



April 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](#).

Clean Energy and Climate

SMART Agricultural Solar Guidelines Finalized



The Department of Energy Resources (DOER) has finalized the Guideline Regarding the Definition of Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Units for the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Program. The Department has reviewed all public comments submitted on the Guideline. The updated Guideline can now be found on the [Department's website](#).

Key changes made to the guideline include:

- Sets a program goal of 80MW AC capacity for Agricultural Solar Tariff Generation Units (ASTGU)
- Clarifies requirements for compatible sunlight
- Sets the maximum AC rated capacity to 5 MW
- Sets a DC to AC capacity ratio of 2:1 and caps projects to 7.5MW DC
- Establishes requirements on newly created farmland including:
 - Must be in agricultural production prior to applying
 - Defining and allowing conversion of fallow farmland for ASTGU
 - Prohibiting the clearing or conversion of forest land
- Establishes requirements for Agricultural Plans including:
 - Production requirements for hay and grazing of animals
 - Enabling transition to new commodities
- Establishes a waiver process if anticipated yields are decreased
- Clarifies requirements for failure to submit annual reports
- Sets an effective date of May 15, 2022 for the guideline

All SMART program Guidelines and other supporting documentation can be found on the Department's [website](#). If you have any questions, please direct them to DOER.SMART@mass.gov.

A Virtual Tour of the SouthCoast Project



On Wednesday, May 4 from 6:30-7:30pm, Mayflower Wind will hold a virtual open house. The open house will feature a 3D tour of the project from the offshore wind energy lease area located in federal waters extending through an intermediate crossing underneath Portsmouth, RI to an onshore grid connection at Brayton Point in Somerset, MA. There will be opportunities to ask questions.

The fourth in a series of virtual public forums Mayflower Wind will present information on the following:

- Offshore Wind Energy Lease Area
- Export Cable Route and Intermediate Portsmouth, RI Crossing
- Brayton Point (Somerset, MA) Converter Station and Grid Connection
- SouthCoast Project Timeline and Next Steps

All are welcome to participate in this free online event. Please feel free to contact info@mayflowerwind.com if you have any comments or questions. [Register here.](#)

Mass Save Program Update



In order to meet Massachusetts' climate goal of net-zero emissions by 2050, the state is spending hundreds of millions to incentivize electric heat pump installation to replace common oil or natural gas heating systems. This program contains the goal of weaning 100,000 homes off fossil fuels per year through 2030. In 2020, the pilot year, this number was an abysmal 461. This is likely due to the initial cost of transition which can be quite daunting for property owners, despite eventual net savings provided by these relatively cheap renewable energy sources. The Mass Save program seeks to alleviate initial costs and raise community awareness of the benefits of electrification by providing energy efficient incentives to increase savings. This program, run by a conglomerate of state utility companies, has already reduced resident carbon emissions by 3.7 million metric tons over the past decade. Their new three-year plan aims to increase carbon reduction by 845,000 metric tons.

Unfortunately, the Mass Save program is not without faults. In its final version, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) referenced a statutory requirement to offer all energy efficiency options, including those that are a net-negative for the climate. The DPU also muddled or nullified language aimed at promoting environmental justice in underserved communities. Nonetheless, while not perfect, this plan remains an important step toward supporting the state's environmental agenda and providing consumer savings in doing so.

Clean Transportation

Fare-Free Bus Pilot in Boston



On the 1st of March, the city of Boston began a two-year pilot program in which MBTA Routes 23, 28, and 29 are completely fare-free. This program followed the analysis of a similar, earlier pilot involving only Route 28 that increased the route's ridership 22%. From this increase, 7% came from passengers that would have otherwise driven or been unable to afford the riding frequency enjoyed under the pilot program. Despite this rider increase, the relevant areas of Roxbury, Mattapan, and Dorchester experienced virtually no impact on travel time or reliability. In fact, shorter queue times resulting from lack of a required payment mechanism caused a decrease in station lingering time. Even with these promising statistics, only 21% of Route 28 commuters saved over \$20/month, with another 12% saving somewhere between \$20 and \$0. This datapoint is attributed to the unchanged purchase of monthly T-passes by travelers who transfer to other bus routes or subways in addition to Route 28 during their commute.

