

# MASSACHUSETTS SIERRA

Explore, Enjoy, and Protect the Planet



MASSACHUSETTS  
SIERRA CLUB

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# Letter from the Director

Dear Friends,

Over the past year we clearly witnessed the accelerating impacts of the climate crisis – forest fires, floods, hurricanes, and here at home a record warm year that featured a record breaking drought. As we continue to face down this growing crisis, we know that working together is the only way to make the changes we need to meet the challenges ahead.

Your Massachusetts Sierra Club continues to grow in impact, with more volunteers working every single day across varied campaigns. Our Chapter staff now support over a dozen volunteer teams and subject area leaders - working on energy efficiency, equitable building decarbonization, transit, offshore wind, solar, electing climate champions, plastics and toxics reductions, municipal climate leadership, protecting our forests and waters, and the list goes on.

You are part of this movement that submitted thousands of public comments into over a dozen different legislative and regulatory processes this year. And our organizing campaigns are working! In 2022 alone, we saw the passage of An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind, funding to support communities facing PFAS “forever chemical” contamination in their water supplies, the long overdue passage of the Public Lands Protection Act, the election of Maura Healey to the Governor’s office, and the adoption of meaningful regulations to reduce emissions in the transportation sector.

Still, these victories, though important, are only a start. As they say, the devil is in the details, and in this case, those details are played out in how the Governor’s administration implements the legislature’s statutes. Under the Baker Administration, climate action was weakened through poor implementation of hard won policies - including the net zero stretch code, the timely procurement of offshore wind, and the 2021 Next Generation Roadmap bill’s environmental justice and climate impacts criteria for approvals of new energy projects.

Making matters more difficult, in the midterms, we watched the federal winds shift even further against common sense climate policy and a healthy democracy - underscoring the importance of organizing locally here in Massachusetts - especially to support the effective and equitable disbursement of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and the Inflation Reduction Act federal funds.

Sierra Club will strongly support the Healey administration in their work to create clean energy and energy justice programs that allow us to meet our climate goals while powering Massachusetts locally and equitably - ensuring that our low and moderate income neighbors do not bear the economic burden as we shift to cleaner, safer, and more efficient technologies.

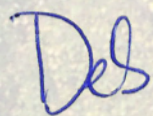
As gas and electricity prices rise dramatically in Massachusetts – thanks to the energy crisis created by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, our region’s overdependence on fracked methane “natural” gas, and record profiteering from the oil and gas industries – Sierra Club will be working through the courts, through the legislature, through the media, and showing up en masse, to push for cleaner, cheaper, local, and efficient energy solutions that will foster health equity, economic justice, energy independence, good jobs, and a cleaner environment.

Building on our victories and motivated by our shared goals, we will continue to grow the climate movement across the intersectional issues of racial, economic, housing, health, energy and worker justice to support our leaders in holding corporate interests accountable for the external impacts and costs of their business practices - that are borne by all of us.

In 2023, we will expand our advocacy training programs, helping new volunteers convert their climate fears into coordinated action. We will keep fighting not just for our communities, but also for the wildlife, for the wild spaces, and for those who will inherit this earth, because they do not have the voice to protect this planet we all call home.

I thank you for being part of our community, and for your financial support and partnership. Always contact us to learn more, and thank you for all you do.

Gratefully yours,



Deb



Photo: Liz Linder



# Two Years of Effort Results in a Major Climate Bill

By Paul Dale and Jess Nahigian

On August 11, 2022, a Massachusetts climate bill, *An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind* ([bit.ly/3FZCKOo](https://bit.ly/3FZCKOo)), became law! This was a culmination of two years of legislative and grassroots advocacy by the Sierra Club and partners. Many feared that only a minor bill, or none at all, would pass. Certainly, this multifaceted bill would not have become law without dedicated partners and supportive legislators using a combination of grit, organizing, fact-based analysis and a pinch of luck.

For the first year of the legislative cycle (2021), staff and volunteers focused on aligning ourselves with allies, honing our priority list, gaining legislative co-sponsors, holding legislative briefings on priority policy, and writing and delivering meaningful testimony to specific committees. All the while, we offered opportunities for members to engage through Action Alerts, hosting webinars and lobby days and working with partners to strengthen our coalitions. (If you have not already done so, please consider signing up to receive Action Alerts by email.)

