

Governor Deval Patrick
Massachusetts State House, Room 360
Boston, MA 02133

September 4, 2014

Re: Hold the Line Against Dirty Fuels in Massachusetts

Dear Governor Patrick:

The undersigned organizations urge you to take steps to keep tar sands-derived fuels out of the Massachusetts energy supply. Our organizations represent more than 190,000 Massachusetts members, including thousands who have written to you to ask you to keep tar sands derived fuels out of the state.

Under your leadership, Massachusetts has taken a number of important steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. From the passage of the Global Warming Solutions Act and leadership in the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to more recent efforts like joining the eight-state Zero Emission Vehicle Memorandum of Understanding and establishing consumer rebates for electric vehicle purchases and leases, the Commonwealth has staked a claim in the clean energy economy.

However, gains from these excellent initiatives could be undermined if high carbon fuels derived from tar sands enter the Commonwealth's fuel supply. A recent report by Hart Energy¹ shows that by 2020, fuels derived from tar sands could make up between 11.5 and 18.0 percent of the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic market – compared to less than 1 percent in 2012 – unless you act quickly to keep this high carbon fuel out of the state's fuel supply.

On a lifecycle basis, producing and burning gasoline from tar sands generates on average 17 percent more greenhouse gas emissions than the U.S. average for gasoline. **An influx of tar sands-derived fuels will have disastrous effects for residents of the Commonwealth, adding climate change pollution that harms our health, economy, and environment.**

Initially, you showed great leadership in pursuing regional policy solutions to reduce the carbon intensity of our transportation fuels. In 2009, you took a leadership role in launching a regional Clean Fuels Standard (CFS) effort by initiating a memorandum of understanding (MOU) focused on the development of a regional CFS which was signed by governors from 11 Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. Your commitment to pursuing a CFS is also embodied in the 2008 Clean Energy Biofuels Act and the Massachusetts 2020 Clean Energy & Climate Plan. However, despite your initial leadership, and the commitment to establishing a CFS that is embodied in existing policy, the Commonwealth has not yet taken action to adopt a CFS.

¹ Hart Energy, Evaluation of Potential Pathways for Tar Sands to the U.S. Northeast, June 2013 available at: http://docs.nrdc.org/energy/files/ene_14011601a.pdf

Massachusetts, in conjunction with other states in the region, can avoid the looming disaster presented by the influx of dirty tar sands-derived fuels. Recently, Governor Hassan of New Hampshire sent the environmental community a letter committing to work with other states in the region to track carbon fuel intensity, in conjunction with the New England Governors/Eastern Canadian Premiers Conference and NESCAUM. Governor Shumlin has also committed to investigate tracking transportation fuel carbon intensity in Vermont, demonstrating a growing regional interest in this issue. A CFS in Massachusetts would both hold the line against more carbon-intensive transportation fuels, as well as promote lower-carbon alternative fuels, leading to lower overall transportation fuel carbon intensity in the Commonwealth. Importantly, the CFS will also reduce the state's reliance on volatile world oil markets and help protect consumers from costly gasoline price spikes.

In the near term, we urge you to lead Massachusetts in rejecting tar sands by taking the following actions:

- Track the sources and carbon intensity of our fuels. This will provide the framework to move forward with broader policies.
- Enact a 'no backsliding' policy that would mandate that the carbon intensity of our transportation fuel mix can't get worse.

Earlier this year, you heard from thousands of grassroots supporters who sent the message that Massachusetts cannot tolerate an influx of dirty fuels like tar sands. We hope you will maintain your commitment to a clean fuel economy in Massachusetts, and take the steps necessary to prevent our current gains from being overcome by high carbon fuels. Your commitment to holding the line against dirty fuels and promoting clean fuel alternatives in the Commonwealth is needed now more than ever. We look forward to working with you to put Massachusetts on a path to clean fuels.

Sincerely,

Craig Altemose
Executive Director
Better Future Project

Robert L. Zimmerman, Jr.
Executive Director
Charles River Watershed Association

Gary Rucinski
Co-founder, Chairman
Citizens Climate Lobby (MA)

Cindy Luppi
New England Director
Clean Water Action

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Luke Tonachel
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Claire Miller
Massachusetts State Director
Toxics Action Center