Email from MEMA President Michael Ferrante to WVCB TV's Ben Simmoneau in response to his television news report on May 4, 2026, that labeled heating oil "dirty."

Thank you for your continued reporting on climate change and decarbonization policies and programs in Massachusetts. I'm writing to respectfully offer some feedback regarding your recent report on ISO New England's reliance on distillate fuel—heating oil—to meet electricity demand during the past winter.

Referring to heating oil as a "dirty" fuel no longer accurately reflects the significant progress the retail heating oil industry and its partners at Clean Fuels Alliance America have made over the past two decades to transform the fuel. The industry across the Northeast has worked diligently to modernize and improve the environmental profile of this fuel, with measurable success.

That transformation has occurred through a combination of regulatory reform and private-sector investment. Industry leaders voluntarily partnered with state regulators and lawmakers to dramatically reduce sulfur content in heating oil. At the same time, the industry invested millions of dollars to support blending ultra-low sulfur heating oil with renewable liquid biofuels also known as biodiesel and Bioheat heat.

As a result, carbon emissions have steadily declined in millions of homes and businesses throughout New England, New York, and the Mid-Atlantic. These cleaner fuel blends provide immediate emissions reductions using existing heating systems and infrastructure. They are readily available, cost-effective, and highly efficient.

Despite this progress, organizations such as the Acadia Center continue to characterize heating oil as "dirty" while overlooking the fact that no other conventional heating fuel—including natural gas and propane—currently has a direct and scalable pathway for reducing carbon content through renewable blending.

The benefits of renewable liquid fuels are also reflected in public policy. Massachusetts enacted the Alternative Energy Portfolio Standard in 2018 to encourage the use of specific biofuels, and the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is expected to advance a Clean Heat Standard in 2028 that would further incentivize renewable biofuel use in heating oil.

Other states have recognized the environmental value of biofuels as well. Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island have adopted blending requirements for heating oil and/or diesel fuel that incorporate renewable biofuels.

I hope this information is helpful in providing additional perspective for future reporting on heating oil, renewable biofuels, heat pumps and climate policy.

And finally, Governor Healey's support for an all-energy sources strategy is sound policy.

Massachusetts still relies heavily on fossil fuels for electricity generation, and the electric grid remains years away from operating primarily on fully renewable sources. Given those realities, it should not be surprising if ISO New England once again turns to distillate fuels during future winter reliability events.

At the same time, Massachusetts residents already pay some of the highest electricity rates in the nation – about 31 cents per kilowatt-hour – roughly 60–70% above the national average. Yet policymakers, Mass Save, and many environmental advocates continue to push for widespread electrification through heat pumps.

While Mass Save incentives can provide up to $8,500 for whole-home heat pump conversions, the actual cost of a full conversion can range from $40,000 to $45,000 depending on the home and required upgrades such as electrical wiring.

These economic realities, combined with ongoing global energy uncertainty, will continue to influence how homeowners and businesses evaluate their options for affordable, reliable and clean heating and cooling in the years ahead.

Michael Ferrante | President | Massachusetts Energy Marketers Association | 781-365-0844

www.massenergymarketers.org