



September 2023

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 [Sam Lambert](#).

As the summer comes to a close and many Massachusetts residents are heading back to school, the municipal team at MA Sierra Club wanted to highlight key actions for your community. The articles in this newsletter span important drivers of emissions across the state and highlight new grant programs, important engagement points, and considerations for future solutions. We hope you learn something valuable!

Community Choice Aggregation

By Sam Lambert

Community Choice Aggregation is a program that allows municipalities to purchase electricity in bulk on behalf of residents and businesses within their community. Many municipalities will take this opportunity to purchase a larger stake of renewable energy, thus decreasing their reliance on fossil fuel powered electricity and providing a stable price point for consumers.

The process to implement a Community Choice Aggregation plan has several steps, each with their own challenges. However, the [Department of Public Utilities will be accepting comments on a proposed expedited review process through October 6, 2023](#).

Submit your comments to contribute to the improvement of the process, and [get in touch with us](#) to learn more about initiating a municipal aggregation plan in your community!

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

Electric Buses & Fleet

By Brooke Van Ackooy & Armando Terrones

If you want to improve the health of students, lower pollution, and upgrade old school buses, the Federal and State Governments have large amount of grant funding available to municipalities.



There is over \$5 billion dollars allocated to replacing old diesel school buses with newer clean technologies through Federal programs: Clean School Bus Program (CSB) and Diesel Emissions Reduction ACT (DERA). These include fully electric buses, engine retrofits, and new more efficient diesel buses! There is also money

allocated by the MassCEC State Accelerating Clean Transportation School Bus program (ACTBUS) to provide technical planning and deployment support.

- Funding is open for DERA! The application is due December 1st, but get started now as the application may take some time. [Manage your grant application](#) and [gather further information here](#).
- Funding is closed for ACT and CSB, but you can create grant accounts with the various organizations and prepare to apply when funding reopens.

There are also number of financial resources available for the purchase of electric vehicles or to build charging stations through MassEVIP and MOR-EV. There are no deadlines and the applications are online!

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

Building Retrofits

By Mallorie Barber

Buildings drive a large portion of emissions in every municipality in Massachusetts, but their variation adds complexity to finding solutions. **Now, municipalities have more resources than ever to impact the building sector from policies to grants to programming guidance!**

Municipalities should review the available options and identify the best path forward for their communities while advocating to fill gaps in the available resources. This article presents an overview of the current programs across the state in an easy to understand framework.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

Zero Carbon Renovation Fund

By Tyler Aprati



The Zero Carbon Renovation Fund is a bill proposing the opening of an account and allocating \$300 million from the Massachusetts state Legislature to fund the renovation of existing buildings.

Check out this interview with Acting Chapter Director, Vick Mohanka, on the importance of this bill and how you can show support this legislative session!

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

Stretch Code & Fossil Free Buildings

By Madeline Buscone & Sydney Jenkins

As part of targeting net zero emissions by 2050, Massachusetts is offering options to promote sustainability in the building sector. **These programs will benefit the environment, lower construction costs, reduce utility bills, and eliminate dangerous household pollutants.**

Massachusetts is currently offering three building energy codes: the Base Code, the Stretch Code, and the Specialized Code. **The Specialized Code** is a municipal opt-in code that ensures new construction and major renovations are consistent with achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. This code can be adopted by any cities and towns in Massachusetts through a vote, either by a city council or at a Town Meeting.

Additionally, the **Municipal Fossil Fuel Free Building Demonstration Program**, a program that promotes the construction of green buildings, allows a select number of municipalities to ban fossil fuels in new construction and major renovations.

Bill H.3227, under consideration this year, would allow any interested communities to participate in the program, allowing for more equitable access to the health, economic, and sustainability benefits associated with green buildings. **Community support for H.3227 will therefore help promote a better future for both our planet and our local communities.**

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

Upcoming Events

[Statewide Municipal Partnerships Conference](#)

October 10th, 2023

Lieutenant Governor Kim Driscoll invites you to the 2023 Statewide Municipal Partnerships Conference for municipal officials and staff, co-hosted by the Massachusetts Regional Planning Agencies (MARPA) and Division of Local Services. The event will be held at the College of the Holy Cross on Tuesday, Oct. 10, 2023.

Additional Resources

- [Mass Towns for Climate](#)
- [Updated Map of Stretch and Specialized code communities](#)
- [White House Inflation Reduction Act Guidebook](#)

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