



October 30, 2025

Dear Chair Barrett, Chair Cusack and members of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy,

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts (LWVMA), comprised of 3,000 members in 44 local Leagues across 155 municipalities, urges you to remove Section 45 when you report [H.4144](#), An Act relative to energy affordability, independence and innovation, Governor Healey's energy bond bill out of the House Telecommunications Utilities and Energy Committee.

LWVMA applauds the Herculean efforts of this committee to meet the Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050. However, LWVMA opposes Section 45 due to the lack of citizen participation as well as the promotion of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).

While fighting for a broad range of environmental legislation, the League has stressed citizen participation as a necessary component of decision-making related to nuclear energy at all levels of government. Section 45 repeals the referendum passed by 67% of voters in 1982 that requires voter approval before any new nuclear power plants and radioactive waste facilities are constructed in an outside section amendment. The governor repeals the referendum via "outside section amendment." LWVMA supports outside section amendments in budgets and bond bills that add an entire bill/policy for which we are already advocating. However such amendments are already filed as legislation and will have public hearings.

The League of Women Voters of the United States believes that democratic government depends upon informed and active participation at all levels of government. The League further believes that governmental bodies must protect the citizen's right to know by giving adequate notice of proposed actions. Repealing a referendum within an outside section amendment in a bond bill does not give notice to voters as it was not legislation previously filed and therefore had a public hearing.

To meet Net Zero climate goals by 2050, Governor Healey and Energy Secretary Rebecca Tepper as well as environmental groups propose use of SMRs--small fission reactors--currently only in use in China and Russia. SMR technology in the United States is presently unproven. Additionally, radioactive waste remains an issue. The League opposes increased reliance on nuclear fission and opposes licensing for construction of fission power plants--large or small. The League has long opposed building a radioactive waste disposal facility in Massachusetts.

Most importantly, we can all agree that Holtec's decommissioning of the Pilgrim plant in Plymouth has been a disaster--pun intended. Holtec's mismanagement remains a grave danger to the health and safety of residents of the Commonwealth as well as to Cape Cod Bay, the Atlantic Ocean and related

natural ecosystems. Attorney General Andrea Campbell filed a civil lawsuit in February 2024 against Holtec for mishandling asbestos during the initial demolition. In July 2024, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) denied Holtec a permit to dump 1.1 million gallons of radioactive waste into Cape Cod Bay based on the Massachusetts Ocean Sanctuaries Act. Next a *whistleblower* alerted the public to Holtec evaporating radioactive wastewater into the air—[a continued threat to this day](#). Based on our collective experience, we strongly advise against Holtec or any other nuclear power company playing Russian roulette with public health.

While nuclear power has changed dramatically since the ballot measure passed in 1982, valid safety concerns remain the focus of advocacy work at three of our local Leagues closest to the Pilgrim Plant: LWV of the Cape Cod Area, LWV Plymouth and LWV Falmouth. These three local Leagues have actively supported numerous state level bills throughout the years including S.1507/H.2254 An Act Relative to Monitoring Dry Casks of Spent Nuclear Fuel, among others. LWVMA hosted education forums and issued action alerts related to legislation specific to the Pilgrim plant decommissioning. These local Leagues on and near Cape Cod also attend the [Nuclear Decommissioning Citizens Advisory Panel](#) or NDCAP monthly meetings.

LWVMA supports investment in renewable energy to meet our climate goals but these must be policies that limit reliance on nuclear fission. To learn more about the misconceptions of SMRs as a climate crisis solution, we encourage you and your staff to attend *The Risks of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs)* on Wednesday, November 12 from 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM in Room 222 of the State House. Dr. Edwin Lyman, Nuclear Safety Director for the Union of Concerned Scientists, discusses the risks of small modular nuclear reactors.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to remove Section 45 of H.4144 before reporting it out of committee.

Sincerely,



Courtney Henderson
Board Co-President



Courtney Rau Rogers
Board Co-President



Jennifer Muroff
Legislative Action
Committee Chair