



**The Commonwealth of Massachusetts**  
**General Court**

Secretary Rebecca Tepper  
100 Cambridge Street, 9<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Boston, MA, 02114

August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023

Dear Secretary Tepper,

A few months ago, the Attorney General released a report entitled *Overly Impacted and Rarely Heard: Incorporating Community Voices into Massachusetts Energy Regulatory Proceedings*.<sup>1</sup> This report illustrated how the existing culture at the DPU has led to worsening relationships with the public. The Attorney General outlined many of the concerns that we in the Legislature share regarding the DPU's inaccessible and opaque practices. The report highlights that the public feels that their input is disregarded while the utility companies' interests are prioritized. As the Commonwealth transitions towards carbon neutral energy production, there is no better time for the Department to take the immediate and necessary steps to ensure that the public's interests are protected.

As members of the Legislature, we are requesting that you begin to implement many of the recommendations that would include equipping our constituents with the information necessary to participate in DPU proceedings. It is important that communities directly impacted by the DPU's decisions be engaged with, rather than dictated to. The Department has neglected its regulatory responsibility of supporting all neighborhoods' right to meaningful involvement in energy and environmental decision-making.<sup>2</sup> We encourage the DPU to take an important first step and equip the public with a calendar of events, comment deadlines, and educational webinars. Providing plain language summaries and a list of commonly used abbreviations would help the public decode complicated proceedings full of technical language and legalese.<sup>3</sup> Consumers must be able to understand the impacts of decisions without needing industry experience or assistance of counsel to engage with the Department.

The DPU's outdated filing room is unsearchable, making it nearly impossible for the public to track lengthy proceedings that directly affect their utility bills. Applications for municipalities to join preexisting municipal aggregations can take upwards of eighteen months, leaving ratepayers paying higher basic service rates without explanation. Since the public cannot search the filing room, they are left for months, even years, wondering how they will be impacted by delayed closed-door deliberations. This silence creates the appearance of an inaccessible and disinterested

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<sup>1</sup> "Overly Impacted and Rarely Heard: Incorporating Community Voices into Massachusetts Energy Regulatory Proceedings." *Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General*, 4 May 2023, [www.mass.gov/doc/overly-impacted-and-rarely-heard-incorporating-community-voices-into-massachusetts-energy-regulatory-processes-swg-report](http://www.mass.gov/doc/overly-impacted-and-rarely-heard-incorporating-community-voices-into-massachusetts-energy-regulatory-processes-swg-report).

<sup>2</sup> "Environmental Justice Policy of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs." *Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs*, 24 June, 2023, [www.mass.gov/doc/environmental-justice-policy6242021-update/download](http://www.mass.gov/doc/environmental-justice-policy6242021-update/download).

<sup>3</sup> "Overly Impacted and Rarely Heard: Incorporating Community Voices into Massachusetts Energy Regulatory Proceedings." 70.

DPU that focuses on appeasing utility companies rather than delivering efficient results for the consumer.

Reengaging the DPU with ratepayers will be a long process involving comprehensive regulatory and legislative changes. The Governor is to be commended for appointing new DPU commissioners, and we hope that they will work to bring a new and transparent culture to the Department. The Legislature is looking forward to working in partnership with the EEA to create an accessible and engaging DPU. As we begin implementing a new era of clean energy, Massachusetts residents deserve to have the opportunity to voice their concerns with energy and rate decisions. We are hopeful that new leadership and reforms will foster a positive and transparent relationship between the DPU and the public.

Sincerely,

Rep. John Barrett III  
1<sup>st</sup> Berkshire District

Senator Paul Mark  
Berkshire, Hampden, Franklin and Hampshire District

Rep. Tricia Farley-Bouvier  
2<sup>nd</sup> Berkshire District

Senator John Velis  
Hampden and Hampshire District

Rep. Smitty Pignatelli  
3<sup>rd</sup> Berkshire District

Senator Jacob Oliveira  
Hampden, Hampshire and Worcester District

Rep. Carol Doherty  
3<sup>rd</sup> Bristol District

Senator Barry Finegold  
Second Essex and Middlesex District

Rep. Carole Fiola  
6<sup>th</sup> Bristol District

Senator Jason Lewis  
Fifth Middlesex District

Rep. Natalie Blais  
1<sup>st</sup> Franklin District

Senator Walter Timilty  
Norfolk, Plymouth, and Bristol District

Rep. Susannah Whipps  
2<sup>nd</sup> Franklin District

Senator Patrick O'Connor  
First Plymouth and Norfolk District

Rep. Jerald Parisella  
6<sup>th</sup> Essex District

Senator Michael Brady  
Second Plymouth and Norfolk District

Rep. Manny Cruz  
7<sup>th</sup> Essex District

Senator Nick Collins  
First Suffolk District

Rep. Jennifer Armini  
8<sup>th</sup> Essex District

Senator Robyn Kennedy  
First Worcester District

Rep. Peter Capano  
11<sup>th</sup> Essex District

Rep. Thomas Walsh  
12<sup>th</sup> Essex District

Rep. Sally Kernas  
13<sup>th</sup> Essex District

Rep. Shirley Arriaga  
8<sup>th</sup> Hampden District

Rep. Carlos Gonzalez  
10<sup>th</sup> Hampden District

Rep. Lindsay Sabadosa  
1<sup>st</sup> Hampshire District

Rep. Mindy Domb  
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Rep. Margaret Scarsdale  
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Rep. Mike Connolly  
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Rep. Steven Ultrino  
33<sup>rd</sup> Middlesex District

Rep. Colleen Garry  
36<sup>th</sup> Middlesex District

Rep. John Rogers  
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Rep. Mathew Muratore  
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Rep. Gerard Cassidy  
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Rep. Samantha Montaña  
15<sup>th</sup> Suffolk District

Rep. Jonathan Zlotnik  
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Rep. Brian Murray  
10<sup>th</sup> Worcester District

Rep. David LeBoeuf  
17<sup>th</sup> Worcester District