



January 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

### Senate Passes Bills to Tackle Climate Change



Late last night, the Massachusetts Senate passed a package of three climate bills: [“An Act Setting Next Generation Climate Policy,”](#) [“An Act to Accelerate the Transition of Cars, Trucks and Buses to Carbon-Free Power,”](#) and [“An Act Relative to Energy Savings Efficiency.”](#)

The package includes legislation that requires the state to reach net zero emissions by 2050 and create a carbon price on transportation by 2022, commercial buildings by 2025, and residential buildings by 2030. The legislation establishes permanent statutory authorization for the MOR-EV consumer rebates for electric vehicles. It directs MBTA to ensure that all bus procurements are electric by 2030 and transition their fleet completely to electric buses by 2040. The bill further requires DOER to set solar energy allocations for low income neighborhoods, empowers communities to adopt a stricter net zero stretch code and requires the MassSave program to prioritize programs that yield the most the emission reductions. You can read an overview of the bill [here](#) and [here](#) and Sierra Club’s statement [here](#).

## Westborough Opposes Expansion of Gas Pipeline



This week, the Westborough select board unanimously voted to oppose the expansion of Eversource’s Worcester Feed Line Improvement Project, that would see the construction of a gas pipeline passing through the town. The town has committed to be an intervenor in the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) process. This decision comes following a public hearing held earlier this month attended by over 80 community members.

Residents and elected officials have voiced opposition to the proposed 16-inch, underground, high pressure pipeline that will pass through residential neighborhoods. Community members screened the film [Under Pressure](#) for people to learn about the dangers of fracked gas and alternatives available for clean, climate friendly heating and cooling technologies. [Sustainable Westborough](#), a chartered town committee, plans to hold educational sessions about building electrification and work with residents to implement these new technologies. For more information, [contact John Metzger](#).

## Community Solar Farm Provides Affordable Green Energy to Low Income Households



Five hundred low-income households in the Indian Orchard neighborhood of Springfield, Massachusetts will benefit from a ground-mounted 12,600-panel solar farm set up by [Citizens Energy Corporation](#). The clean and renewable energy will be discounted by 50 percent for these households, and each household will save about \$300 annually.

Citizens Energy won the competitive bid process to turn the dumping ground into a greenfield site, adding to its now five solar farms that comprise the [JOE-4-SUN program](#) in Massachusetts. Collectively, the five arrays generate 16 MW of affordable energy for low-income families in both Eversource and National Grid service territories. The program is funded by the [Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target \(SMART\)](#) initiative and is the largest low-income solar program in the state.

## Amherst Moves Ahead on Community Choice Aggregation



The Amherst Town Council voted this month to develop a [Community Choice Aggregation](#) program (CCA) which authorizes the town manager to work with Northampton and Pelham to develop and administer a plan that will bring more renewable energy for customers in all three communities. The plan will be filed with the [Department of Public Utilities](#) and will be developed in consultation with the

[Department of Energy Resources](#). The vote follows an 18-month study by the Inter-Municipal Task Force on Community Choice Aggregation to create a more resilient local energy system, competitive and more stable long-term electric rates, and broader and more equitable access to clean energy resources. The state budget includes 50,000 dollars for this project. Additional money for start-up

costs may be available from the [Municipal Vulnerabilities Program](#).

# Pollution and Toxics

## MassDEP Introduces Regulations on PFAS



The Massachusetts Department of Environment Protection (MassDEP) has filed two rules to limit per and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in soil and drinking water. The [final soil and groundwater cleanup rule](#) requires parties that are responsible for contamination to clean up groundwater that could be used as drinking water to meet a limit standard of 20 parts per trillion (ppt) for the sum of six PFAS compounds. The clean-up standard also establishes specific PFAS limits for soils.

The [draft drinking water standard](#) would establish a Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for drinking water of the sum of 20 ppt for six PFAS compounds. The standards aim to provide a greater degree of protection, particularly for sensitive subgroups including pregnant women, nursing mothers, and infants. Written comments on the draft standard can be emailed to [program.director-dwp@mass.gov](mailto:program.director-dwp@mass.gov) until 5:00 p.m. on February 28, 2020. Include *PFAS MCL Comments* in your subject line.

