



October 2019

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

NOTES FROM MASSACHUSETTS CITIES AND TOWNS

Dear Veena,

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 [Veena Dharmaraj](mailto:Veena.Dharmaraj@sierraclub.org).

Clean Energy and Climate

Boston Outlines Plan to Get To Carbon Neutral By 2050



Earlier this month, Boston released an update to their [Climate Action Plan](#) which identifies priority actions necessary in the next five years to accelerate efforts towards carbon neutrality by 2050. The plan details strategies to reduce the city's emissions in the buildings, transportation, electricity and waste sectors.

The plan seeks to decarbonize the building sector, which accounts for 70% of its carbon emissions by requiring new municipal buildings to be constructed to net zero standards, strengthening green building zoning requirements to a zero net carbon standard, investing in energy efficiency and renewable energy generation and developing new guidelines for city backed affordable housing projects. It also includes recommendations to advocate for Boston's priority transit projects, accelerate the adoption of electric vehicles, and implement the city's community choice aggregation program.

First Offshore Wind Training Facility Launched



The [Massachusetts Maritime Academy](#) opened the nation's first offshore wind crew training facility at Buzzard's Bay. Supported by a \$1.73 million grant from the administration and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), the academy will train workers for the emerging offshore wind industry.

Vineyard Wind was awarded the first round of contracts for the 800 MW commercial offshore wind farm to be built 14 miles south of Martha's Vineyard and Massachusetts is pursuing projects that could bring another 2400 MW of wind power to the state. A [MassCEC study](#) indicates that offshore wind farms could create up to 3000 jobs and generate as much as \$2 billion in economic benefits over the next decade.

November Vote on the IECC Will Set the Stage for Progress Towards Climate Goals

This November registered municipal officials will cast their votes for proposals being considered for the 2021 updates to the International Energy Conservation Codes (IECC). Updated every three years, the IECC sets minimum energy efficiency standards for commercial and residential



buildings. The decisions made during the update sets the stage for how buildings will operate for decades to come. In early November the [Energy Efficient Codes](#)

[Coalition](#) (EECC) together with partner organizations will publish a checklist and voting guide for priority proposals that will boost efficiency. For a high-level overview of the efficiency proposals that have the greatest potential to reduce energy and to learn more about the voting process [register for this webinar by the National Buildings Institute \(NBI\)](#) on Tuesday, November, 6 at 12:30 pm EST.

Taunton Climate Summit for Municipal Leaders Explores Local Solutions



Senator Marc Pacheco opened Sierra Club's recent Climate Leadership Summit for municipal officials. Organized in Taunton, municipal elected and appointed officials learnt more about the climate crisis, the Massachusetts renewable energy landscape, and clean energy solutions being implemented across the state. The summit provided participants with an opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss local actions to respond to the climate crisis.

The next climate summit for municipal elected and appointed officials is on November 23 from 12:00 – 2:30 pm at Cape Cod Community College. [Click here to register](#). For more information, contact [Jacob Stern](#), Clean Energy Organizer.

Pilot Program to Rehabilitate Abandoned Homes with Efficiency Measures

The Department of Housing and Community Development in Massachusetts is working with NueVue, a nonprofit community development corporation, to rehabilitate abandoned properties with the intention of making them more energy efficient. This \$7.5 million five-year pilot program will rehab 40 properties along Route 2 corridor in Athol, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner and Leominster and incorporate a combination of energy efficiency strategies.

The [Massachusetts Clean Energy Center will cover the cost](#) of some of the updates that will include better insulation, optimized heating and hot water, and new and efficient windows and doors. The redeveloped and energy efficient homes will be sold to low-and-moderate income residents and will help lower monthly costs and the reduce the risk of mortgage default.

Westborough Passes 100 Percent Renewable Resolution



On October 21, Westborough [passed a resolution](#) that will require the town to establish a task force to create a climate action plan by spring of 2021 to move the town towards the goal of 100% renewable energy. Proposed by Sustainable Westborough, the plan will be aligned with emission reduction goals of the Global Warming Solutions Act and establish clear,

measurable goals for emission reductions and adapting to climate change. The plan will [explore pathways and investments](#) needed to transition to 100% clean, safe and renewable energy. As a first step, the task force will look into the feasibility of converting 100% of the town's electricity purchase to renewable sources by 2035. For more information, [contact Pete Dunbeck](#), Chair of Sustainable Westborough and member of Sierra Club Energy Committee.

