

August 1, 2023

Cambridge City Council  
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Cambridge, MA 02139



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Massachusetts Biotechnology Council  
700 Technology Square, 5th Floor  
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Members of the Cambridge City Council:

On behalf of MassBio and our 1,600+ members, we appreciate your consideration of these written comments relative to amending the Municipal Code for the City of Cambridge to add a new Chapter, 15.30, titled “Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration,” proposed Ordinance 2023-3, and more specifically the proposed amendment to BEUDO offered by Councilor Zondervan that requires new covered properties to achieve net zero by 2030.

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.

As you know, Cambridge is the home to a world-leading biotech cluster. As such, our industry must lead the way toward solutions around issues like sustainability and diversity. Our members and the biopharmaceutical industry in Massachusetts are helping lead the way in the development of energy efficient green buildings. Many of the industry’s latest buildings have achieved the highest LEED (Leader in Energy and Environmental Design) designations from the U.S. Green Building Council. Our industry “thinks green” out of a strong social and civic consciousness, as well as necessity.

We applaud the City of Cambridge for its continued efforts to reduce building energy use and MassBio, and our member companies, want to be a partner in this effort. MassBio members have already undertaken significant efforts to comply with BEUDO's already accelerated 2035 net zero deadline for 100,000 sf non-residential buildings. However, MassBio opposes Councilor Zondervan's proposed BEUDO amendment shortening to 2030 the timeline for net zero compliance for buildings of 100,000 sf and larger "that receive their Certificate of Occupancy (CO) prior to January 1, 2025." Buildings on track to receive a CO by January 1, 2025, are well into the design and construction process. Imposing a 2030 net zero deadline is unfair, presents technical challenges, and ignores the efforts that went into the recent passage of a comprehensive series of BEUDO amendments.

As the life sciences industry pursues the research and development of life-changing medical treatments and cures, our companies and non-profit research institutions use the latest research and manufacturing processes. While new technologies and an industry commitment to green technologies are helping improve energy efficiency overall, the research, development and manufacture of biopharmaceuticals necessarily requires that facilities serving the industry are as energy efficient as possible.

We hope that the proposed order is not adopted and that we can continue the stakeholder dialogue to ensure that we can identify the best path forward. MassBio and our members want to work with the City and all the relevant stakeholders, to be part of crafting real solutions that achieve our shared goals.

Sincerely,

Kendalle Burlin O’Connell  
CEO & President