

PFT TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF H. 3196

Chairman Roy, Ranking Member Jones and distinguished members of this committee: My name is Gary Meltz, and I am the Executive Director of Power for Tomorrow, a non-partisan advocacy organization, which operates on a national level and represents the united interests of energy experts, organized labor and electric utilities on the principle that consumers benefit when electric utilities are sensibly regulated.

I sincerely want to thank you for the opportunity to testify before your committee today on an issue that is important for Massachusetts residents: ensuring that ratepayers are protected from predatory retail electricity suppliers that engage in business practices that often leave the poorest and most vulnerable parts of the community paying more – not less – for electricity.

In fact, there may be no better rationale for a statewide regulatory body, to oversee the local electric company to ensure stable electricity rates, than the proliferation of retail electricity suppliers in states which have walked away from the traditional regulatory model to deregulate or restructure their electricity services.

Consider these facts uncovered by the recent Massachusetts Attorney General's report on the predatory actions of retail electricity suppliers which operate in Massachusetts.

- One: Massachusetts energy consumers who buy electricity from the retail supply market have overpaid by \$525 million.
- Two: between 2015 and 2021 roughly 430,000 residential customers who purchased electricity from retail electricity suppliers, other than regional or local utilities, paid an average of \$231 more a year than they would have paid if they had kept their old service.
- Three: that competitive retail electricity suppliers target vulnerable and low-income populations like seniors, minorities and non-English speaking consumers.
- And lastly, that in just one city, Lawrence, where about a quarter of the city's residents use competitive retail electricity suppliers, ratepayers lost more than \$192,194 during a one-month period in September 2021, or an average of \$28.33 that month per household.

These facts mirror a similar report issued in 2021, by then AG, and now Governor Maura Healey, which found that “in the last five years, individual residential customers who received their electricity from competitive suppliers paid \$426 million more on their bills than they would have paid if they had stayed with their utility companies.”

Regrettably, the competitive retail electricity supply industry continues to persist in Massachusetts and aggressively advocates for their lucrative business model that overcharges those least able to afford high power bills.

I urge the Committee to pass H. 3196. It's time for Massachusetts to end retail electricity supply in the Bay State. This will protect vulnerable populations from paying too much for electricity and help ensure reliable and affordable energy for all customers 24/7/365.