



March 2022

## CLIMATE LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

### NOTES FROM MASSACHUSETTS CITIES AND TOWNS

Dear Friend,

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

Massachusetts Commission of Clean Heat



Aiming to cut down carbon emissions, Governor Charlie Baker has created the

Commission of Clean Heat, the first committee created to do so in the United States. The commission, which has already met once since its establishment, will advise Baker on legislation to transition current heat sources in buildings to cleaner alternatives, specifically within the building sector. This commission will help move Massachusetts closer to its goal of net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and moves in line with the Massachusetts 2050 Decarbonization Roadmap. The Commission of Clean Heat will be holding a public hearing session in March. Details for attending will be available on their [website](#).

*Photo Credit: Tim Mossholder*

## **SMART Program Doubles Capacity**



The Massachusetts Dept. of Public Utilities has ordered a doubling of the solar capacity incentive program from 1,600 – 3,200 MW of solar energy. This is in reference to the [Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target](#) program (SMART). This incentive is for homeowners and businesses that produce solar energy and are interconnected to the grid. For them to be eligible they must be connected to National Grid, Eversource, or Until. Solar advocates are enthusiastic about the order but cautiously since the program was originally doubled to 3,200 MW back in spring of 2020. About 175 MW of projects have been waiting to receive their incentives. Some are concerned about the bigger picture and how delays like this could leak over and effect Massachusetts overall goal of net-zero carbon emissions by 2050. The order went into effect on January 14th.

## **Franklin Town Councilors Anticipate Climate Change Mitigation Plan**



There is exciting news for Franklin residents. The Town's Councilors have added to their to-do list for the 2022-2023 period to be looking into incorporating a net-zero emissions plan that could be incorporated into their Green Communities goals. [Green Communities](#) is a state-wide program that provides funding for eligible municipalities across Massachusetts. This is a step forward to achieving a more equitable and sustainable community. Our friend Ted McIntyre from MCAN added that net-zero emissions said, "means the community gets as much energy from renewable sources as it uses." This plan will help create energy efficiencies for existing and new buildings along with more efficient building codes and renewable energy purchasing.

*Photo credit: Town of Franklin, MA on [Twitter](#)*

## Clean Transportation

**More Fare-Free Bus Routes!**





More fare-free bus routes could be coming to central and eastern MA soon. At the end of January, 15 municipalities submitted a letter to the MBTA requesting that the transit agency streamline and standardize the process for establishing fare-free bus routes. The letter builds on momentum from the popular pilot program that eliminated fares on route 28 in summer 2021. The pilot program has been extended multiple times, and Mayor Michelle Wu has allocated funding to establish fare-free pilot programs for routes in Dorchester and Mattapan.

Municipalities including Cambridge and Brookline are eager to establish similar programs in their communities. Fare-free programs can help reduce traffic congestion, as well as increase transit equity.

### **Maynard Adds EV Charging Stations**



Maynard, MA is making strides toward achieving the sustainability goals set in its master plan – 6 EV charging stations were recently installed at central locations in town. Residents can charge their EVs at the Town Hall, library, and Maynard Country Club. Rates start at 25 cents per kilowatt/hour. The project was funded by a grant from the MA Department of Environmental Protection, and revenue generated from the charging stations will be used to offset utility and repair costs to maintain and expand local EV infrastructure.

## **Grants and Webinars**

**Offshore Wind Works: Workforce Training & Development Solicitation**



Massachusetts Clean Energy Center recently released their fourth [Offshore Wind Works - Workforce Training & Development Solicitation](#). Through this Solicitation, MassCEC seeks to competitively select and fund qualified applicants or applicant teams to implement projects that advance offshore wind workforce development in the Commonwealth.

While proposals relating to any dimension of offshore wind workforce development will be considered, this solicitation seeks specifically to advance projects and initiatives that relate to one or more of the following focus areas:

- **Skilled Trades** - Support the readiness, capabilities, and capacity of local unions.
- **Vocational-Technical Schools** - Build upon the Career Technical Initiative to enhance Voc-Tech training in OSW.
- **Higher Education** - OSW-specific programs and curricula, focusing on engineering, environmental science, project development, and other professional services at degree-granting institutions.
- **Industry Partnerships** - Encourage partnerships with established Tier 1 suppliers and OEMs to solidify job placement and ensure the most relevant and applicable training needs are met.
- **Infrastructure** - Support procurement and installation of specialized infrastructure to simulate various aspects of installation and service operations.
- **Diversity, Equity, Inclusion & Justice** - Increase access for underrepresented and/or target populations to training programs and reduce barriers for individuals interested in pursuing offshore wind job opportunities

Proposals are due **March 18, 2022, by 11:59 pm Eastern**. More information on the priority focus areas, eligibility requirements, selection criteria, and deadlines can be found in the [full solicitation here](#).

*Photo Credit: Dennis Schroeder, National Renewable Energy Laboratory*



## Electric School Bus Funding Opportunity



The Massachusetts Clean Energy Technology Center (MassCEC) intends to issue a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) entitled: **Accelerating Clean Transportation School Bus (“ACT Bus”)**. MassCEC recognizes school bus electrification as an important challenge for market development in the transportation sector. ACT Bus will demonstrate innovative, broadly replicable clean transportation adoption and deployment business and service delivery models. MassCEC intends to:

- Deploy electric school buses across major fleet operation models in Massachusetts
- Provide bus fleet electrification planning support services to school districts and prepare them for future funding opportunities
- Provide grant funding to school districts located in environmental justice communities to electrify school bus fleets.

The Notice of Intent for Funding can be [viewed here](#). Questions can be sent to [cleantransportation@masscec.com](mailto:cleantransportation@masscec.com).

*Photo Credit: Denise Leon*

## Resources and Reading List

- To streamline the solar permitting process, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) led a collaborative effort to develop the [Solar Automated Permit Processing \(SolarAPP+\) tool](#). The free, online tool automates permit plan review, enabling an instant permit approval process for code-compliant residential PV systems.

- To help track implementation of their Landline Vision Plan, MAPC has developed a database of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the 101 municipalities they serve. In their [Metro Boston Municipal Trails, Bikeways & Greenways Inventory](#), MAPC compares and ranks communities based on shared use path, bicycle lane, and foot trail availability.
- Drawing on years of experience working with cities and towns in clean energy and climate, [MAPC's Municipal Net Zero Playbook](#) provides guidance and tools to equip cities and towns with the resources to set forward a tactical and equitable net zero action blueprint for their communities. The Playbook has four main chapters that focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation, buildings and energy supply sectors through their zoning and permitting. Foundational frameworks on equity and action guide communities on how to operationalize the Playbook.
- [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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