



December 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@sierraclub.org).

Clean Energy and Climate

Berkshire Wind Expands Wind Farm on Brodie Mountain



As part of their second phase of construction, the [Berkshire Wind Power Project](#) atop Brodie Mountain in Hancock has added two, 2.3 MW turbines. Each megawatt is enough to power around 1,000 suburban homes under optimal conditions. This brings the total number of turbines to 12 and 19.6 MW.

The two new turbines are expected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 7,400 tons of carbon dioxide every year. Municipal light plants (MLP) participating in the second phase of the project include Boylston, Chicopee, Hull, Ipswich, Marblehead, Peabody, Russell, Sterling, Wakefield and West Boylston. The 15 MW first phase included 10 turbines and began operation in 2011.

Newton and Ashland Commit to Net Zero Goals



Both Newton and Ashland recently made significant commitments to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. [Newton's Climate Action Plan](#) aims to make Newton carbon neutral by 2050 and Ashland voted in favor of a nonbinding resolution to be net zero by 2040.

To meet this goal, Newton plans to transition their building and transportation systems to electricity. Their plan calls for an increase in energy efficiency measures, improved building insulation, installation of efficient heating and cooling technologies like heat pumps, and hiring an 'energy coach' to help residents understand the best energy options available. The city also plans to gradually replace fossil fuel powered city vehicles with zero emission electric models and expand charging infrastructure with support from Eversource. [Click here for more information on Newton's Climate Action Plan.](#)

With the approval of the net-zero resolution, Ashland will now begin the process of developing a net zero plan by the fall of 2020. As part of its strategy Ashland is considering increasing the use of renewable energy both on-site and off-site.

Cranberry Farmers Consider Dual Solar and Agriculture Projects Over Bogs



Cranberry farmers in Massachusetts are looking into building solar panels above their bogs as a source of revenue to combat falling fruit prices. While there has not been much research on how crops can fare under solar panels, the idea is to build the solar arrays high enough off the ground and in more spaced-out clusters to allow for crops to be safely grown and harvested. Researchers at the University of Massachusetts are beginning to assess the impact shading of the panels will have on yield and color of cranberries.

Cranberry farmers hope to take advantage of [state renewable energy incentive](#) to encourage dual solar and agriculture projects. To qualify, arrays must be built at least eight feet off the ground and be able to demonstrate that the land under the panels will remain agriculturally productive. One proposal has received state approval and others are under review.

Pollution and Toxics

\$3.6 Million in Grants Awarded for Recycling, Composting, and Waste Reduction



Massachusetts announced \$3.6 million in the second round of [Sustainable Materials Recovery Program \(SMRP\) grants](#) to [54 communities, regional groups and non-profit organizations](#). The grants will help increase the diversion, reuse, composting and recycling of materials in the solid waste stream.

Grants in this round were awarded to implement a number of waste reduction initiatives. They include Pay-As-You-Throw (PAYT) programs, residential mattress recycling programs, the purchase of wheeled carts for implementation or expansion of curbside single-stream or dual-stream recycling, increasing the efficiency of recycling cardboard with compactors, and expanding food waste composting operations.

The first round of SMRP funding announced in October [awarded more than \\$2.9 million](#) in grants to 262 communities.

Clean Transportation

New Report Provides Insight into Bikeshare Program



The [Metropolitan Area Planning Council \(MAPC\)](#) has released an interactive web report, [“First Miles: Examining 18 months of Dockless Bikeshare in Metro Boston,”](#) that uses detailed trip-level data from the Lime dockless bikeshare system to map trip patterns and pinpoint the most-frequented routes in 16 cities and towns. Over the past 18 months, users in Greater Boston have taken over 300,000 trips, logging an estimated 380,000 miles. Malden, Everett, Arlington, Winthrop, and Melrose saw the highest per-person ridership. The report provides new insight on micro-mobility and key bike connections, and is a useful resource to identify where transportation investments and infrastructure improvements are most needed to create safe conditions for bikers.

Sierra Club Releases First Ever Nationwide Investigation into Electric Vehicle Shopping Experience



Sierra Club's new report, [“Rev Up Electric Vehicles: A Nationwide Study of the EV Shopping Experience,”](#) shows that the U.S. auto industry is largely failing to meet consumer demand for electric vehicles (EVs) . Based on surveys carried out by Sierra Club volunteers, who visited 909 different auto dealerships and stores across all 50 states, the study found that dealerships and automakers have massive room for improvement to increase EV availability, make sure that EVs are prominently displayed and charged for test drives, and ensure that salespersons are offering important information upfront about charging, range, and federal and state consumer incentives.

The study found that [74% of dealers did not have a single EV in stock](#); many of those dealers had no more than two EVs available on their lot, and 10% of the time when volunteers asked to test drive an EV, the vehicle was insufficiently charged and unable to be driven. [This press release](#) details our key findings from the report.

Statewide Rules for Use of E-Scooters Proposed



Lawmakers are considering several proposals to legalize e-scooters by setting rules for how and where they can be used in cities and towns that want them, while protecting the safety of users and pedestrians. The proposals consider locations of use, minimum age of riders, speed limits, and use of helmets. E-scooters are an emission free, affordable transportation option and have become popular for short commutes and as first-and-last-mile mobility options.

[Spin](#) and [Lime](#) have tested them as part of pilot projects in Salem, [Boston](#) and

Brookline.

Commonwealth Awards \$2M in Grants for Public Access Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure



Eighty-five grants totaling more than \$2 million have been awarded to 49 entities, including companies, utilities, and universities across the Commonwealth for the installation of 195 Level 2 electric vehicle (EV) charging stations as part of the [Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program's \(MassEVIP\) Public Access Charging \(PAC\) program](#). Communities that will get new charging stations include Lawrence, Fall River, Webster, Revere, Amesbury, Northampton, Woburn, and Mansfield.

The MassEVIP PAC program provides grants covering 80 percent of the cost to acquire and install publicly accessible Level 2 EV charging stations, up to \$6,250 per port. This round of funding supports the installation of 368 EV charging ports across the Commonwealth.

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) also offers the [MassEVIP Workplace](#) and [Multi-Unit Dwelling Charging programs](#), both of which are currently open and accepting applications.

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ALL OF US AT THE
MASSACHUSETTS**



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