

SENATE No. 2152

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

PRESENTED BY:

Brendan P. Crighton

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts in General Court assembled:

The undersigned legislators and/or citizens respectfully petition for the adoption of the accompanying bill:

An Act establishing the gateway cities renewable, efficient, and electrified neighborhoods initiative.

PETITION OF:

NAME:	DISTRICT/ADDRESS:	
<i>Brendan P. Crighton</i>	<i>Third Essex</i>	
<i>Christina A. Minicucci</i>	<i>14th Essex</i>	<i>2/24/2021</i>
<i>James B. Eldridge</i>	<i>Middlesex and Worcester</i>	<i>3/2/2021</i>

SENATE No. 2152

By Mr. Crighton, a petition (accompanied by bill, Senate, No. 2152) of Brendan P. Crighton, Christina A. Minicucci and James B. Eldridge for legislation to establish the gateway cities renewable, efficient, and electrified neighborhoods initiative. Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy.

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**In the One Hundred and Ninety-Second General Court
(2021-2022)**

An Act establishing the gateway cities renewable, efficient, and electrified neighborhoods initiative.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

1 Chapter 25A of the General Laws is hereby amended by adding the following section:-

2 Section 18. GREEN Act.

3 (a) As used in this section the following words shall have the following meanings unless
4 the context clearly requires otherwise:-

5 “Clean cooking technology,” a non-combustion technology used to prepare food without
6 emitting greenhouse gases or other harmful pollutants in normal operation, such as induction
7 cooktops and electric coil stoves.

8 “Clean heating technology,” a non-combustion technology used to provide space heating
9 and cooling or water heating and cooling without emitting greenhouse gases or other harmful

10 pollutants in normal operation, such as air-source heat pumps, ground-source heat pumps, and
11 solar hot water systems.

12 “Department,” the department of energy resources.

13 “Gateway municipality,” as defined in section 3A of chapter 23A.

14 “Highly energy efficient,” using efficient appliances and lighting and plumbing fixtures,
15 with a building envelope that meets passive house standards or as close to passive house
16 standards as practicable given the constraints of the building.

17 “Initiative,” the Gateway Cities Renewable, Efficient, and Electrified Neighborhoods
18 Initiative, known as the GREEN Initiative.

19 “Low income,” earning below 50 per cent of area median income.

20 “Moderate income,” earning between 50 to 80 per cent of area median income.

21 “Naturally occurring affordable housing units,” unsubsidized housing units that are
22 typically occupied by low income or moderate income individuals or groups of individuals.

23 “Passive house standards,” standards for the construction of highly energy efficient
24 buildings, including but not limited to: (a) continuous insulation throughout the entire building
25 envelope without any thermal bridging; (b) an extremely airtight building envelope, preventing
26 infiltration of outside air and loss of conditioned air; (c) high-performance windows and doors
27 that exploit the sun's energy for heating purposes in the heating season and minimize overheating
28 during the cooling season; (d) balanced heat- and moisture-recovery ventilation; and (e) a
29 minimal space conditioning system.

30 “Qualifying municipality,” a gateway municipality or smaller qualifying municipality.

31 “Renewable electricity,” electricity produced by a renewable energy generating source.

32 “Renewable energy generating source,” as defined in section 11F of chapter 25A.

33 “Smaller qualifying municipality,” a municipality that meets all of the criteria to be a
34 gateway municipality except that its population is 35,000 or less.

35 (b) There shall be a Gateway Cities Renewable, Efficient, and Electrified Neighborhoods
36 Initiative, known as the GREEN Initiative, within the department. The department may contract
37 with the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to administer all or part of the GREEN Initiative.
38 The purpose of the GREEN Initiative is to retrofit existing low income and moderate income
39 housing in qualifying municipalities to be highly energy efficient, use only clean heating
40 technologies and clean cooking technologies, and where possible be powered by electricity from
41 on-site renewable energy generating sources. The initiative shall collect data and identify best
42 practices for retrofitting Massachusetts’ existing low income and moderate income housing
43 stock.

44 (c) Phase 1 of the GREEN Initiative shall begin no later than 12 months from the
45 effective date of this section, and shall last for 2 years. The initiative shall fund at least 1 project
46 in each gateway municipality and a total of 10 projects in smaller qualifying municipalities each
47 year.

