



June 2019

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 to Ramp Up Commitment to Offshore Wind



An [offshore wind study](#) by the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) recommends doubling the state's commitment to offshore wind. This would require the procurement of up to 1,600 megawatts of offshore wind capacity, or enough to power up to 1 million homes. This is in addition to the 1,600 megawatts of offshore wind for which the state is authorized to award contracts.

Vineyard Wind was awarded the first round of contracts for the 84 turbine, 800 megawatts wind farm to be built 14 miles south of Martha's Vineyard. The nation's first foray into large-scale offshore wind is projected to become operational by 2021. Another 800 megawatts of the initial 1600 megawatts has gone out to bid this year. Further bids for 800 megawatts will likely go out in 2022 and 2024. This staggered series of bids aims to exploit the present technological evolution rapidly making wind farms more efficient as well as more affordable to build.

Closed Landfill in Westport to be Converted into a Solar Farm



Renewable energy company, Ameresco is partnering with the town of Westport to build a 622 KW-dc ground-mounted solar farm at the town's former landfill. The project is expected to be operational by August 2019. Ameresco will lead the process from start to finish, with full financial responsibility for designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining the solar farm. They will lease this land from Westport and pay a yearly Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) to the town.

BBRS Moves Ahead with Net Zero Stretch Code

At a recent meeting, the [Board of Building Regulations and Standards \(BBRS\)](#) indicated their support for a net zero stretch code for the state and tasked the Energy Advisory Committee (EAC) to develop an implementation framework over the next year. This will ensure that all new buildings built in the state are



extremely energy efficient and get their energy from a mix of onsite and off-site renewable energy.

The [stretch energy code adopted by Massachusetts in 2009](#) provides communities the option to adopt a more stringent energy code than the mandatory statewide base code. However, the stretch code is no longer a significant improvement over the base code. Development of a net zero stretch code will make it easier for municipalities, especially those interested in [net zero planning](#) to reach their emission reduction goals.

Commonwealth Launches Zero Energy Modular Affordable Housing Initiative

[The Department of Energy Resources \(DOER\)](#), in partnership with Vermont Energy Investment Corporation (VEIC), will be accepting applications from homeowners and affordable housing development partners to participate in the [Zero Energy Modular Affordable Housing Initiative \(ZE-MAHI\)](#). As part of this initiative ten zero energy modular homes will be installed across Massachusetts by 2020.

Zero Energy Modular homes will be all-electric, highly efficient and designed to use about as much energy as they produce each year, resulting in low or no monthly energy bills for residents. The program will increase access to quality affordable housing for low and moderate-income residents. [Click here](#) for more information about program eligibility.

Newton to Divest Two Municipal Funds from Fossil Fuel Company Holdings

Newton's City Council unanimously voted on an ordinance requiring the city to fully divest municipal funds from the fossil fuel industry within two years. Proposed by Councilor Emily Norton, the ordinance defines a fossil fuel company as "a publicly traded company that holds oil, gas or coal reserves in such quantities so as to be listed with a fossil fuel divestment



index." The ordinance will affect two funds totaling \$12 million. The city views the ordinance as a step towards a larger goal of eliminating Newton's financial support of fossil fuel companies.

Agawam's Cooler Community Challenge Teaches Students About Energy Efficiency

The Agawam Energy Commission and [Ener-G-Save](#) organized the Cooler Community Challenge to provide opportunities for community-wide engagement around energy use and climate change. A key part of the community challenge involved schools where students worked on projects related to climate change and energy. Student projects and the town's efficiency initiatives were featured at a culminating expo that made residents aware of the many ways they can be more efficient with energy use and save money at the same time.

Watertown Approves Electricity Aggregation Program



Watertown recently approved the setting up of a [municipal electricity program](#) that would allow the town to buy electricity in bulk on behalf of its residents and businesses. Municipal electricity aggregation provides price stability and the opportunity for the town to increase the amount of renewable energy in the community's electricity supply, above the minimum amount required by state law.

The program will help the town cut 16,000 tons of carbon emissions annually and drive new renewable energy generation in New England.