Join our Action Alert email list:

[www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/get-involved](https://www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/get-involved)

In February 2022, the House passed a sweeping wind bill, adding to a number of other wind procurements already underway. Legislation to use offshore wind as a clean energy substitute is important, yet the state must also focus on other essential climate actions in buildings, transportation, solar and storage, with overarching concern with environmental justice. This became the focus of our advocacy.



Photos: Allyson Samuell

On Earth Day the Senate responded to the House's wind bill by releasing a more comprehensive climate bill. We then organized a list of priority amendments, supported a call-in day, and organized a phonebank to ask members to contact key legislators. Because of these efforts and the effort of our partners, several of our amendments made it into the Senate version of the bill, but our priority amendments for retrofitting buildings to meet the needed scale for decarbonization died.



Both bill versions (House and Senate) then went to a reconciliation committee where tensions were high because time was running out for the session. We organized three rallies with allies to count down the days remaining in the session, but regardless of these efforts, the committee became deadlocked. After strategically placed emails, distributed rallies, a dear colleague letter, a letter signed by over 60 organizations, and daily rallies in the state house, advocates broke the deadlock.

There was a chance the governor would veto the bill because of his close ties to the utility and real estate industries, as well as his objection to a provision that would allow 10 municipalities to ban fossil fuels in new construction.

On August 11, the final day for the governor to act, he signed the bill into law – an important step to net-zero by 2050. There is plenty to do in the coming years to reach this goal. Specifically and immediately, the funding required to (partly) implement the bill died in the last hours of the formal session and our priority legislation to build a program that would retrofit buildings at the scale and pace necessary was not included in full. But we are re-invigorated with hope; we are working to elect more climate justice champions this fall, and we are regrouping around important issues that remain unaddressed so we can advance them next session. Thanks to all who helped make this happen.



# Transportation Policy Wins in 2022

By Veena Dharmaraj



Photo: Mike B, Pexels

This has been a big year for advancing climate friendly transportation policies. Transportation generates more climate pollution than any other sector in Massachusetts and contributes to negative health impacts including increased risk of cancer, cardio-respiratory illnesses, and asthma. To combat this we simultaneously need to expand alternatives to personal vehicles (transit, walking, and biking) and electrify the vehicles on our roads.

Thanks to your advocacy we have some exciting state and federal wins to celebrate. Your enthusiasm and action—whether it was signing an action alert, contacting your legislators, writing a letter to the editor, showing up at a public hearing, or posting on social media—helped get us over the finish line.

## The Massachusetts Climate Bill and Other State Actions

The climate bill signed into law this August includes several important transportation provisions. It requires the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to electrify their bus fleet by 2040 prioritizing deployment in environmental justice populations. The bill also provides Regional Transportation Authorities (RTAs) with technical and funding assistance to electrify their fleets.

And there's good news if you plan to switch to an electric vehicle (EV). To ensure that electric vehicle rebates through the MOR-EV program reach people that need it the most, the bill sets the vehicle eligibility price cap to \$55,000, increases rebate levels for battery electric vehicles to \$3500, makes the rebate available for new and used vehicles at the point of sale, and provides an additional rebate of \$1500 for low-and-moderate income residents. Once implemented, these are all measures that will advance electric vehicle accessibility.

To reduce barriers to charging access, the bill creates an interagency council to develop and implement a plan for deploying EV charging infrastructure in an equitable and accessible manner. It further mandates that all new cars sold in the Commonwealth must be electric by 2035. The bill builds on these key measures by including several reporting requirements to track progress being made.

Earlier this year, the Commonwealth took a big step forward by adopting the Advanced Clean Trucks (ACT) Rule that Sierra Club successfully advocated for with allies. The Rule sets annually increasing zero-emission truck sale requirements for manufacturers and requires the sales of trucks and buses in Massachusetts to be all-electric by 2045. Collectively, these policy measures will help Massachusetts reach its goal of 900,000 electric cars and 50,000 electric trucks by the end of this decade.

