



November 2020

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

NOTES FROM MASSACHUSETTS CITIES AND TOWNS

Dear Emma,

The Climate Leadership Newsletter features stories of environmental and climate action in Massachusetts. It provides a platform to highlight work being done by municipalities, climate leaders, and local groups in communities across the Commonwealth. To share local climate actions in your community, email [Emma Brown](mailto:Emma.Brown@sierraclub.org).

Clean Energy and Climate

Mayflower Wind Project Update



Governor Baker approved the contract for Mayflower Wind, the Commonwealth's second offshore wind farm, earlier this month. Mayflower Wind was selected over other competitors based on economic benefits for consumers, reliability of energy production, employment opportunities, and reduction of environmental impacts. It will be located in the waters south of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket and could produce enough electricity to power over 500,000 homes.

The program would be cost-effective; it could reduce consumer electricity bills by 0.1%-1.8% per month. Mayflower Wind is also projected to provide cheaper electricity than Vineyard Wind, another Massachusetts wind farm in development. It is expected to be operational by the end of 2025.

Nauset school district to enter renewable energy agreement



Earlier this month, Governor Charlie Baker signed a bill into law authorizing the Nauset Regional School District to enter into a renewable energy agreement. The law allows the district to enter into a 20-year lease on select parcels of land in Orleans and Eastham for the purposes of renewable energy production and storage, including power purchase agreements. The goal is to help reduce carbon emissions and save taxpayers money, benefiting students, taxpayers and the environment. The legislation allows the Nauset Regional School District to install a solar canopy in the middle school bus parking lot. The school district will enter a power purchase agreement with a solar installer, and the project will be eligible for Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target incentives.

New Report: “Coastal Resilience Solutions for Dorchester”



Image courtesy of "Coastal Resilience Solutions for Dorchester" report.

The Walsh Administration recently [issued a report](#) outlining how Boston intends to shore up coastal protections and re-think development along Dorchester's waterfront in the coming years and decades as sea levels continue to rise due to climate change. The report is a comprehensive summary of the Climate Ready Dorchester initiative, and acts as a roadmap for short- and long-term solutions for Dorchester to be more climate resilient.

Outlined solutions in the report make assumptions based on scientific models that project a dramatic rise in sea level as high as 9 inches in the next decade and up to 40 inches over the next 40 years. The estimated cost of implementing the solutions ranges from \$111 million to \$215 million, depending on the choices made going forward by city and state officials. The report also introduces a new concept — "The Dorchester Shoreway" — a term used to define the 9.5 mile coastline that could be transformed from a series of distinct spaces into "one coherent, linked destination for all Dorchester residents and other residents of Boston."

Clean Transportation

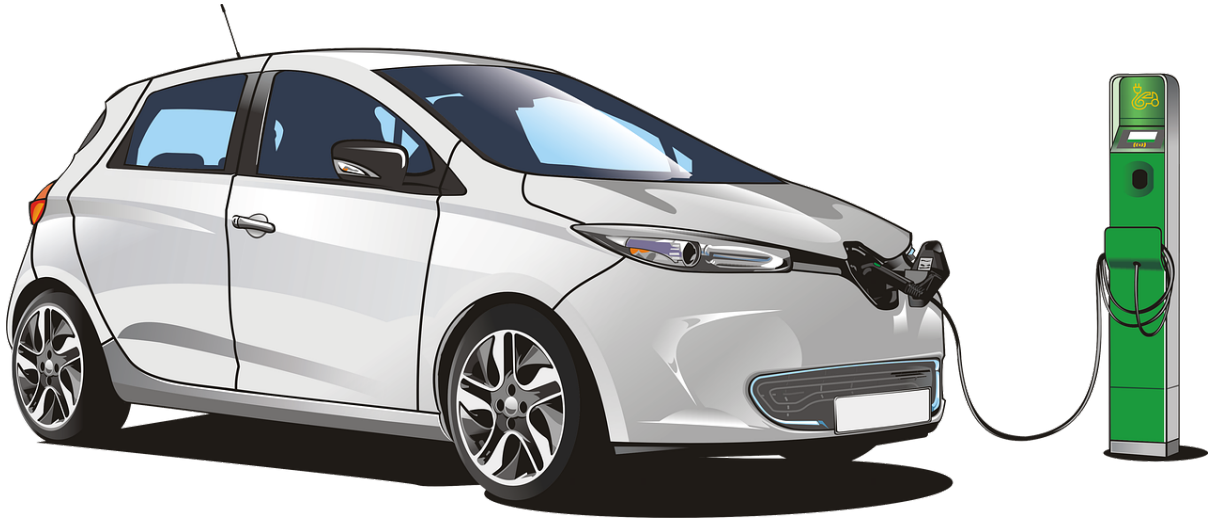
New Bus Lane for the Tobin Bridge



The Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT) has committed to establishing new bus lanes on the Tobin Bridge and I-93 as part of a legal settlement over its decision to eliminate a carpool lane on I-93 in the spring of 2019. The carpool lane had been part of a suite of transit improvements that the state had negotiated as mitigation for the “Big Dig” project in 1990, but had been opened to all traffic in 2019. As of November 23, the high-occupancy vehicle lane was re-installed.