Pollution and Toxics

Five Towns on Cape Cod Pass a Municipal Plastic Bottle Ban

This spring five towns on the Cape—Provincetown, Wellfleet, Harwich, Chatham, and Orleans—passed a municipal plastic bottle ban. Initiated by Cape Cod headquartered



[Sustainable Practices](#), the ban focuses on eliminating non-emergency plastic bottle purchase by town governments and on town property in Barnstable County.

Plastic bottles are made from non-renewable fuels, leach chemicals into consumables, and never biodegrade. They impact environmental health and the health and longevity of other species, who may ingest plastic as food. Ultimately, plastic re-enters the human food chain where the adverse consequences are both known and emerging.

Sustainable Practices will be filing and working in the remaining Barnstable County towns: Barnstable, Bourne, Brewster, Dennis, Eastham, Falmouth, Mashpee, Sandwich, Truro, and Yarmouth this fall. Contact [Madhavi Venkatesan](#) for more information.

Boston Announces Move Towards Zero-Waste



Boston released their ambitious [zero waste plan](#) designed to reduce both the city's consumption of natural resources and greenhouse gas emissions. The plan includes 30 near and long-term strategies that will help the city recycle or compost 638,000 tons of its annual output of about 1.2 million tons of waste.

Approximately, six percent of Boston's greenhouse gas emissions comes from waste. The city will expand their composting and yard waste collection program, increase access to recycling opportunities and launch a city-wide education campaign on recycling. Through these and other initiatives the city hopes to increase Boston's current recycling rate from approximately 25% to 80% by 2035 and to 90% by 2050. This plan ties into the city's [larger climate action plan](#) (currently being updated) that will lay the roadmap for Boston to become carbon neutral by 2050.

Land Conservation

Land Trusts and Municipalities Collaborate to Protect 4,000 acres of Forests



Photo Credit: David Foster

We are excited to announce that this spring, the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership (NQRLP), fiscally sponsored by Mount Grace Land Conservation Trust, permanently protected more than 4,000 acres between the Quabbin Reservoir and Wachusett Mountain. This project brought together 21 partners and 32 landowners in north-central Massachusetts. Land trusts and municipalities including Petersham, Barre, Phillipston, Hubbardston, Westminster, and Princeton collaborated on this multi-landowner, landscape-scale projects to mitigate the effects of climate change in a highly fragmented area.

The project was funded by a \$7M federal Forest Legacy grant and a subsequent \$1.2M Massachusetts Landscape Partnership Program grant. The initiative involved the permanent protection of lands that the NQRLP, in collaboration with The Nature

Conservancy and the Open Space Institute, has mapped as places most likely to continue to support biodiversity in the face of a changing climate. These properties will continue to be sustainably managed over time. Read more about the [Forest Legacy component of this project here](#). Meet some of the [faces behind the project here](#). For more information contact [Cami Duquet](#).

Clean Transportation

MassDOT Grant Aims to Improve Worker Transportation Access and Air Quality



MassDOT will be directing \$1.58 million in federal funds, as well as a state match, to a grant program to provide transportation options to workers across the Commonwealth. Set to begin in October, the state will use their allocations from Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds, to prioritize reducing the number of single-occupancy vehicles and improving air quality. Likely projects include, first mile-last mile links between employment sites and transit centers, and subscription-based transportation services. Grant applicants will comprise employers, transportation management associates, municipalities, and regional transit authorities, among others. MassDOT plans to begin accepting grant applications in July and to announce grant awards in the fall.

Cape Air to Decarbonize Air Travel with All-Electric Aircrafts

Massachusetts based regional airline, [Cape Air](#), has announced plans to buy a fleet of all-electric planes at the Paris Air Show. Alice, the new all-electric plane,

manufactured by Eviation Aircraft aims to make air travel affordable, quieter, and cleaner. Planes are likely to be available to carriers for commercial use as soon as 2022. [Alice](#) is designed to fly nine passengers up to 650 miles on a single charge and is set to revolutionize regional transportation.

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