energy future. The FUTURE Act provides opportunities and incentives for gas companies to develop, deploy, and implement the improved technologies and practices we all need now.

Thank you,

Name of signer _____

i The deficient performance in closing leaks is depicted in Exhibit A.

ii In 2014-2017, 41 cities and towns across the state in a bi-partisan show of support, representing 41% of the state's population adopted resolutions supporting legislation to address the fact that ratepayers were paying for the leaked gas. The 41 towns are: Arlington, Bedford, Boston, Brookline, Somerville, Chelmsford, Chelsea, Cheshire, Concord, Dalton, Fall River, Framingham, Gloucester, Great Barrington, Haverhill, Hopkinton, Lexington, Lowell, Lynn, Malden, Marblehead, Medford, Natick, Newton, North Adams, Northampton, Pittsfield, Quincy, Reading, Rockland, Salem, Somerville, Springfield, Swampscott, Waltham, Wayland, Wellesley, Weston, Weymouth, Williamstown and Worcester.

iii The [Worcester Business Journal](#) estimated the cost of leaked gas to ratepayers at \$39 million per year.

iv See also "[America Pays for Gas Leaks](#)", a 2013 report prepared for Senator Edward J. Markey.

v Solar Energy Industries Association, <https://www.seia.org/state-solar-policy/massachusetts-solar>

vi Replacing all the leaky gas pipes under our streets is not an option. It will take decades and cost gas customers over \$9 billion for pipes that will be outdated by 2050.

vii District Energy distributes thermal energy to buildings through underground pipes. It is used on the Harvard & MIT campuses, in cities such as Stockholm and Paris, and in countries such as Denmark.

Exhibit A:

No Real Progress on Gas Leak Repair in MA

16,778 leaks at Year-end 2017

As leaks are fixed, new ones appear:
19,000 repairs but
18,000 new leaks each year

Gas Utilities estimate
\$70 million to repair
remaining leaks.

Gas Leaks Allies