The southbound bus-only lane on the Tobin Bridge will go into effect December 14th, according to MassDOT highway administrator Jonathan Gulliver. The lane will extend from the Everett St. ramp in Chelsea, where Route 111 buses join the bridge, to the City Square tunnel in Charlestown. The lane will be created as a pilot lasting between six months and two years, and data collected from the pilot would inform whether the new bus lane could be made permanent.

Boston's Zero-Emission Vehicle Roadmap



This month, the City of Boston announced a [Zero-Emission Vehicle Roadmap](#) to curb climate change through new green infrastructure, emissions-cutting targets and ongoing efforts to shift travelers from personal vehicles to public transportation, walking and biking. The roadmap calls for charging stations in municipal lots in every Boston community by 2023 and an electric vehicle car share facility or charging station in walking distance of every household by 2040. As transportation accounts for nearly one-third of the city's greenhouse gas emissions, the new roadmap aligns with the city's goals of being carbon-neutral by 2050. City officials plan to work with lawmakers, dealerships, rental companies, regional partners and other states to expand infrastructure and to educate, build awareness and overcome consumer concerns around electric vehicles.

The roadmap also calls for an overhaul of Boston's municipal fleet: all new vehicle purchases for the Central Fleet will be electric or zero-emission. By 2035, city officials want all passenger light-duty vehicles to be emissions-free; by 2050, all medium-duty vehicles; and by 2060, all heavy-duty vehicles to be emissions-free or low-emissions.

Toxics and Pollution

Weymouth Compressor Given Go-Ahead to Operate—Again



The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration gave the green light for the Weymouth Compressor Station to resume its operations in December. Earlier this fall, two emergency shutdowns resulted in hundreds of thousands of cubic feet of natural gas being vented into the surrounding area. The agency determined that the issues leading to the two shutdowns have been identified and resolved, and that the station "is fully prepared to safely enter service."

Meanwhile, earlier this month, Massachusetts energy regulators [launched an investigation](#) into the state's reliance on natural gas, the largest fuel source used to heat homes and businesses. The Department of Public Utilities plans to assess the role of gas companies in curbing emissions, and how natural gas as an energy source conforms with the state's climate goals.

MassDEP Proposed Waste Ban Amendments



MassDEP is proposing amendments to **310 CMR 19.000** that would add mattresses and textiles to the list of materials banned from disposal in Massachusetts. The proposal would also lower the threshold for the existing ban on commercial organic (food) materials disposal to facilities that generate one-half a ton per week or more of these materials for disposal. The agency is also proposing changes to its waste disposal ban guidance document for solid waste management facilities. See the [proposed amendments](#), a [background document](#), and the [draft revised guidance](#).

Written comments may be submitted until 5:00 PM on December 4, 2020 and must be submitted by email to dep.swmp@mass.gov or via mail to John Fischer, MassDEP, One Winter Street, Boston, MA 02108.

EPA Awards Approximately \$90 Million to Address Water Infrastructure



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced funding to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts totaling more than \$90 million for major water infrastructure projects in communities across the state. As part of the overall funding, EPA is announcing significant amounts to address lead in drinking water in schools in Boston, and schools and childcare facilities in communities across Massachusetts. The EPA is awarding nearly \$54 million for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and more than \$25 million for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). The funding is available for a wide range of water infrastructure projects, including modernizing aging wastewater infrastructure, addressing stormwater, and to improve drinking water infrastructure. Additionally, the EPA is announcing significant grant funding to address lead in drinking water in schools in Boston, and schools and childcare facilities in communities across Massachusetts. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Clean Water Trust will receive \$3 million, and Boston Public Schools will receive \$6.2 million.

Resources and Reading List

- [Senators vote on state budget amendments](#) (Lowell Sun)
- [Facing Solid Consensus for At-Grade Design, MassDOT Stalls Allston/I-90 Decision](#) (StreetsBlog Mass)
- [A lot of Boston commuters expect to start driving after the pandemic, survey says](#) (Boston Globe)
- [MassRecycle: Municipalities pursue private sector solutions while awaiting new state policies](#) (WasteDive)
- [Eyes On the Street: Boston's New Downtown Protected Bike Lanes](#) (StreetsBlog Mass)
- [Want to fix your own Tesla? Massachusetts just made it easier.](#) (Grist)

- [A Daily Ray of Hope](#). The Sierra Club has been offering a “Daily Ray of Hope” email for years, and we could all use a bit of that right now. Subscribers get a beautiful picture from the natural world along with some words of wisdom every morning. [Sign up today and bring some joy to your inbox](#).

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