



September 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 Proposes Expanding the SMART Program

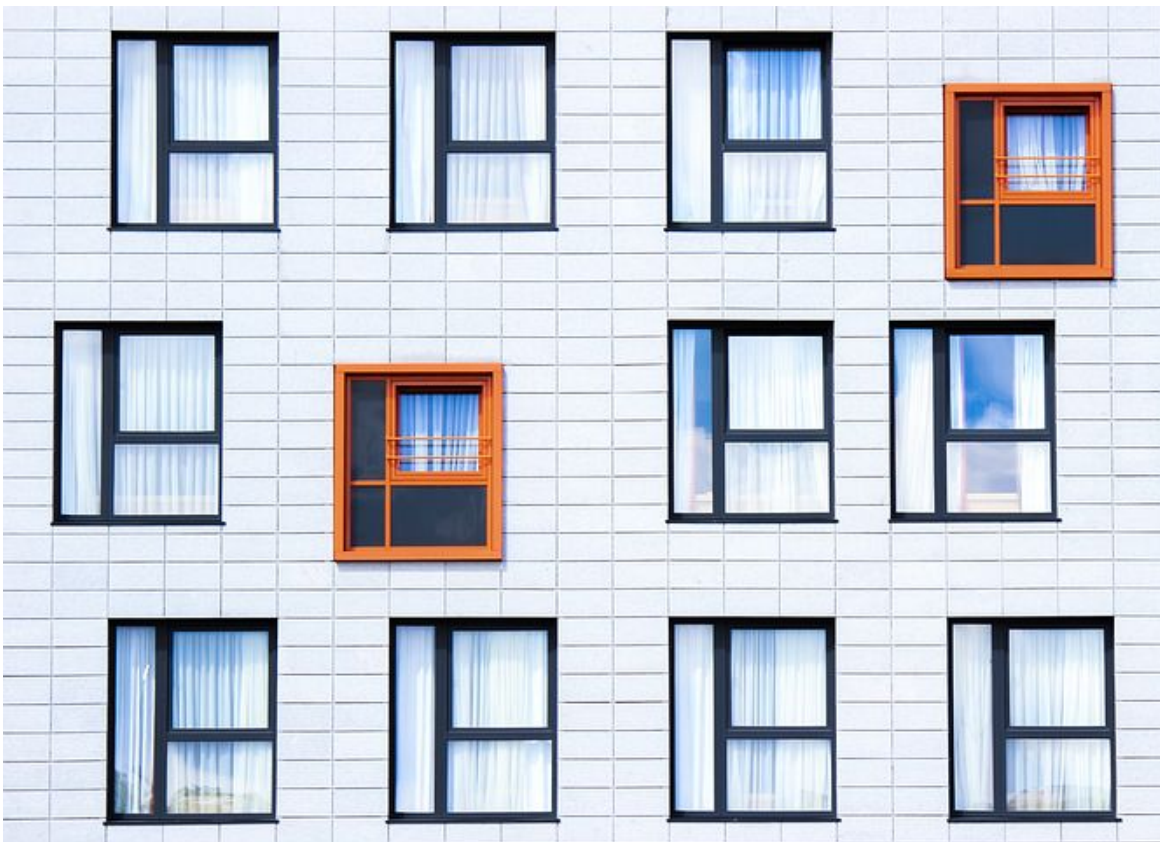


The Commonwealth has proposed an additional 800 MW expansion—beyond the initial 1600 MW—of the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) incentive program designed to facilitate solar projects. Earlier this month the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) [issued for public comment a straw proposal](#) with changes to the program after reviewing the first 400 MW solar

capacity accepted into the program. According to the administration the changes outlined in the straw proposal will help advance projects on utility waiting lists, deliver solar energy benefits in low income areas, and require larger solar projects to be paired with energy storage infrastructure. Industry groups and environmental advocates are calling on the administration to take into account land use considerations, strengthen provisions for low-income access and address net metering caps among other policy recommendations.

