



**Statement of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board Before the Joint Committee on  
Telecommunications, Utilities & Energy In Strong Opposition to S1761 An Act  
Relative to Home Energy Efficiency  
June 30, 2015**

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The over 8,00 members of the Greater Boston Real Estate Board (GBREB) wish to express our strong opposition to S1761, *An Act relative to home energy efficiency*. We respect the good intentions of the bill's proponents, however we have a number of serious concerns that we oppose. They are:

**Creating additional barrier for consumers looking to purchase their first home, or buy up.** The addition of energy audits to the equation further constricts the consumers' ability list and sell their home.

**Adversely impacting home values.** From an appraisal standpoint, the use of erroneous energy data could impact the value of a home to the extent that an appraiser uses it to determine if the energy efficient features contribute to a home's value.

**Stigmatizing neighborhoods of older and historic communities.** The bill provides for home energy labels that would stigmatize neighborhoods of older and historic communities.

**Unfairly punish sellers of older and historic homes who cannot afford costly renovations.** The bill appears to unfairly punish home sellers of older and historic homes who can ill-afford to perform costly renovations in areas of the state where the housing market has still not recovered. We cannot afford legislation that will further restrain home sales by artificially inflating values of some properties and making older, affordable housing less attractive to the consumer.

**Unnecessarily complicates and delays the time of the transaction.** The standard creation of these ratings could lead to delays in the home buying process as well as effect the negotiation of contracts regarding the acceptability of the ratings.

**Homebuyers are currently provided with information on home energy audits by home inspectors.** Under existing state law home inspectors are required to provide consumers at no cost information regarding home energy audits. If a homebuyer wishes to perform an energy audit or request utility information from a seller they are free to do so, however we do not believe requiring this function at the home inspection or closing is the right step.

**Homeowners will pay twice.** Massachusetts residential consumers currently pay a surcharge on their energy bill for energy audits that they can have performed on their homes at no additional cost. Homeowners across the Commonwealth pay millions of dollars for the purpose of providing energy conservation information to Massachusetts homeowners and tenants.

We believe that energy efficiency is something that many homeowners are already moving toward. Our members strongly believe that homeowners should move in this direction at their own pace, without a mandate that causes them to incur substantial costs or impede their ability to afford the home they desire. We urge the committee to report SB1761 out unfavorably.