## Federal Investments in Sustainable Transportation

Congress passed the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) this August-- the largest climate bill in U.S. history-- directing \$369 billion in investments for climate, jobs, and justice. It includes grants for improving transit, community walkability and connectivity, and dedicates funds for electrifying the U.S. Postal Service delivery vehicles, port equipment, and commercial vehicles. Funding through the IRA will also expand clean vehicle manufacturing facilities in the U.S., extend and expand the existing federal consumer EV tax credits, and create a federal tax credit for commercial vehicles.

The investments in the IRA complement those in the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) that fund transit capital projects, safe biking and pedestrian infrastructure, deployment of electric school buses, and expansion of charging infrastructure. For the first time, through the Justice40 initiative, 40% of federal investments will flow to disadvantaged communities that are underserved, and overburdened by pollution.

This suite of state and federal measures are crucial to begin building a cleaner transportation system in the Commonwealth. However, there's more work to be done. Alongside the speedy and equitable implementation of these policies, Massachusetts needs an affordable and expanded transit system and denser walkable and bikeable communities. Our advocacy—with your support—will continue to build grassroots power to make that vision to reality.



# Food Lies at the Heart of Fighting Climate Change

By Kelsey Damrad

Reimagining our global eating habits and food production practices is necessary to reverse climate change, reduce water stress and pollution, restore depleted lands and ocean health, and protect endangered wildlife—not to mention, safeguard our own health and future. Eating a plant-based diet is a high-impact way to fight climate change from your own home.

## About the Sierra Club's Plant-Based Planet Team

The Sierra Club's Plant-based Planet Team is raising awareness about the severe environmental impact of animal agriculture and helping people make a difference by either **reducing** or **eliminating** the amount of animal products on their plates.

The team hosts community events that teach about the impact of eating habits and how to build a sustainable, plant-based kitchen. Some of these events are cooking demonstrations for plant-based recipes, gardening classes for growing your own food, and potluck dinners to introduce guests to a variety of plant-based dishes.



Photo: Beverly Rich

The group is also dedicated to raising awareness of the prevalence of animal agriculture's contribution to environmental racism, which is the disproportionate impact of pollution and climate change on communities of color.

All are welcome to join the Plant-based Planet Team events, no matter if you're a transitioning vegetarian/vegan or if you've never tried a plant-based meal in your life.

## The Intersection of Animal Agriculture and Climate Change

Climate scientists have consistently warned that the level of greenhouse gasses generated by cattle, dairy, egg, and fish farming at every stage of the production process is at a dangerous all-time high. Today, the energy use from global food production represents 35% of planet-heating gas emissions, most of which comes from animal agriculture. In the U.S. alone, food production has an outsized impact, accounting for nearly 60% of the country's greenhouse gasses.

The negative environmental impact of animal agricultural exploitation—all to meet a growing demand for meat and dairy products—is attributed to several factors, including:

- **Forest felling.** Half of all habitable land worldwide is dedicated to agriculture, with more than three-quarters specifically for livestock production. Forests and lands are cleared to allow for the grazing and growing of feed for livestock. Consequences include the death of native vegetation due to toxic livestock manure, lack of nutrient-dense grass due to livestock grazing methods, and displacement of native wildlife.
- **Contamination of drinking water.** Facility wastewater often contains fecal matter and other pollutants that infect nearby community reserves of drinking water. Notably, this externality disproportionately impacts communities of color.
- **Large methane quantities.** Methane produced by livestock ("cow burps" and manure) is dangerously potent, with more than 80 times the warming power of carbon dioxide.
- **Pollution and warming of oceans.** Overfishing and bycatch (non-target animals that are indirectly killed by fisheries, such as turtles and whales) have depleted important marine life that are essential for sustaining the health of our oceans.

To learn more about Sierra Club's stance on agriculture, visit [www.sierraclub.org/policy/agriculture/food](http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/agriculture/food).

To become involved with the Plant-based Planet Team, visit the Sierra Club's online calendar ([www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/events-calendar](http://www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/events-calendar)) or email [scplantbasedplanet@gmail.com](mailto:scplantbasedplanet@gmail.com).



