An Act requiring state procurement of low-carbon building materials introduces a public procurement standard, or “buy-clean” policy, for state projects that will require the measurement and reduction of emissions that come from building materials used in these projects. This legislation will prioritize the materials that have the highest carbon footprint in our built environment, including concrete and steel. It will also ensure that requirements for the reduction of carbon in state projects become progressively stronger over time, a critical step to ensuring that our buildings are being transformed from polluters to protectors of our environment, our communities, and our health.

WHAT IS EMBODIED CARBON AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Embodied carbon is the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions associated with the manufacturing, transportation, installation, maintenance, and disposal of building and infrastructure materials and accounts for between 11-23% of global annual emissions. In spite of the staggering impact embodied carbon has on the climate crisis, health, and equity, it is still rarely included in our efforts to reduce emissions. In order to ensure that we have a holistic approach to embodied carbon, we must address embodied carbon as well as operational carbon. Beginning with state projects is a proven, reasonable, and effective place to start.

1. Introduces a public procurement standard, or “buy clean policy” for state building projects

2. Requires that solicitations for public projects include Environmental Product Declarations for carbon-intensive materials, like concrete and steel

3. Requires a reduction of embodied carbon in carbon-intensive materials used in state projects. Reductions are required to increase over time

WHY THIS LEGISLATION IS IMPORTANT?

1. Massachusetts is at risk of falling behind other states. States across the country, including New Jersey, Oregon, and California have already passed buy-clean policies similar to the one that is proposed in this bill. If we do not take action, we risk falling behind other states in our efforts to effectively decarbonize our built environment.

2. The State can lead by example and create a market for low-embodied carbon materials in buildings. This legislation calls for state government to lead by example. In doing so, the state will be increasing the demand for low-carbon materials, making it easier and more cost-effective for the private sector to also begin using low-embodied carbon materials

3. Reducing embodied carbon is critical for holistic building decarbonization. Buildings account for nearly one-third of the Commonwealth's overall emissions. As we continue to make progress in reducing operational carbon, the ghg's from embodied carbon will become a larger portion of the sector's emissions. If we want to holistically decarbonize our buildings, we must adopt legislation that takes substantive action to reduce embodied carbon