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TOWN OF ARLINGTON
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**RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF
MASSACHUSETTS HOUSE BILL H.2849
MASSACHUSETTS SENATE BILL S.1940
*An Act for Utility Transition to Using Renewable Energy
(The FUTURE Act)***

WHEREAS: The Select Board of the Town of Arlington committed in 2010 to preparing for the impact of climate change and to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the Commonwealth by the year 2050 to at least 80 percent of the 1990 level, as required by the Global Warming Solutions Act of 2008; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Arlington has now joined the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, adopting its goal of achieving net zero emissions by 2050; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Arlington has constituted the Clean Energy Future Committee under the direction of the Town Energy Manager to guide the Town in achieving its net zero by 2050 goal; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Arlington participates in the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Program to prepare for, and become resilient in the face of, local impacts of climate change; and

WHEREAS: The Arlington Select Board resolved to support the earlier Gas Consumer Cost Protection bill, H.2870 by vote in 2015; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Arlington has one of the older natural gas infrastructures in the Commonwealth, with hundreds of gas leaks beneath its streets leaking methane into the atmosphere; and

WHEREAS: Gas leaks contain 95% methane, a greenhouse gas that is 84 times more potent than carbon dioxide over a 20-year period; and

WHEREAS: Methane from gas leaks damages or kills Arlington's street trees – trees which improve the quality of life of Arlington's residents, provide protection for the Town's residents

against extreme heat and storm water flooding, and increase property values and the Town's property tax base; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Arlington has already submitted several claims to the gas utility National Grid for the loss of public trees that have died as the result of leaking gas distribution lines; and

WHEREAS: The Town of Arlington can reasonably expect to submit additional such claims for public trees killed by gas leaks; and

WHEREAS: An aging fracked gas infrastructure poses serious health and safety risks as evidenced by the explosions in the Merrimack Valley in September of 2018; and

WHEREAS: The September 13, 2019 report, "Rolling the Dice: Assessment of the Gas System Safety in Massachusetts," written by Bob Ackley, Molly Fairchild, Sarah Griffith, Nathan Phillips, Ph.D., and Regina LaRocque, MD, MPH, gasleaksallies.org, identifies

"multiple problems and hazards in continuing to rely on an explosive gas as an energy source as well as the Commonwealth's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions dramatically over the coming decades [and makes] over 50 recommendations toward a strategy of triage and transition:

- **Triage** Reduce short-term risks to safety, health, and property by enhancing statewide gas leak classification standards and prioritizing the largest and most hazardous leaks for repair, not pipe replacement.
- **Transition** Eliminate long-term risks intrinsic to reliance on a combustible gas by deploying a managed, just transition to cleaner, safer, and more cost-effective heating and cooling solutions"; and

WHEREAS: The Gas Leaks Allies report in its "Legislative Mandates for Transition," supports the FUTURE Act as described below as an effective means for moving the Commonwealth away from fossil fuels including natural gas; and

WHEREAS: Gas companies have not significantly reduced the number of gas leaks and the volume of methane emissions since the passage of [Chapter 149 of the Acts of 2014, An Act Relative to Natural Gas Leaks](#), requiring them to classify and repair leaks, and ratepayers still pay for the lost gas; and

WHEREAS: [House H.2849/Senate S.1940](#), "An Act for Utility Transition to Using Renewable Energy" (FUTURE Act) focuses on the problems with the distribution of natural gas in the Commonwealth, addressing not only the crumbling infrastructure and immediate safety concerns, but also creating a path forward by avoiding future stranded assets and permitting gas companies to distribute renewable thermal energy, including solar and geothermal, instead of explosive fossil fuel; and

WHEREAS: The FUTURE Act will empower municipalities to have stronger, safer, more

transparent working relationships with the gas companies by improving coordination for gas leak repairs and strengthening safety standards, mandating that the gas companies notify the local fire chief and police department within an hour of finding a dangerous leak, requiring that the gas companies and the Department of Public Utilities share maps, costs, and plans with municipalities and the public, and requiring that gas companies be audited annually for safety, performance, and leak reports; and

WHEREAS: The FUTURE Act will mandate that gas leaks within a specified distance of a school zone or building, or within the root zone of a tree, be fixed within 6 months; and

WHEREAS: The FUTURE Act will give municipalities an effective voice in proceedings before the Department of Public Utilities by permitting municipalities to participate in adjudicatory hearings related to their service areas, and allowing individuals and municipalities to pursue remedies with the DPU as an alternative to the courts for claims for property damage incurred during gas company roadwork, as well as damage to trees from gas leaks; and

WHEREAS: The FUTURE Act will authorize municipalities to procure local or district energy services and to establish an energy microgrid; and

WHEREAS: The FUTURE Act's legislative co-sponsors include Senator Cindy F. Friedman and Representatives Sean Garballey and David Rogers; now therefore be it

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: That the Arlington Select Board go on record in strong support of the principles embodied in The FUTURE Act (H.2849/S.1940) and urge the Legislature to pass the bill during the 2019-2020 session; and be it further

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk be and hereby is requested to forward suitably engrossed copies of this resolution to members of Arlington's Legislative Delegation, as well as to House Speaker Robert DeLeo, Senate President Karen Spilka, and Governor Charlie Baker on behalf of the Arlington Select Board.

_____	SELECT BOARD
_____	OF
_____	THE
_____	TOWN OF
_____	ARLINGTON

A true record.

ATTEST:

By: _____
Board Administrator