# Decarbonizing Boston

By Michele Brooks

In Boston, buildings account for roughly 70% of the city's total carbon emissions; and just 3% of our largest buildings are responsible for 50% of our carbon emissions! According to The Boston Foundation's Inaugural Boston Climate Progress Report ([www.tbf.org/climate2022](http://www.tbf.org/climate2022)), the city is not expected to meet its interim goal of reducing emissions 50% by 2030. In order to achieve the City of Boston's stated goal of being Carbon-Free by 2050, we must urgently decarbonize the building sector.

The City took a major step toward meeting its carbon-free goal in the fall of 2021 by passing amendments to the Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO), which requires all existing large buildings (20,000+ sq ft) to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The policy will prevent 37 million metric tons of greenhouse gasses from being released over the next 30 years. Regulations are now being developed and the first year of reporting will begin in 2025.

Additionally, the City's planning and development agency has put forth a Zero Net Carbon (ZNC) building policy which will require new large buildings (20,000+ sq ft) to minimize carbon emissions from building planning, development, and operations, maximize on-site renewable electricity generation, procure renewable electricity, and meet standards annually for zero net carbon emissions.

Third, the Wu administration submitted a petition to be included in the 10-municipality pilot program included in the state climate bill, with the intent to eliminate fossil fuels from new buildings and major renovation projects. The process will include the creation of an advisory committee composed of stakeholders with expertise in environmental justice, affordable housing, labor and workers' rights, building engineering and energy, healthcare and public health, real estate development and management, architecture and urban design, and distributed energy systems. The advisory committee will be tasked with developing standards that promote local economic and workforce development.

All three of these policies together will significantly reduce building emissions and pollution, putting the city on track towards being a Carbon Free Boston. To learn more about our Boston building electrification campaign and stay attuned to take action on these critical policies, visit our website ([bit.ly/3UjRUID](http://bit.ly/3UjRUID)).

# Equity Update

By Emma Brown

About two and a half years ago, the Massachusetts Chapter staff took a hard look in the mirror and asked ourselves: are we living up to the equity values that we claim to hold? The short answer was no, and thus began a new era in our equity journey here at the Chapter.

Over the last two years we've researched, written, and publicly released an "Equity and Justice Roadmap" ([bit.ly/3UDtnYx](http://bit.ly/3UDtnYx)) that we are implementing and continually monitoring as a means of accountability for ourselves. We've worked to engage with our partners and communities to understand our shortcomings and the areas where we need to improve. While we haven't figured it out 100%, we have made some concrete steps in a positive direction that we are excited to share with you today:

- We partnered with Buffalo Cloud Consulting to design and run an equity training for our staff and volunteer leaders to increase our institutional knowledge around equity and justice;
- We have regranted thousands of dollars to frontline communities and organizations, such as Eastie Farm in East Boston;
- In coordination with Sierra Club National, we have overhauled our hiring process to be more inclusive and equitable;
- We have instituted a process of purchasing memberships for all of our donors;
- We have partnered with frontline groups to write op-eds and letters to the editor highlighting the impacts of air pollution and the need to transition off of fossil fuels;
- We have supported campaigns for fare-free buses, the Fair Share Amendment, and others which are not explicitly climate justice issues but are inseparable from climate justice;
- And, we have published and continue to add to a list of anti-racism and equity resources on our website.

We share these examples to demonstrate our commitment to enacting change from the ground up. This work is incredibly challenging and I'll be honest: we don't always get it right. We have learned a lot, and grown a lot, since we began this journey – and we still have much more to learn. To learn more about our Equity and Justice Roadmap or to get involved in the process, please reach out to Emma Brown at [emma.brown@sierraclub.org](mailto:emma.brown@sierraclub.org).

