

LETTERS

Heat pumps: a green solution with more than a few gray areas

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There's another solution to consider

Sabrina Shankman's front-page story detailed some of the questions surrounding the notion that electric heat pumps are a welcome and cost-effective solution to combating climate change in Massachusetts.

Her report detailed the high costs associated with electric heat pumps, their performance deficiencies, and the failure of state energy officials and the utility-controlled Mass Save program to persuade homeowners and heating contractors to join the movement to "electrify" 1 million fossil-fueled homes by 2030. With a paltry 461 homes making the switch last year, the state needs to reassess its climate change strategy.

The heating oil industry has a proven, drop-in solution that is reducing greenhouse gas emissions now in Massachusetts: renewable biofuels blended with heating oil. The [greenhouse gas emissions](#) from biofuels are 66 percent to 82 percent less than emissions from traditional heating oil. Using biofuels requires no heating system modifications and costs about the same as regular heating oil.

The state's heavy reliance on heat pump technology while establishing a totally renewable electric grid is a laudable but challenging goal, and decades away. Meanwhile, contrary to what some believe, energy officials here should embrace the accelerated use of liquid biofuels as a pathway for immediate reductions in carbon emissions.

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