The expansion of the fare-free program to Route 23 and 29 will result in a cost of \$8 million over its two-year span. This will be paid for with federal funding the city has received. This money would also cover possible increased bus service needs as a result of increased demand. This initiative is an important part of Mayor Wu's broader focus on reducing the burden of public transit on commuters, an important step in reducing the city's climate emissions by incentivizing public transit over individual driving. MBTA Assistant General Manager of Policy and Transit Planning, Lynsey Heffernan, has said several other municipalities such as Cambridge, Salem, and Brookline have communicated interest in launching their own fare-free bus program. Somerville has even suggested a municipal program to distribute transit passes to its residents. All of this paints a promising picture for what is to come in expanding the affordability and reliability of public transit in the greater Boston area.

State Awards \$5 Million for Clean Transportation Projects



The Baker administration has awarded [\\$5 million dollars in grants](#) to fund 10 projects aimed at providing clean and equitable transportation options in underserved communities. The money is primarily aimed at cutting emissions as part of the State's goal of [net-zero by 2050](#), but will also serve to reduce congestion and pedestrian danger, and to promote equitability.

4 of the 10 projects center on electric bikes, including half a million to the city of Boston to develop a bike delivery program for residents of Allston. The largest appropriation, of a million dollars, will go to Metro Mobility, who will put it towards three e-bike ownership and share programs in the greater Boston area. e-bikes provide a myriad of advantages over their conventional counterparts like delivery trucks or vans including smaller carbon footprint, less noise, and much less risk to pedestrians. Another goal of the grants is to electrify the taxi and ride-share industries, including a half million to the Way Forward Taxi Alliance, an incentive program primarily for minority owned taxi companies to purchase electric vehicles.

Mass Fleet Advisor Now Available



Mass Fleet Advisor is now accepting private and commercial, medium- and heavy-duty fleets that are interested in **FREE** electrification advisory services. MassCEC has funded a team of advisors to offer personalized guidance to help fleets big and small plan for a clean and cost-effective future with zero emission trucks.

If you do not have a fleet but know of any businesses or organizations in your network or community that would benefit from electrification services, please pass along this information! You can visit the [Mass Fleet Advisor website](#) to learn more about the program.

Toxics and Pollution

Cape Cod Has A Trash Problem



In Cape Cod and The Islands, dwindling trash-dumping areas are intersecting with a volatile recyclables market to create a garbage crisis, according to the Barnstable County Commissioners. Their study identified waste-by-rail as a possible solution to this issue. This would involve the creation of a ground transport system to move trash overflow to states with available landfill capacity. This system would specifically target landfills with more sophisticated methane capture and energy producing technologies to decrease emissions by ~2,000 metric tons of CO₂ compared to current methods, saving the Cape an estimated \$15-34 million over a 15 year period. Waste-by-rail would also increase cargo capacity and decrease traffic interference compared to current trucking practices.

Another study by Geosyntec showed that organics make up the largest portion of waste produced on the Cape, comprising nearly 30% of all garbage disposed. This statistic makes composting through individual action or sub-regional facilities another viable way of mitigating the area's trash issue. Combined with waste-by-rail operations, it is estimated that sub-regional composting facilities would decrease waste removal spending by \$29.3 million and decrease disposal greenhouse emissions three-fold.

Webinars

Non-Profits and the Public Workshop

Tuesday, April 19, 2022 from 4:30pm – 6:00pm | [Register here](#)

The Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program (NEP) will update its [Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#) (CCMP) in 2023. The purpose of the CCMP is to define goals and approaches to protect and restore water quality and living resources in Buzzards Bay and its surrounding watershed. Approaches and recommendations contained in the CCMP not only define the work of the NEP and establish eligibility for our grant and technical assistance programs, but priorities in the CCMP are considered by several other state and federal grant programs as well.