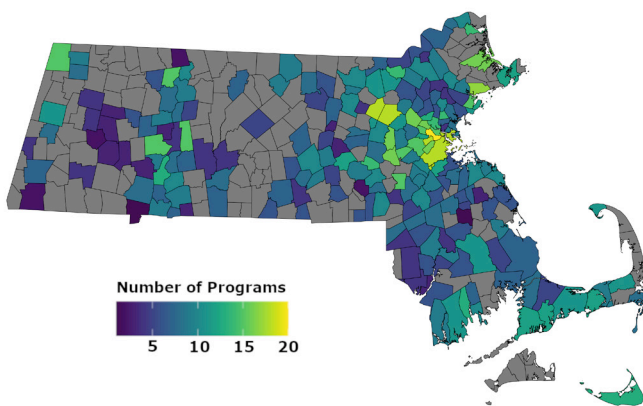


# Expanding Municipal Climate Leadership

By Mallorie Barber

The Climate Research Team (CRT) aspires to empower municipalities to take equitable climate action through community organizing and local leadership. We utilize education, research, and advocacy to accomplish this goal. In 2022, we took steps to become a centralized place for municipal leaders to go for all things climate by leveraging our public-facing website, [MassTownsForClimate.org](http://www.masstownsforclimate.org), and expanding our coordination with non-profit and government organizations.


Local actions are vital tools in our fight against climate change, especially in Massachusetts where our largest emissions come from buildings and transportation. These areas are heavily impacted by local policies such as building codes, home weatherization and electrification programs, access to public transit, and EV charging infrastructure.



This fall, the CRT restarted in-person events for municipal leaders. This educational series, last held in 2019, consists of four events across the state for elected and appointed municipal officials to learn about local climate actions. Attendees learn from our expert staff and volunteers, and are encouraged to discuss their own experiences implementing various initiatives which enable peer sharing of best practices. This year we were excited to include representatives from most Massachusetts Regional Planning Agencies – organizations which often assist municipalities in applying for funding and implementing initiatives.

In addition to planning these events, our team has improved our website functionality, expanded statewide research, and advocated for local action. The team website now includes an interactive map showing the number of climate actions for each municipality across the state as well as a cross-organization calendar of events for municipal leaders. This much-requested calendar is important to our strategy to simplify the many resources available for officials who want to take action.

As of this writing, our statewide research covers 214 municipalities and continues to grow. Have we researched your city or town? We encourage you to use the information on the website to advocate for more climate action in your community! It's easy and well worth the effort!



Use our interactive map to explore actions taken by cities and towns across the state by visiting [www.masstownsforclimate.org](http://www.masstownsforclimate.org)

Some examples of this year's advocacy included contacting leaders in high priority school districts to encourage participation in the heavily funded electric school bus programs; submitting comments on the proposed Green Communities update; and meeting with small groups, such as the Progressive Municipal Legislators Network, to share climate actions.

Our volunteers are vital to our ability to have such a broad impact and we are grateful to the many hours, emails, and phone calls they have contributed this year. In 2023 we hope to expand our efforts to connect directly and indirectly with municipal officials as well as local organizers. We also hope to expand on our research to identify trends in data. For example, early analyses have demonstrated a connection between hiring a sustainability manager and implementing climate programs. A dedicated staff person can more easily manage grants and climate strategies—often absorbing their salary in the energy reduction costs. In our commentary submitted to the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) regarding the Green Communities update, we leveraged this data to advocate for energy/sustainability manager seed funding grants for all municipalities, especially focused on EJ communities.

Please visit our website ([www.masstownsforclimate.org](http://www.masstownsforclimate.org)) and contact Emma Brown ([emma.brown@sierraclub.org](mailto:emma.brown@sierraclub.org)) to learn more about getting involved!



# MASC PAC Takes Guesswork Out of Campaign Support

By Mike Stone

One hundred and sixty seats were up for election this year in the Massachusetts House of Representatives alone, along with another forty seats in the State Senate and the races for Governor and state's Attorney General – all charged, in part, with determining the future of Massachusetts' environmental policies including the fight against climate change. These responsibilities are not exclusive to politicians on Beacon Hill. For example, there are forty-one locally controlled municipal light departments run by elected board members who determine energy policies for around fifty communities in the Commonwealth.

Sorting through these state and local races to identify and support campaigns with the greatest potential to impact our state's environmental policies is a priority for the Massachusetts Sierra Club Political Action Committee (MASC PAC).

The PAC has come a long way since its inception in 2019 when three volunteers first met at a coffee shop in Boston's Downtown Crossing and proceeded to get the PAC up and running. Soon a chairperson was elected, a Treasurer was recruited, papers were filed with the Office of Campaign and Political Finance and a Board of Directors was formed. Finally we designed and launched a website, [www.masssierraclubpac.com](http://www.masssierraclubpac.com), which provides news to our members and serves as a fundraising hub for donations to support viable candidates running for office.

