



December 16, 2019

Cambridge City Council
City of Cambridge
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

main: 617 • 674 • 5100 fax: 617 • 674 • 5101

Massachusetts Biotechnology Council
300 Technology Square, Eighth Floor
Cambridge, MA 02139

Re: Prohibition of Natural Gas Infrastructure in New Buildings

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council:

On behalf of MassBio and our 1,200+ members, I am writing to urge you to oppose the proposed ordinance entitled “Prohibition of Natural Gas Infrastructure in New Buildings.”

MassBio represents a wide-range of member organizations, including biotech companies, teaching hospitals, and academic institutions, the majority of which are directly engaged in cutting-edge research, development, and manufacturing of innovative products that improve the lives of sick people around the world. A significant percentage of our membership is located in Cambridge and they would be disproportionately, negatively impacted by this proposal because life sciences companies, research institutions, universities, and other commercial and industrial users are significant users of energy due to the size and nature of their operations, including laboratory space.

Approval of this ordinance will seriously harm our member companies, especially our early-stage biotech companies reliant on lab space that make up the majority of our cluster. Of the more than 60% of our members that are biopharma companies, more than 70% have less than 50 employees. Almost all are private, pre-revenue companies, working on the most-risky and cutting-edge research. They operate on defined tranches of investments that limit their spending to only that necessary to advance to their next research milestone. Forcing these companies to use only electricity for heat at prices that are among the highest in the country, and to prohibit natural gas infrastructure in new or retrofitted buildings even if necessary for laboratory usage, for example, will have a lasting impact on the growth and sustainability of Cambridge’s leading industry.

Cambridge cannot take for granted its position as the world-leader of biopharmaceutical R&D. Already, lab space is the most expensive in the country. Further, companies have significant difficulty recruiting talent to work in Cambridge because of the high cost of housing in the region and the terrible commuting options to get here. Due to these factors and more, locating a new or growing biotech in Cambridge is no longer a given. Our members are increasingly choosing to locate in municipalities outside of Cambridge, in places such as Framingham, Marlborough, Waltham, and Woburn. These growing clusters share many similarities – cheaper rent, easier commutes, and proximity to where talent lives. If this proposal passes, and costs to locate in Cambridge further increase through higher utility costs, it will be a much easier decision for companies to locate outside of Cambridge.

MassBio supports efforts to combat the footprint of carbon emissions and our member companies devote significant time and resources to help address the significant environmental challenges we face. However,

we believe this extreme measure is not the solution and would also have a major chilling effect on the development in the City.

Thank you for your consideration of our letter. Please do not hesitate to reach out with questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "RK Coughlin". The letters are cursive and fluid, with the "R" and "K" being particularly prominent.

Robert K. Coughlin
President & CEO, MassBio