## Regulators Asked to Address Safety Violations at Weymouth Compressor Site

Weymouth councilors and residents are asking federal regulators to enforce a traffic plan to ensure crews working to remediate hazardous material at the site of the planned fracked gas compressor station, follow agreed upon routes that do not pass through residential streets. And that vehicles are properly washed before leaving the

site.

The compressor station is part of the Atlantic Bridge project being built by Algonquin, a subsidiary of Enbridge. The site was previously used by Boston Edison to store and dispose coal and ash and later housed a 11.3-gallon oil tank. Previous soil assessments have identified polyaromatic hydrocarbons, coal, ash, and metals, including arsenic. For more information on how the compressor station poses a threat to public health, safety, and the environment, visit [Fore River Residents Against the Compressor Station \(FRRACS\)](#).

## Clean Transportation

### Massachusetts Extends the MOR-EV Rebate



The [Massachusetts Offers Rebates for Electric Vehicles \(MOR-EV\)](#) program has been extended after running out of funds last September. The program restored on January 1, allocates \$27 million annually in 2020 and 2021 for electric vehicle rebates.

Under the program, consumers are eligible for rebates of up to \$2,500 when they buy an all-electric vehicle under \$50,000, or \$1,500 for a plug-in hybrid car with a range of at least 25 miles on a battery charge. Since the MOR-EV program started in 2014, the state has given out more than \$31.2 million in rebates for the purchase of over 15,000 electric vehicles. However, this is far short of the Commonwealth's commitment to put 300,000 zero emission vehicles on the road by 2025.

### TCI States Release Draft MOU



Massachusetts and other states participating in the [Transportation and Climate Initiative \(TCI\)](#) have released a [draft Memorandum of Understanding](#) to establish a regional cap and invest program to transition to a more sustainable, resilient, low carbon transportation sector. Also released were initial projections of the potential [economic and public health benefits](#) such a program could achieve. The proposal aims to reduce emissions from tailpipes by 20-25% over a decade. For the latest updates on the policy development process, listen to [this webinar recording](#). You are encouraged to submit comments via the [TCI portal input form](#) by Feb 28<sup>th</sup>.

A [recent poll from MassINC Polling Group](#) showed that there is broad support for the proposed policy, with 68% of Massachusetts voters backing the initiative. Reducing emissions from the transportation sector also aligns with Governor Baker's call to achieve net zero emissions by 2050.

### **Somerville Releases Draft Vision Zero Action Plan**



Somerville released the [draft Vision Zero Action Plan](#) that details actions that the city will take over the next five years to eliminate deaths and serious injuries from the transportation system. It was developed by a team of city staff and dedicated resident volunteers on the Vision Zero Task Force, including representatives from advisory and advocacy committees from Somerville and the Greater Boston region.

The city has already held two open houses to share more about the plan and gather public input, with the last one scheduled for Wednesday, February 5 from 6:00 – 8:00 pm at Somerville Public Library. For more information contact [Hannah Payne](#),

## Westfield Launches New Electric Vehicle Program



Westfield Gas and Electric has launched an [electric vehicle outreach and incentive program](#) to inform utility customers about savings and benefits that come from choosing an electric vehicle (EV). Whether new to EVs or already an existing EV driver, residents can learn more about the different types of available electric vehicles and charging, get connected with dealers, hear about upcoming local EV events, and connect with EV rebates and incentives for EV charging.

Existing electric vehicle owners can earn a [\\$5 - \\$10 monthly credit](#) on their electric bill by charging their cars between 8pm-8am on weekdays. EV owners can also get a [rebate of up to \\$400](#) to install a Level 2 charger. The program offers access to comprehensive EV resources and the support of EV specialists via a toll-free support line (1.833.443.8363) and email ([ev@ene.org](mailto:ev@ene.org)).

## Grants

### The Green Communities 2020 Grant Program Announced



The [Green Communities](#) 2020 competitive grant program provide municipalities that meet eligibility criteria with the financial and technical support for efficiency improvements. Grant applications are [available here](#) and must be submitted online **by 5pm on March 27, 2020.**

On a related note, [this Energy Efficiency Checklist for Municipal Buildings](#) released by UMass Clean Energy Extension has relatively simple and cost-effective measures that can be implemented by energy coordinators and facility managers.

Subscribe to the Newsletter



---

ABOUT