



February 2020

CLIMATE LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

NOTES FROM MASSACHUSETTS CITIES AND TOWNS

Dear Supporter,

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

Massachusetts Offshore Wind Energy Projects Face Setbacks



Federal permitting for two offshore wind projects will be delayed likely until the end of this year because the Department of Interior intends to undergo a more systematic review of all wind farms planned for waters up and down the east coast and their collective impact.

The new timeline will impact the construction of 1600 MW of offshore wind power contracts awarded to [Vineyard Wind](#) and [Mayflower Wind](#) and push back the delivery of wind power needed to meet our emission reduction standards.

MassCEC Extends Heat Pump Pilot



The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) is recruiting participants through **June 20, 2020** for its [Whole-Home Air Source Heat Pump Pilot Program](#). The pilot is open to customers in new and existing homes served by natural gas who are looking to fully electrify their home's heating and cooling system. Through the pilot MassCEC is offering technical assistance to participants and highlighting [success stories](#), [best practices](#), and [cost comparisons](#) on the new generation of whole-home air-source heat pumps systems.

To be eligible for the pilot the air-source heat pump must be capable of heating the entire home and be in use through-out the heating season. And in the case of new construction, homes cannot include any fossil fuel appliances for other uses like hot water and cooking. For more information contact [Emma Preger](#), Clean Heating and Cooling Fellow at MassCEC.

UMass Lowell and City of Lowell Launch Green Community Partnership

University of Massachusetts Lowell and the City of Lowell are establishing a [Green Community Partnership](#) to reduce the city's carbon footprint. Through this partnership \$50,000 is available for joint community projects that will advance sustainability in



Lowell. Proposals that align with [UMass Lowell's 2020 Strategic Plan](#) and [city's 2025 Sustainability Master Plan](#) will be considered for funding.

Initial focus areas are expected to include renewable energy and greenhouse gas reductions, transportation improvements, pollution prevention and resource protections. The first round of grant recipients will be announced on Earth Day. For more information contact sustainability@uml.edu.

Harvard Faculty Activists Turn Toward Divestment



The Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard's largest academic division, recently passed a motion calling on the university to divest its \$40 billion endowment from fossil fuels. The divestment petition signed by over 1,000 faculty members also asks Harvard not to pursue investments in fossil fuel companies and ensure that advisors

unwilling or unable to comply with divestment instructions be replaced. Ultimately, the decision would need to come from the [Harvard Corporation](#), which has the authority to order divestment.

Last academic semester, numerous alumni called for divestment at Harvard University and a [student protest](#) at a Harvard-Yale game made headlines. The student campaign intends to escalate actions leading up to an Earth Day 2020 deadline for divestment. A [climate justice campaign](#) focused on electing new candidates to the Board of Overseers has also begun.

Pollution and Toxics

MassDEP Establishes Reduce and Recycle Forum



The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) will kick off the first meeting of the [Reduce & Reuse \(R&R\) Workgroup](#) on Wednesday, March 4 from 10 am – 12 pm at their office located at 1 Winter Street, Boston, MA 02108. Call-in option available.

The R&R workgroup will serve as a forum for discussions on source reduction

and reuse regulations, policies, and programs in Massachusetts. Established to assist in the development of a MassDEP Strategic Reduce and Reuse Action Plan as outlined in the “[Solid Waste Master Plan 2030](#),” the working group is open to anyone interested in providing input on source reduction, reuse, and repair strategy in Massachusetts and keeping informed of new policy and program developments. For more information contact [Erin Victor](#).

