



## Springfield Regional Chamber Adopts Energy Position

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*SPRINGFIELD* — The board of directors of the Springfield Regional Chamber voted this week, on behalf of its members, to take a position on energy in the state of Massachusetts and to support a balanced energy portfolio, including the expansion of the supply of natural gas.

“Energy is a critical issue for our members. While they acknowledge that regional investment in the transmission infrastructure has increased the reliability of our grid, they see that demand for natural gas continues to rise and the infrastructure is not in place to support such demand,” said chamber President Jeffrey Ciuffreda. “This not only increases their already-high costs of electricity, but causes constraints on the infrastructure and supply. Combined, they tell us it significantly impeded their continued economic development and the economic development of our region.”

As a result, Ciuffreda said the Chamber, on their behalf, has adopted the following position:

“The Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce (SRC), through its members, has long identified the high, and increasing, cost of energy as a major issue to address and more recently has identified the constraints on the supply of natural gas as a major deterrent to economic development in the region.

“Therefore, the chamber supports the expansion of the supply of natural gas, especially to the Western Massachusetts region, as a means to assist in economic-development efforts as well as to reduce the cost of electricity. The chamber acknowledges that two pipeline expansions are in various stages of development, the Spectra project as well as the Kinder Morgan project, and encourages the development of each. The chamber believes that there are sufficient permitting

and regulatory rules in place to ensure the safety of these projects and the protection of lands in and around these projects.

“While endorsing the increased supply of natural gas, the chamber also reiterates its support for the goal set by the state for the development of solar energy and encourages swift action on a comprehensive energy bill that will further bring on line other alternative energies such as wind and hydro.

“Finally, the chamber is encouraging its members to take advantage of the programs available, many funded through electricity charges, for conservation and efficiencies. There is no better way to lower the cost of electricity than through those efforts.

“Moving toward this balanced portfolio of energy sources and recognizing the conditions and constraints about being in New England will ensure a better future for all — businesses and residents alike.”

Ciuffreda said the chamber will work with local and state officials, utility companies, and developers to continue to advocate on behalf of its members for the programs and capital necessary to lower these escalating costs and improve the region’s infrastructure, and will be an active participant in reviewing any legislation on this issue.

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