



December 2023

## CLIMATE LEADERSHIP NEWSLETTER

### NOTES FROM MASSACHUSETTS CITIES AND TOWNS

Dear Emma,

What a year 2023 has been! Many of you implemented local change in your communities from climate action plans to retrofit programs, a new state administration made climate a priority, and the federal government made significant climate funding available. In this newsletter, we highlight findings from our December regional summit, get into the details of the Department of Public Utilities order to move our system off gas, and provide background on tree canopy efforts - a topic that continues to come up in our discussions with folks like you.

We hope you found these newsletters valuable in 2023 and would love your feedback on how we can better support your vital local climate efforts. 2024 is going to be a big year for climate action and we are honored to work beside you.

*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](mailto:Sam.Lambert@sierraclub.org).*

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## Regional Climate Leader Summit

By Sam Lambert



On the evening of December 7th, we were joined by a fantastic panel of climate leaders and municipal elected, staff, and volunteers at the First Parish Church in Malden. Malden City Councilor Carey McDonald, Newton Energy Coach Liora Silkes, and Sierra Club Climate Research Volunteer Armando Terrones joined us to share their wins in 2023 and what led to them. It was also great to begin visioning

for our 2024 goals and how if we work collectively, we can achieve the urgent climate goals we need.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## DPU Order 20-80

By Jess Nahigian

On December 6th, the Healey administration's Department of Public Utilities (DPU) issued a transformative decision for the future of the Massachusetts energy system.

The top-line takeaway? For the first time in the 15 years since Massachusetts passed landmark decarbonization legislation, **the state has definitively said that gas heating is not in our long-term future.**

This blog from Sierra Club's political director, Jess Nahigian, details exactly what that order means and how it will impact Massachusetts going forward.

[Read the Full Article Here](#)

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## Tree Canopy Resource Sheet

By John Pescatore, Luis Roldan, Sydney Jenkins, Robbie Boczon, and Mallorie Barber

The Climate Research Team heard your requests for more information on tree canopy and developed a **one-stop-shop resource sheet with key pieces of information** including community approaches, tools, funding, and common concerns to enable your community to implement actions in this area.

This resource sheet is a test document for future content on specific climate actions - please contact [Sam Lambert](#) with any suggestions on requests!

[Tree Canopy Resource Sheet](#)

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## Municipal Reforestation Act

By Mallorie Barber

Tree canopies have important climate, health, and social impacts such as cleansing the air, calming traffic, reducing crime, mitigating floods, reducing the impacts of drought, and cooling the streets. Despite these benefits, substantial variation exists in tree cover between communities, often impacting environmental communities most significantly. Additionally, individual communities lack the resources and expertise required to launch and maintain tree canopy programs.

**The proposed Municipal Reforestation Act will support cities and towns in developing and executing reforestation plans** through technical and monetary support, prioritizing efforts on communities with the most to gain.

**Check out this interview with climate activist Marilyn Ray Smith**, on the importance of this bill and how you can show support this legislative session!

[Interview with Marilyn Ray Smith](#)

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## Additional Resources

- [Mass Towns for Climate](#)

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

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