As part of the CCMP update, the NEP must undertake a climate change vulnerability assessment to determine how climate stressors might affect our collective ability to meet the goals and objectives in the CCMP. The results of the climate change vulnerability assessment will be reflected in the 2023 CCMP update. The NEP has drafted a [Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment for the Buzzards Bay CCMP](#) (CCVA). To support this effort, the Buzzards Bay Coalition will host three workshops targeting the following interest groups: state/federal personnel and scientists, regional/municipal personnel, and non-profits/the public. These workshops will be used to solicit comments and suggested approaches, exchange ideas, and help us improve upon the document. After each workshop, the CCVA will be revised.

Municipal Emergency Preparedness: Lessons Learned from COVID-19

Tuesday, April 26, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m. | [Register here](#)

Massachusetts municipalities created strong partnerships across their governments and communities to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic. At this webinar, hear from emergency preparedness experts, municipal leaders, and emergency management directors on how to apply lessons learned to other emergencies.

Creating an Equitable and Resilient Region: MetroCommon 2050

Thursday, May 5, 2022, 10:00 AM – 12:30 PM | [Register here](#)

To build the Greater Boston we all want, everyone has to work together. MetroCommon 2050 is our roadmap to a more equitable, sustainable, and prosperous region.

At this launch, you'll learn about the plan, meet and hear from inspired leaders, and learn what you can do. We hope to see you there!

MetroCommon 2050 is Greater Boston's regional land use and policy plan. It's about ways the Boston region can become more equitable, more prosperous, and more sustainable. MetroCommon is built on goals – that is, what people have told us they want. It defines action areas that give today's issues context, and that reveal systems that require intervention. It goes deeply into key topics, finding insight in the trends, patterns, and idiosyncrasies of the region: research. And it makes specific

recommendations for policy changes that can get us to our goals.

Grant Opportunities

Green Communities 2022 Competitive Grant Program

The Green Communities 2022 Competitive Grant Application is [currently available on CommBuys](#). To be eligible, Green Communities must have:

- Expended all prior Green Communities designation and competitive grant funds by February 11, 2022;
- Submitted their final grant report no later than 5 PM February 11, 2022; and satisfied all outstanding questions no later than 5 PM March 18, 2022; and
- Submitted their FY 2021 Green Communities Annual Report by November 19, 2021 and satisfied all outstanding questions no later than 5 PM March 18, 2022.

Applications must be submitted online by **5pm on April 22, 2022**.

MOR-EV Rebate Program

The Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) is offering rebates of up to \$2,500 for the purchase or lease of battery electric vehicles and fuel-cell electric vehicles and up to \$1,500 for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles with a sales price, not more than \$50,000.

For more information, and to apply for a rebate, please visit the program website at www.MOR-EV.org

The MOR-EV Trucks Program aims to provide air pollution emission reductions for the Commonwealth by increasing the use of electric trucks (incl. buses, vans, etc.) through the offering of rebates to purchasers who register their medium duty/heavy duty on-road vehicles in the Commonwealth.

Purchases or leases of battery-electric and fuel-cell electric vehicles with a sales price of more than fifty thousand dollars (\$50,000) and having a gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of more than 8,500 pounds made on or after February 16, 2021, are eligible for a rebate in the MOR-EV Trucks Program. Parties can apply for a rebate following purchase and registration of the medium/heavy-duty vehicle(s) in Massachusetts. The amount of the rebates under the MOR-EV Trucks Program is determined by the vehicle GVWR and applicable Block that the purchaser qualifies for under the program.

For more information, and to apply for a rebate, please [visit the program website](#).