48 (d) In each year of phase 1, electric and gas distribution companies and municipal
49 aggregators with certified clean energy plans shall transfer a sum of money to the department of
50 energy resources sufficient to administer the initiative, collect and analyze data, and provide

51 incentives, rebates, or other financial assistance necessary to complete the retrofits beyond the
52 financial assistance already available from ratepayer-funded energy efficiency programs or other
53 utility, state or federal programs. The department of public utilities shall increase the charges
54 assessed to electric and gas utility customers under sections 19 and 21 of chapter 25 by an
55 amount equal to the sum of money transferred to the department of energy resources under this
56 subsection, to ensure that there is no reduction in the funds available to carry out the energy
57 efficiency investment plan and natural gas efficiency investment plan.

58 (e) Municipal governments, nonprofit organizations, or other entities, known as sponsor
59 organizations, shall apply to the department to carry out a project in a qualifying municipality.
60 Each project shall retrofit at least 10 existing low income or moderate income housing units to be
61 highly energy efficient, use only clean heating technologies and clean cooking technologies, and
62 where possible be powered by electricity from on-site renewable energy generating sources. The
63 housing units may be in single-family or multi-family buildings. If a residential building includes
64 commercial space, the project may also retrofit the commercial space within the building.

65 (f) In phase 1, the department shall prioritize retrofits of naturally occurring affordable
66 housing units in buildings with 10 or fewer housing units, including buildings occupied by
67 owners and buildings occupied by tenants.

68 (g) The department shall assist sponsor organizations in assessing technology options and
69 identifying qualified contractors to carry out the retrofits. The department shall work with the
70 department of public utilities and other state agencies to provide a single application process for
71 sponsor organizations, building owners, and tenants to qualify for all applicable energy
72 efficiency, clean heating, clean cooking, and renewable electricity financial assistance programs

73 offered by the commonwealth, electric and gas distribution companies, and municipal
74 aggregators with certified clean energy plans, and for additional incentives offered by the
75 department through the initiative. The department shall develop incentive structures that
76 encourage property owners to maintain their properties as low income or moderate income
77 housing after retrofits are completed.

78 (h) The department shall set goals for the participation of contractors that are minority
79 business enterprises and women business enterprises in projects funded by the initiative.

80 (i) The department may cover the costs of pre-weatherization, electrical service upgrades,
81 or other improvements necessary before energy efficiency, clean heating, clean cooking, and
82 renewable electricity upgrades can be completed.

83 (j) Each sponsor organization shall hold at least one event open to the general public to
84 share the results of the project, and shall make an effort to publicize the results of the project to
85 local news outlets and on social media. Each sponsor organization shall make information about
86 the project available online in the predominant languages spoken in the community, and shall
87 provide interpretation services at the event for non-English speakers. The department shall
88 provide financial assistance for sponsor organizations to pay for interpretation and translation
89 services.

90 (k) The department shall collect quantitative and qualitative data on the results of phase 1
91 and publish evaluations no later than 6 months after the end of the first year and 6 months after
92 the end of the second year of phase 1. The evaluations shall consider data on energy savings,
93 utility bill savings, improvements in indoor and outdoor air quality, reductions in greenhouse gas
94 emissions and other pollutants, and improvements in comfort and safety for residents, and

95 identify the most effective retrofit approaches for each housing type. The evaluations shall also
96 include data on the participation of contractors that are minority business enterprises and women
97 business enterprises in projects funded by the initiative.

98 (l) The department shall convene a task force to design and oversee phase 2 of the
99 initiative, including individuals representing the executive office of energy and environmental
100 affairs, department of energy resources, department of public utilities, department of
101 environmental protection, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, department of housing and
102 community development, executive office of labor and workforce development, and department
103 of public health. The task force shall also include at least 2 low income or moderate income
104 residents of qualifying municipalities, and at least 2 representatives of nonprofit organizations
105 headquartered in or with a significant presence in qualifying municipalities. The task force shall
106 consider results from the evaluation of phase 1 in designing phase 2, shall hold at least 3 public
107 hearings in qualifying municipalities, and shall consider a range of funding sources including
108 commonwealth and federal programs.

109 (m) Phase 2 of the initiative shall begin at the expiration of phase 1, and shall continue
110 for at least 8 years. At the request of the department of energy resources, the department of
111 public utilities shall authorize further transfers of money to pay for the costs of the initiative,
112 subject to the conditions in subsection (d) of this section.