The PAC strategy is straightforward but exhaustive! We focus on contested elections and look to candidates

who have been endorsed by the Chapter Political Committee to ensure alignment with Sierra Club priorities. We then examine the dynamics of the race and ask pertinent questions, like: is the endorsed candidate running a viable campaign? Does their opponent have a policy platform that is apathetic or even worse, hostile to the priorities of the Sierra Club? Do indicators show the race to be competitive?

As for numbers, MASC PAC relies completely on donations from individuals. The number of campaigns the PAC supports as well as the level of support are tied to the success of our fundraising each election season. Due to the pandemic, the PAC's first fundraiser was a Zoom forum that featured guest speakers Liz Miranda and Amber Hewitt, who were running for office. Sierra Club member donations enabled the PAC to support five candidates with funds that paid for essentials like mailers, promotional videos and as well as in-kind support to pay for Chapter interns to work on campaigns and carry out campaign-specific missions. The races the MASC PAC chose to support were successful. The PAC continued its work supporting candidates during the 2022 midterms, thanks to the continued generosity of MASC members. Support of contributors provided the funds needed to contribute to each of the races we determined needed a boost.

If you are looking to help make a difference in whether Massachusetts will be a leader when it comes to environmental policy, turn to us. We've got your PAC.

## Power in Volunteer Strength

The Massachusetts Chapter is looking for a wide range of volunteers to help build our power, working on issues that span environmental justice, racial justice, housing justice, and transit justice; for indigenous rights, immigrant rights, women's rights, LGBTQ+ rights, labor rights, and so much more. Here are some activities volunteers have done in the past:

- Virtually led meetings, fundraisers, trainings, etc.
- Testified on legislation at the MA State House
- Provided written articles, blog posts, and persuasive writing
- Worked for Sierra Club's endorsed candidates
- Given presentations on environmental and energy issues
- Acted as a Sierra Club liaison in coalitions
- Much, much, more!

The Sierra Club relies on the enthusiasm, energy, and ideas of our member-volunteers: YOU! Learn more about current volunteer opportunities with the Chapter by visiting [bit.ly/3DOoCEN](http://bit.ly/3DOoCEN), or sign up for a one-on-one conversation with a member of our team at [sc.org/massvolunteer](http://sc.org/massvolunteer)!



# Forests and Trees: Why should we care?

By Lynne Man

The Massachusetts Sierra Club Forest Protection Team strives to protect both urban and rural trees and forests from human interference and destruction. We lobby to permanently preserve forests on public lands and advocate to minimize urban tree cutting, so all of our land can be utilized equitably to meet our human needs, provide maximum climate resiliency, and protect biodiversity.

Forests are earth's "lungs." Without them, we could not live. They sequester and store carbon dioxide, help mitigate climate change, and release oxygen into the air. Around the planet, they clean our water and provide rich species habitats. Forests and trees have profound effects on both physical and mental health. People living in neighborhoods with little or no tree canopy suffer from higher morbidity and mortality ([bit.ly/3EgUNya](https://bit.ly/3EgUNya)), including heat related illnesses, respiratory problems, poorer immunity, additional stress, more violence ([bit.ly/3NWqbFy](https://bit.ly/3NWqbFy)), and poorer educational outcomes ([bit.ly/3heZDCX](https://bit.ly/3heZDCX)). Such neighborhoods are disproportionately lower income and non-white, making "tree justice" ([bit.ly/3NMjcPn](https://bit.ly/3NMjcPn)) an important part of social justice.

Massachusetts has one of the densest tree covers in the country, yet forests are being logged at an unsustainable rate. Development of all kinds – residential, commercial and industrial – often sacrifices forests for "progress" rather than using land that has already been destroyed. In addition, both public and private forest lands are routinely logged for what is thought by some to be good for forest health. However, logging often destroys forest health and habitats ([go.nature.com/3Ef3Klg](https://go.nature.com/3Ef3Klg)), and forests will certainly never reach their mature capacity if they are routinely harvested. According to climate and forest researchers Moomaw, Masino and Faison, forest health is best with minimal human intervention ([bit.ly/3UC5INI](https://bit.ly/3UC5INI)).