Request for Proposals: Commonwealth Hydropower Program

MassCEC seeks applications to its [Commonwealth Hydro Program](#) to facilitate greater energy production and reduced environmental impacts from hydropower facilities that are eligible for the MA RPS. Commonwealth Hydro provides grant funding of up to \$300,000 per project. Through the provision of this support, Commonwealth Hydro seeks to increase the output, longevity, and ecological acceptability of hydropower facilities that are qualified for the MA RPS, or have a strong likelihood of attaining

qualification, as further explained herein. Applicants' facilities must also be licensed by FERC, have an order from FERC indicating that they are non-jurisdictional to FERC, or have a determination from FERC that they are a "qualifying conduit hydropower facility" in accordance with FERC Order 800. **Applications Due for Preferred Review by April 29.**

Request for Proposals: Women and Minority Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) Support Grants

The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center is introducing a [Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprise \(MWBE\) Support Program](#) in climate critical fields. The program is an overarching initiative aimed at the exploration, development, innovative support, and training opportunities for Massachusetts-based MWBE companies. This solicitation aims to support the entry, creation, and expansion of MWBEs into fields that are critical to meeting the Commonwealth's ambitious climate goals of reaching net zero emissions by 2050. Proposed support and training initiatives may be aimed at facilitating certifications from the Massachusetts Supplier Diversity Office (MSDO), or certification from the Massachusetts Department of Capital Asset Management and Maintenance (DCAMM) or other certifications for new MWBEs, creation of new MWBEs, as well as supporting existing MWBEs to grow and excel in clean energy and climate critical fields. All applicants are encouraged to partner with other support programs for small businesses in Massachusetts if applicable.

The program includes:

- Stakeholder outreach and workshops
- MWBE support for planning and implementation grants

At MassCEC's discretion, applications for Implementation Grants that are not detailed enough for initial award or need further development may be offered a \$50,000 MWBE Support Planning Grant, and if funding is available, an opportunity to reapply in a later round of MWBE Support Implementation Grants. **First Round of Proposals Due by April 29.**

EPA New England's Healthy Communities Grant Program

EPA New England's [Healthy Communities Grant Program](#) is currently accepting applications for projects that will benefit one or more New England communities. EPA plans to award a total of approximately 15 cooperative agreements. **The deadline to submit an application is Monday, May 9, 11:59PM.**

The Healthy Communities Grant Program will identify and fund projects that:

- Target resources to benefit communities at risk [areas needing to create community resilience, environmental justice areas of potential concern, and/or sensitive populations (e.g. children, elderly, tribes, urban and rural residents, and others at increased risk)].
- Assess, understand, and reduce environmental and human health risks.
- Increase collaboration through partnerships and community-based projects.
- Build institutional and community capacity to understand and solve environmental and human health problems.
- Achieve measurable environmental and human health benefits.

Eligible projects under this program must be located in and/or directly benefit one or more of the “target investment areas” and identify how the proposed project will achieve measurable environmental and/or public health results in one or more of the seven “target program areas.”

In 2022, “Target Investment Areas” include: 1) Areas Needing to Create Community Resilience; 2) Environmental Justice Areas of Potential Concern, and/or Sensitive Populations. “Target Program Areas” include: 1) Capacity Building in Minority or Low-Income Populations; 2) Clean, Green, and Healthy Schools; 3) Energy Efficiency; 4) Healthy Indoor Environments; 5) Healthy Outdoor Environments; 6) Pollution Prevention; and 7) Sustainable Materials Management. A description of these target areas can be found in the [2022 Request for Applications](#).

Eligible applicants include state and local governments, public nonprofit institutions or organizations, private nonprofit institutions or organizations, quasi-public nonprofit institutions or organizations, federally recognized tribal governments, K-12 schools or school districts; and non-profit organizations (e.g. grassroots and/or community-based organizations). Applicants can request up to \$30,000 (or up to \$40,000 for projects qualifying under the Pollution Prevention or Sustainable Materials Management Target Program Areas).

