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For Immediate Release

Senate to vote on S9 Climate Change Article today.... All are encouraged to read and become educated on the restriction of natural gas in construction. Impacts will be felt across many segments until technology catches up with demand.

Climate change and global warming reduction are two catch phrases or buzz words that everyone seems to pass around. In the trades, Stretch Code revisions are helping to achieve this environmentally friendly way of life. At home, we all do our best to recycle weekly and are encouraged to do so by our municipalities through the catchy reduce, reuse, recycle slogan. Today, April 14th, there is a bill being presented for vote on the State Senate floor regarding climate change – Senate Bill 9. If passed, it will move to the House and could become part of the Massachusetts General Laws by mid-summer. The piece of legislation covers many different methods of achieving reduced emissions by 2050. A noble cause that many can get behind and will support. Its gritty details however need to be further examined and if they aren't trouble will be lurking.

For the past 25+ years, we've witnessed first-hand the failures, improvements and current innovations of the automotive industry with regard to the move from gas to hybrid to electric vehicles. It seems every public parking area has at least one, or a plan to add at least one, electric charging station and we all know someone who has made the switch to an all electric vehicle and raves about it.

A study by the US Energy Information Administration stated that in 2020, half of the dwellings in the Commonwealth were using natural gas for heating their home, 1 in 4 were using oil and 1 in 6 were using electricity.

While everyone agrees that protection of the environment is good and a much-needed movement, the science and testing behind the equipment on the utility end of the transaction has not had enough cultivating time to be ready to meet the challenge. The current bill is rushing the movement of household and business heating equipment amongst other efforts. The bill would ban natural gas from installation in new construction projects over a certain size. The movement could cease many construction plans as the cost for implementation will rise exponentially causing developers and owners to rethink projects and stop pipeline initiatives from coming to fruition until technology catches up. This will have negative affects on many levels. People will think twice before choosing to renovate, trades will loose years of work because projects are not happening, suppliers will be saddled with equipment that isn't moving, manufacturers will have layoffs because of order halts and the train keeps moving further up the rails.

A little over a year ago, the Town of Brookline sought to "make conditions better" by implementing a ban on natural gas installation in new construction and renovations over a certain size. After being voted in by the town meeting members, a case was brought in front of Attorney General Maura Healy's office. It was there determined that the bylaw should be overturned because of the power it would give to the Department of Public Utilities and it was determined at that time that more work was needed before something like this could be implemented because of the down stream ramification to the end user, the utility companies, the construction trade and equipment manufacturers. The current bill will in its first release establish a path for 10 communities to become "testing labs" for banning the use of natural gas in construction projects. There are an additional 30 communities waiting to see how the first wave goes and anxious to join the ranks.

While it sounds great that we should have cleaner air by banning natural gas, the use of coal and oil are what will be used to keep up the demand in production for electricity. The hidden factors are that the air will be dirtier before its cleaner because the technology is not ready. We encourage everyone to think twice about this movement. While it is a necessary evil, and many environmental interest groups are encouraging law makers to rush the timeline of elimination of natural gas and other fossil fuels, does

it really make sense to act first and apologize later in this instance, we think not. Instead of helping the next generation, we could be setting them further back unless the proper timeline is rolled out.

Trade interest groups like members from the Plumbing Heating Cooling Contractors of MA, The United Association of Union Plumbers, Fitters, Welders and Service Technicians, Plumbers Local 12 Union Representatives, The Great Boston Plumbing Contractors Association, The New England Mechanical Contractors Association of Massachusetts, and several other groups have been slowly meeting with local Senators to discuss the ramifications of this bill on the industry. We are encouraging all to get educated fast and start reaching out to your local legislators regarding this piece of legislation. While we all agree its time to do something, acting before technology has had an opportunity to catch up is only setting us back, not moving us forward and in the end, the environment everyone is so desperately looking to save will suffer.

For the full bill S.2819 Text, see this link: [Bill S.2819](#)

To contact your State Legislators, use this link for contact information: [Find My Legislator \(malegislature.gov\)](#)

PHCC of MA is part of the oldest trade association in the country. Working with plumbing heating and cooling contractors across the State and Nationally to help promote the industry, provide continuing education and other business programs and ensure the trade, business and other needs are kept watch over for our members. Please visit [phccma.org](#) for more details.

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