To get involved, please contact Lynne Man ([lynneman@gmail.com](mailto:lynneman@gmail.com)) or Nancy Polan ([nancypolan@gmail.com](mailto:nancypolan@gmail.com)). Learn more about our team on our webpage: [www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/forest-protection](https://www.sierraclub.org/massachusetts/forest-protection)

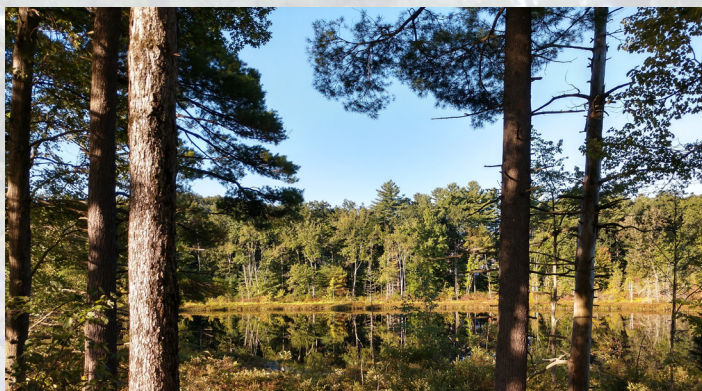


Photo: Lynne Man

What can you do to help protect forests in Massachusetts?

- *Walk in the woods!* Merely walking in nature will make you feel great AND inspire you to protect what you love!
- *Act locally.* Become aware of departments, commissions, laws or ordinances in your city or town's local government that have the most influence on the fate of your trees. This might include the Conservation Commission, Open Space Committee, or Zoning Department. Learn about tree ordinances in your town, development projects that will involve cutting trees. Attend meetings, read minutes, and submit oral or written comments. (Bring your friends!)
- *Follow state legislation.* We have made progress with all forest protection bills, i.e., protect state forests, preserve and promote urban trees, and stop subsidizing woody biomass. But there is still more work to do in the next session. The more voices to support these issues, the higher the likelihood we will make a difference!
- *Know who represents you.* At local, state and federal levels - get to know your elected (and appointed) officials. You should always feel free to write, call, or request a meeting with them. They are, after all, "public servants," and are there to help you!
- *Educate others.* Learn everything you can about the importance of forests and trees and what we can do to protect them. Share your knowledge with others.
- *Attend a MASC Forest Protection meeting.* Check out our web page ([bit.ly/masc-fpt](https://bit.ly/masc-fpt)) for educational materials, resource lists and more.

The future of our planet depends on the future of forests, and you can help!



# The Pesticide Crisis - 60 Years On

By Celia Doremus and Clint Richmond

It is sobering to realize that this year marks the 60th anniversary of the 1962 publication of Rachel Carson's book *A Silent Spring*, which unequivocally summarized the harm that indiscriminate use of pesticides brought to the natural world. Yet we, as a society, are still manufacturing and releasing great quantities and varieties of these intentionally toxic chemicals.

Carson brought to light the probability that the chemical industry was spreading disinformation that was being accepted by lawmakers. Her research and writings focused on the aerial use of DDT to control mosquitos. Her work demonstrated the unreasonable drive of human beings to control the natural world, to deny the harm synthetic pesticides like DDT cause to our health and environment, and the need to push legislators to develop strong science-based policy to protect us.

Today, the fight for banning these insecticides, industrial chemicals and by-products continues and, incredibly, the problems have only gotten worse. Our state and federal regulatory bodies allow industry to continue manufacturing and using chemicals and toxins, including PFAS ("forever chemicals"), and they are threatening the stability of the earth itself, contaminating our rivers, air, sea, and earth. Not only that, science shows that these substances have long-term effects on the health of children - from birth defects to developmental delays to cancer.

Industry and business push to control the natural environment and do not want to admit that the planet can't absorb that kind of pressure. Massachusetts is one of the few states that guarantees the right to clean air and water ([bit.ly/3t9UO0F](http://bit.ly/3t9UO0F)), yet so often these rights

are ignored. Sadly, we are still fighting to reduce the mass spraying of pyrethroid pesticides (such as Anvil, Duet, and Zenivex) by state and regional mosquito control districts.