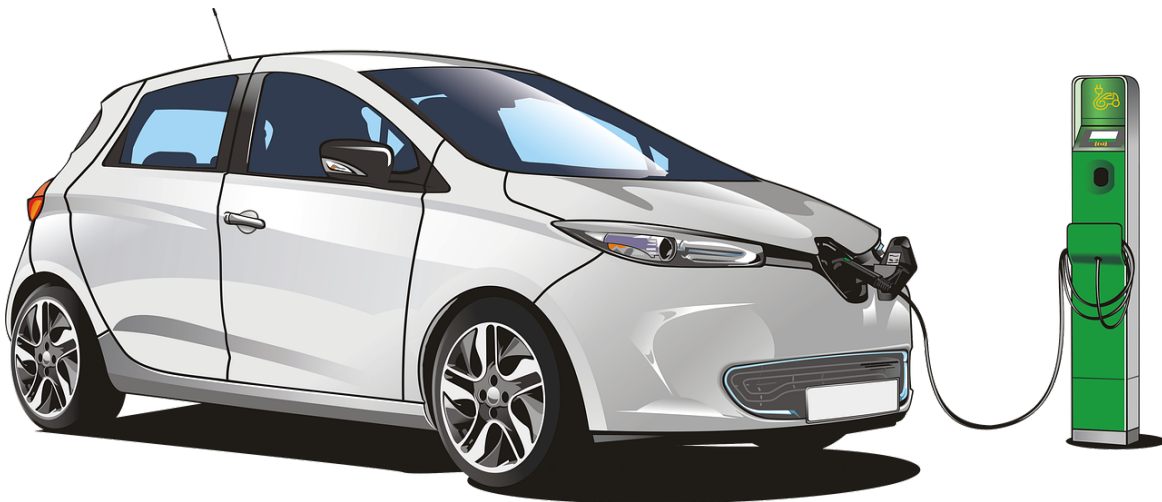
Blue Sky Over Massachusetts Challenge



The [Ocean River Institute](#) has launched the [Blue Sky Over Massachusetts Challenge](#), an innovative prize to capture more carbon with non-polluting lawns. Three prizes--\$ 1,000 First Place, \$500 Second Place, and \$250 Third Place-- will be awarded to the Climate Action Team (locally-based organization or conservation commission) with the highest percentage of homeowners in their municipality pledging NOT to use quick-release fertilizer on established lawns. [Using slow release fertilizers](#) not only saves money and decreases pollution by stopping the use of chemicals, it creates healthier lawns with more foliage to better protect homes during extreme weather events and allows the grass to capture more carbon. For more information contact [Rob Moir](#).

Clean Transportation

MassEVIP Funding Available for Light Duty Electric Vehicles



Are you looking for a more energy efficient option for your light duty fleet? Considering electrifying your fleet? Then you should partner with MassDEP through the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program Fleets (MassEVIP).

Funding is available through the [MassEVIP Fleets](#) program for electric passenger vehicles, up to \$7,500.00 per vehicle. [Click here for a sampling of electric vehicles](#) that are eligible through the MassEVIP Fleets program. If you have any questions related to the program please contact [Sejal Shah](#) or call (617) 556-1015.

Preliminary Alternatives for East West Rail Link Released



New data released by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation Planning proposes [six preliminary alternatives](#) for passenger rail service between Pittsfield, Springfield, Worcester and Boston. The alternatives cover information on possible corridors, station stops, frequency of weekday round trips, anticipated ridership and costs.

The cost estimates for the six proposals covered in the [East West Rail Link study](#) vary from \$2 billion for rail upgrades to \$4.1 billion for new tracks from Springfield to Boston and around \$25 billion for electrified high speed rail from Pittsfield to Boston. Projected ridership numbers are and three of the six proposals call for bus service from Pittsfield to Springfield. The high cost estimates and low ridership projections were met with skepticism at a recent public meeting and do not align with findings of a [2016 study](#) and the costs and ridership numbers of similar rail projects—like the new Hartford line, Amtrak Downeaster—in the region. A final report will be released in spring.

Workforce Transportation Grant Program Expands Commuting Options



Massachusetts has awarded 23 grants totaling \$4.2 million in funding to encourage employers to create innovative solutions to help employees commute to work by using public or shared transportation. Launched in response to the [2019 Congestion Report](#), this round of [Workforce Transportation Grants](#) has funded Regional Transit Authorities (RTA), municipalities, Transportation Management Associations (TMA), business organizations

and others which have demonstrated an intention to shift commuters from single-occupancy vehicles to other modes of transportation to help alleviate roadway congestion and reduce emissions from the transportation sector.

Grants were awarded to 23 entities including Newton, Salem, Pittsfield, Watertown TMA, and Worcester, Montachusett, Metro West, and Metro West Regional Transit Authorities to implement projects ranging from instituting and expanding microtransit and shuttle service, first mile/last mile transportation options and bike share programs.

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