A [new report released by Vote Solar](#) revealed that an inconsistent policy environment in Massachusetts is slowing the growth of the solar industry and called on the state to increase the SMART program capacity to 4800 MW, which would create up to 9,000 new jobs and drive more than \$5 billion in solar project investment to the state's economy.

## **Arlington, Melrose, and Natick Embark on Net Zero Planning Process**



Over the next year and a half, the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will help the communities of Arlington, Melrose and Natick develop [local net zero action plans](#) and identify actions that will help lower greenhouse gas emissions. MAPC will develop a series of resources to support local net zero planning and help these communities develop or update their greenhouse gas inventories. A part of MAPC's Zero to 101 initiative, this project will develop strategies to address buildings, energy, transportation and equity.

## **Commonwealth Awards \$14.9 million in Green Communities Grants**

Ninety-one communities in Massachusetts including Acton, Weymouth, Milton, Melrose, Fitchburg, Framingham, North Andover, Woburn, Worcester, Montague, and Douglas were awarded \$14.9 million in Green



Communities competitive grants to fund clean energy projects. The grants fund a range projects from ventilation system upgrades and high efficiency lighting to installation of insulation and energy

management systems at municipal buildings and facilities. Also included are projects to install LED streetlights, electric vehicles, and electric vehicles charging stations.

Under the Green Communities Act, cities and towns must meet [five criteria](#) to be designated a Green Community and receive funding. Grants are capped at \$250,000 per municipality and all Green Communities commit to reducing municipal energy consumption by 20 percent over five years.

### **Northampton Working Towards Carbon Neutral Goal**

The City of Northampton is developing a [Climate Resilience and Regeneration Plan](#) to lay out a clear roadmap to get the city to carbon neutral by 2050. The plan has been in development for over a year and aims to make the city more resilient to climate change while identifying pathways to reduce emissions. The plan is expected to require new city buildings to meet net-zero energy standards, prioritize electrification of building heating and cooling systems, shift to more renewable energy procurements through community choice aggregation and reduce emissions from the transportation sector.

### **Lincoln Community Farm to Generate Its Own Electricity**



[Codman Community Farm](#) will be the first town owned facility in Lincoln to go solar. The farm is installing a 54 kW solar photovoltaic system on the roof of its three barns that will provide 100% of the facilities electricity. The farm will also save or earn roughly \$15,000 a year on electricity and Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) program tariffs. The \$150,000 in costs to design and build the

photovoltaic system will be covered by donations and two grants totaling \$50,000 from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Energy for American Program (REAP) and Massachusetts Department of Agriculture Resources.

## **Pollution and Toxics**

### **Rockport Bans Plastic Water Bottles and Food Service Ware, Styrofoam Ban Goes into Effect in Falmouth**



Congratulations to Rockport for passing two comprehensive bylaws that [restrict the use of plastic water bottles and food ware](#). Coming into effect in January 2021, it will be unlawful to sell drinking water in plastic bottles of 1 liter or less unless the bottles are 100 percent compostable or at least 50% biodegradable. Also, all disposable food service ware including beverage containers, bowls, plates, trays, cartons, cups, lids, straws, stirrers, forks, spoons, knives, film wrap, and other items designed for one-time or non-durable uses will need to be biodegradable or compostable. Both articles were spearheaded by [Seaside Sustainability](#), the Rockport High School Green Team, Selectwoman Denise Donnelly and Health Agent Leslie Whelan.

Falmouth's ban on styrofoam used in disposable food packaging went into effect this September. Styrofoam is manufactured using polluting fossil fuels, is a contaminant in curbside recycling, clogging storm water drains and impacting wildlife.