Ashland Gas Pipeline Faces Growing Opposition



Municipal elected officials, state representatives, concerned citizens, and community activists in Ashland gathered earlier this month for a viewing of the student documentary "[Under Pressure](#)," about the fallout of the 2018 gas explosions in the Merrimack Valley and the larger health and safety concerns posed by gas infrastructure.

The documentary was followed by a question and answer discussion, much of which was focused on the controversial Eversource gas pipeline replacement project proposed in Ashland. The pipeline would disrupt natural wetlands and wildlife habitat and come within 10 feet of residential homes. The growing opposition to new gas infrastructure projects is an indicator that communities in Massachusetts are becoming increasingly concerned with climate change impacts and recognize the need to transition away from dirty fuels including fracked gas.

Smith College Divests, Student Activists Ask for More



In a letter to students, staff, and faculty, Smith College Board of Trustees announced that they would [no longer make investments in fossil fuel companies](#) and divest existing investments over the next fifteen years. The Northampton based college aims to reduce up to 75% of its investments with the next 8 years.

While this is a major victory for student activists from the 'Divest Smith' campaign, members want the college to do more. They have called for the college to divest sooner than fifteen years, invest in companies developing technologies to fight climate change, and declare a climate emergency to acknowledge the urgency of the crisis.

Pollution and Toxics

262 Municipalities Receive Grants for Recycling Programs



Massachusetts awarded more than \$2.9 million to 262 municipalities and regional solid waste districts in [Sustainable Materials Recovery Program \(SMRP\)](#) grants that will help communities maximize their recycling, composting and waste reduction programs.

Two hundred and nineteen communities qualified for the "Recycling Dividends Program" (RDP) and will receive payments ranging from \$2,100 to \$97,500 for things such as new recycling bins or carts, public education and outreach campaigns, collection of hard-to-recycle items and the establishment of recycling programs in schools, municipal buildings and other public spaces. Forty-three municipalities were also awarded 'Small Scale Initiatives' grants from \$500 to \$2,000 each to help them purchase modest, but critical recycling materials and outreach tools needed to sustain their existing recycling program or to facilitate new, low-cost initiatives. See [list of awardees here](#).

Clean Transportation

TCI States Release Draft Regional Policy Proposal



In October, 12 states and the District of Columbia participating in the Transportation Climate Initiative (TCI) released a [framework for a draft regional policy proposal](#) that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector and generate revenue for equitable clean transportation solutions. A draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) building on the framework is anticipated in December of 2019 and a final MOU, after considering further public input, is expected in the Spring of 2020.

Massachusetts has hosted community engagement workshops across the state this summer and fall to seek input on the draft framework. Register to attend the workshop at [Holyoke](#) (Nov 4th) or provide your [feedback through the online portal](#) on the TCI website by November 5, 2019. Listen to [this webinar](#) from the *Our Transportation Future* coalition to learn more about TCI.

Cambridge Considers Informational Labels at Gas Stations



Cambridge is currently reviewing an ordinance introduced by Vice Mayor Jan Devereux that would require [informational labels on the nozzles at gas pumps](#) informing consumers about how fossil fuels consumption contributes to climate change. The city council will vote on the final proposal once the ordinance committee develops more detailed rules for implementing the labels. This ordinance is not expected to violate the First Amendment or Commerce Clause as long as the labels are “purely factual and uncontroversial”. At ~43%, [transportation is the largest source of emissions](#) in Massachusetts and these educational labels would encourage consumers to think about individual actions and correct public misconceptions.

Sudbury to Pilot Subsidized Rideshare Program



The town of Sudbury has received a \$90,000 grant from the Community Compact Cabinet and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) to pilot a subsidized rideshare program through Uber, Lyft, and taxis in the area. This program will be available to residents over the age of fifty, have a disability, are military veterans, or are in financial distress. They would pay one dollar to ride within Sudbury, two dollars within a ten-mile radius of Sudbury, and the first ten dollars of a fare between ten and thirty miles. The cost of the ride would be billed to the town. Sudbury is looking to partner with other Massachusetts communities –likely Acton, Stow, Bolton, Concord, or Carlisle— to meet the minimum level of business required by the rideshare companies.

Arlington Reduces Carbon Emissions through Bus-Only Lane

Following a successful pilot program, Arlington will now have a permanent bus-only lane along Massachusetts Avenue that serves three MBTA routes. A parking lane along the route has been painted red to designate the bus lane and will be open to public transit buses during peak commuting times—from 6 to 9 am—on weekdays.



Data from the pilot showed that commuters saved five to ten minutes on their commutes. The dedicated bus lane will improve Arlington’s public transportation system, provide faster commute times for riders, and encourage more people to take the bus instead of driving, reducing emissions.

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