MassEVIP Fleets Incentives

MassEVIP Fleets is a MassDEP rolling grant program aimed at making EVs more widely available across Massachusetts. The program provides incentives for public entities to buy or lease EVs. Maximum funding amounts depend on vehicle type and means of acquisition. [Learn more about MassEVIP here](#).

MassDEP accepts applications on a first-come, first-served basis until all available funding is spent. **Apply online:** [MassEVIP Fleets Incentives](#).

MassEVIP Multi-Unit Dwelling & Educational Campus Charging Incentives

MassEVIP Multi-Unit Dwelling (MUD) & Educational Campus Charging is one of several MassDEP rolling grant programs aimed at making electric vehicles (EVs) and EV charging stations more widely available across Massachusetts.

The [Multi-Unit Dwelling & Educational Campus Charging Program](#) provides incentives for property owners or managers to acquire and install Level 1 and Level 2 EV charging stations. Multi-unit dwellings with five or more residential units and educational campuses with at least 15 students on-site are eligible. MassDEP funds up to 60 percent of the hardware and installation costs to a maximum of \$50,000 per street address.

MassDEP accepts applications on a first-come, first-served basis until all available funding is spent. **Apply online:** [MassEVIP MUD & Educational Campus Charging Incentives](#).

MassEVIP Public Access Charging Incentives

MassEVIP Public Access Charging is one of several MassDEP rolling grant programs aimed at making electric vehicles (EVs) and EV charging stations more widely available

across Massachusetts.

The [MassEVIP Public Access Charging Program](#) provides incentives for property owners or managers with publicly accessible parking to acquire and install Level 1 and Level 2 EV charging stations. Non-residential locations with publicly accessible parking are eligible.

- Government-owned locations: MassDEP funds up to 100 percent of the hardware and installation costs to a maximum of \$50,000 per street address.
- All other locations: The agency funds up to 80 percent of the hardware and installation costs to a maximum of \$50,000 per street address.

MassDEP accepts applications on a first-come, first-served basis until all available funding is spent. **Apply online:** [MassEVIP Public Access Charging Incentives](#).

MassEVIP Workplace & Fleet Charging Incentives

MassEVIP Workplace & Fleet Charging is one of several MassDEP rolling grant programs aimed at making electric vehicles (EVs) and EV charging stations more widely available across Massachusetts.

The [Workplace & Fleet Charging Program](#) provides incentives for employers and fleet operators to acquire and install Level 1 and Level 2 EV charging stations. Applicants with 15 or more employees in non-residential places of business are eligible.

MassDEP provides up to 60 percent of the funding to a maximum of \$50,000 per street address for hardware and installation costs.

MassDEP accepts applications on a first-come, first-served basis until all available funding is spent. **Apply online:** [MassEVIP Workplace & Fleet Charging Incentives](#).

Mass Save 1-4 Unit Incentive Program

The Sponsors of Mass Save have officially announced the launch of a new incentive program for 1-4 unit residential buildings. The program is aimed at driving residential new construction toward high-performance, all-electric homes. They are offering incentives up to \$40,000, as well as technical assistance to support builders, developers, and homeowners in the construction of new homes that will use substantially less energy than code-built homes, while providing enhanced comfort and long-term resiliency. While targeted at new constructions, the incentives are open to deep energy retrofits of existing buildings, as long as they meet the same requirements.

Please see this sheet for more info: [Mass Save RNC All-Electric Home 1-pager](#)

Resources and Reading List

- [Mass Towns for Climate](#): Across Massachusetts, individual cities and towns are taking action to fight climate change. These actions, referred to as municipal climate actions, are a key component to achieving the emissions reductions necessary for a safe future. What actions has your municipality taken? How does

it stack up to neighboring cities and towns? Check out our research and resources at [masstownsforclimate.org](https://www.masstownsforclimate.org) to learn more!

- [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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