## Clean Transportation

**New AchiEve Model Policy Toolkit to Accelerate Electric Vehicle Adoption Released**



*Photo Credit: Green Energy Consumers Alliance*

In celebration of [National Drive Electric Week](#), Sierra Club and Plug in America released an updated version of [AchiEVe: Model Policies to Accelerate Electric Vehicle Adoption](#), a toolkit designed to accelerate the switch to clean, electric vehicles in an effective, sustainable, and equitable way by providing public officials and advocates with model EV policies at the state, local, transit, and utility levels.

The toolkit is a comprehensive resource with detailed examples from places around the nation where these policies are working. It includes information on expanding equity and access to EVs, expanding perks and incentives for EV adoption, electrifying public vehicle fleets, expanding charging access, evaluating EV registration fees, and promoting consumer education and protection.

### **Lawrence Offers Free Public Transit on Three Bus Routes**



Kudos to the City of Lawrence for being the first municipality in the state to offer free bus service on three of the busiest routes in the city in a bid to increase mobility and reduce the financial burden on people. To offset the fare loss from the bus routes, the city will provide \$225,000 to the Merrimack Valley Regional Transit Authority for the next two years.

A recent [study from MassINC](#) also found that high fares puts the commuter rail out of reach for many low income residents in gateway cities impacting access to jobs and economic opportunities and called for a new equitable commuter rail fare policy.

## **Sterling Gets Its First Electric Car**

The Sterling Municipal Light Department recently donated an all-electric Chevy Bolt to the Sterling Senior Center. The electric car can get up to 240 miles on a single charge. Volunteers at the center who were using their own cars to run errands can now use the zero- emission electric car to bring meals and people to medical appointments. The purchase was made possible through the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company's discount, a \$7500 grant from the Department of Environmental Protection and a discount from Quirk Chevrolet.

## **Events**

### **Local Climate Leaders' Summit for Municipal Officials in Taunton**

Join Sierra Club on [October 19, 2019](#) from 1:00 – 3:30 pm for a [Climate Leaders' Summit](#) in Taunton. Hosted by State Senator Marc Pacheco, this event is



**exclusively open to municipal elected and appointed officials.** At a time when the federal government is choosing to retreat from climate change, Massachusetts cities and towns are taking leadership for the most important challenge facing mankind. Sierra Club is looking for opportunities to

empower local elected officials (Mayors, Town/City Councilors, Select Board members, etc.) to tackle the work that our national leaders are ignoring.

The summit will give you a chance to learn more about the Massachusetts renewable energy landscape and connect with officials in other communities. Sierra Club MA Chapter Director Deb Pasternak will present current clean energy policies and advocacy around these issues. [Click here to register.](#) If you have any questions, please contact [Jacob Stern](#), Clean Energy Organizer.

### **Resilient and Efficient Communities: Two Strategies for Success**

On [Tuesday, October 1 at 11:00 am](#) the Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP) will host a [webinar](#) to explore the nexus between energy efficiency and resiliency from the community perspective. Speakers will highlight two pathways that communities can use to improve resiliency through updated energy codes. More specifically, the webinar will first highlight the ANCR tool as a means for assessing and improving a community's buildings stock in relation to resiliency. Next, FEMA's Disaster Recover Reform Act (DRRA) will be highlighted as a potential funding opportunity that communities can utilize to build-back with a more resilient and efficient buildings stock. Lastly, participants will learn about efforts communities are undertaking in the region. [Click here to register.](#)

### **Applications Open for Solarize Mass and Solarize Mass Plus**



The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) and DOER are seeking applications from cities and towns to participate in the [2020 Solarize Mass and Solarize Mass Plus](#) programs. MassCEC will provide community marketing grants between \$5,000 and \$13,000, based on community eligibility. Interested communities should review the community [request for proposal](#)

documents and application form (See '[How Do I Apply](#)' tab). Applications are being accepted now through November 15, 2019. MassCEC will also host a [webinar at 1:00 pm on Monday, October 7](#) to provide an overview of each of the technologies and answer questions. [Click here to register.](#)



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