

ViewPoint: State needs balanced approach on energy

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The current debate on the state's energy future is becoming overheated. With so much at stake — achieving key environmental goals, reducing energy costs — it is important for state policy-makers to get this right. An omnibus energy bill should strike a balanced approach that reduces costs for consumers and business while achieving a cleaner, more reliable energy future.

There are some indisputable facts in the current public policy debate over the state's energy future.

Massachusetts has the third-highest residential electricity costs of any state in the U.S. For industrial users here, the cost of energy is more than twice the national average. Massachusetts ratepayers—from a person turning on the light in their home, to a small employer firing up their machine shop, to a large multinational company engaging in R&D—are at a competitive disadvantage.

At the same time, Massachusetts must achieve targets in the reduction of greenhouse gases, mandated by the Global Warming Solutions Act, by 2020, and then again by 2050. Therein lies the challenge facing policymakers: addressing cost and addressing greenhouse gas emissions at the same time.

The [Massachusetts Business Roundtable](#) supports public policy that would address both cost and environmental concerns. The public-policy goal must be to provide reliable, sustainable, affordable energy resources for consumers and businesses that enables the state to meet the needs of a growing economy and the goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act in the most cost-effective way possible.

To achieve this goal, the roundtable supports a balanced, competitive, regional approach that includes renewable energy sources, natural gas, efficiency programs, and innovative on-site distributed generation. A framework should be guided by the following principles:

1. Pursue a balanced approach. A balanced public policy approach to meet the Global Warming Solutions Act targets in 2020 and 2050 and promote long-term economic development must include: growth in renewable energy sources; increased supply of natural gas; continued focus on energy efficiency; and promoting new technologies that deliver innovative on-site distributed generation and storage solutions.

2. Promote competition. Ensure a transparent, competitive marketplace across all sources of energy being generated, transmitted and distributed throughout the region and maximize the impact of competitive forces to ensure the most cost-effective outcomes for businesses and consumers.

3. Collaborate regionally. Regional problems demand regional solutions. Massachusetts must work effectively with partners in the New England region to strengthen the reliability, diversity and consistent supply of energy, while modernizing aging infrastructure.

4. Foster innovation and technology. Technology and innovation will continue to change where and how energy is produced, stored, and delivered. Public policy must consider—and foster an environment conducive to—technological advancement and incorporating innovative solutions now and into the future.

The high cost of energy and electricity is uncompetitive and must be addressed. At the same time, it must be balanced with continued focus on efficiency, technology and a cost competitive strategy for renewable energy to ensure a clean, sustainable energy future for the commonwealth.

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