The Massachusetts Chapter is actively working in coalition on this issue. Clint Richmond, the Chair of the Massachusetts Sierra Club Toxics Team, also serves as a member and Chair of the newly formed Massachusetts Conservation and Pesticide Advisory Council (CPAC). Our robust legislative agenda includes:

- "Ecologically based mosquito management program," (S.556) which reforms mosquito control to limit the use of pesticides in mosquito control to documented health emergencies, manage storm drains/catch basins and other artificial mosquito habitats, and restore of habitats to naturally manage mosquitoes in the wild
- "Empowering towns and cities to protect residents and the environment from harmful pesticides" (H.910) by allowing municipalities to extend state regulation
- "Protections from pesticide chemical trespass" (H.1001) from third-party applications
- "Improving pesticide protections for Massachusetts schoolchildren" (H.926) to use only natural controls on school grounds.

Locally and nationally, the Sierra Club fights for restrictions on harmful chemicals and advocates for the government to regulate these toxins. Members of the Sierra Club can help in this effort by supporting our legislative agenda, buying organic foods, and organizing organic options on school menus. See more on our efforts to stop the use of pesticides ([bit.ly/3EgonUx](http://bit.ly/3EgonUx)) and how to curb what is now widespread exposure to toxins ([bit.ly/3Uk1V1](http://bit.ly/3Uk1V1)).

Photo: Plymouth County Mosquito Control Project





# What's Happening on Cape Cod



Photo: Clint Richmond

By Chris Powicki

Sierra Club's Cape Cod Group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month to discuss local issues, concerns, and projects, plus policies at all levels. Members and interested citizens learn from each other—and from invited speakers—and identify follow-up actions for the group and individuals. Please join us!

In 2022, we wrote letters, made calls, submitted comments, published an attention-getting op-ed, worked with student activists, and hosted a demonstration in Provincetown as part of a state-wide “11th Hour to Act on Climate Legislation” campaign.

We partnered with and were supported by Sierra Club's Massachusetts Chapter, and we collaborated with 350 Cape Cod, Conservation Law Foundation, Mass Audubon, and Silent Spring on specific projects. David Dow, our longtime Treasurer and resident expert on Cape Cod's aquatic environments, illuminated water quality, marine resource, and adaptive management issues. Diane LeDuc, our longtime Secretary, helped organize and document our meetings.

As of early October, guest speakers included representatives from Barnstable Land Trust, Cape Cod Commission, Cape Cod Cooperative Extension, Cape Downwinders, Commonwealth Wind, MyGeneration Energy, and Provincetown Center for Coastal Studies. In addition, candidates for State and County office introduced themselves and their ideas for the future.

Sierra Cape Cod discussions and actions in 2022 centered around—but were not limited to—helping support progress in the following areas:

- Improving awareness of aquifer, pond, and coastal water quality issues, as well as cleanup and treatment activities
- Understanding and addressing PFAS contamination associated with legacy activities, landfilling, and sewage sludge
- Ensuring that a multi-purpose machine gun range does not get built atop the state-protected Upper Cape Water Supply Reserve
- Preventing release of radioactive contaminants to Cape Cod Bay during the decommissioning of Pilgrim Nuclear Power Plant
- Preserving the right of citizens to petition for changes to the Cape Cod Regional Policy Plan
- Protecting “perceived open space” (golf courses, recreational areas, etc.) while accommodating affordable housing
- Opposing expansion of the Bourne landfill and promoting composting and other solutions
- Alleviating barriers to solar PV deployment in the Old King's Highway Historic District
- Halting Cape Cod National Seashore's practice of allowing coyote hunting
- Protecting North Atlantic right whale populations based on improved understanding of their behavior and response to varied stressors
- Supporting offshore wind and opportunities to benefit the Mashpee Wampanoag, other tribes, and local electricity consumers.

For more information and an invitation to our meetings, please reach out to [sierraclubcapecod@gmail.com](mailto:sierraclubcapecod@gmail.com).



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