



July 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

**\$12 Million in Climate Change Preparedness Funding Awarded Through MVP Program**



As part of their [Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Program](#), the Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs has awarded municipalities with a total of \$12 million to fund climate change preparedness. Of these funds, \$1.7 million will allow 65 communities to carry out planning processes to identify climate vulnerabilities and prioritize responses and \$10.3 million will go

to 34 communities to implement projects that strengthen local climate resilience. [View full list of 2019 funding recipients here.](#)

Seventy one percent of Massachusetts communities are now enrolled in MVP program, and grants have been awarded to 70 climate resilience projects. Through the MVP grant and designation program municipalities can access the data, planning tools, and technical support needed to pursue resilience.

## **Lowell and Watertown Approve Community Choice Aggregation Programs**



Lowell and Watertown recently approved Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) programs, which offer municipalities greater agency regarding their electricity sources. This allows communities to increase the proportion of renewable energy in their electricity supply while maintaining energy affordability.

Lowell's program, which is due to begin in October, will increase their proportion of renewable energy purchased through the program to an ambitious 59%. This moves the city closer to achieving their goal of 100% renewable energy by 2035.

[Watertown Electricity Choice](#) will allow the city's residents and businesses to bring their renewable energy use up to 49% in 2019. They join the more than 125 communities throughout the state that have already enacted CCA programs.

## **Mystic River Watershed Secures \$1.1m in Funding to Address Climate Vulnerabilities**

The [Resilient Mystic Collaborative \(RMC\)](#), a coalition of 14 communities convened by the Mystic River Watershed Association and Consensus Building Institute, has secured multiple grants exceeding \$1.1 million to help



communities in the Mystic watershed prepare for extreme weather events like heat waves, droughts, stronger and more frequent storms and coastal flooding.

In the Upper Mystic where stormwater flooding is a concern, funds will be used to identify best ways, including green infrastructure solutions, to manage heavy rainstorms that overwhelm stormwater infrastructure. In the Lower Mystic the focus will be on strengthening climate resiliency of critical regional infrastructure and strategies to address coastal flooding and sea level rise. [Click here](#) for more information.

### Citizen Science Initiative to Map Urban Heat Launched



This summer Boston, Cambridge and Brookline are partnering with the Museum of Science on a citizen's science project to map urban heat. [Extreme heat events are intensified by the urban heat island effect](#) and impacts human health, infrastructure and the environment. Supported by an environmental literacy grant by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), the project will collect temperature and humidity data through a digital platform called [ISeeChange](#), which investigates how weather and climate are changing over time.

Participants can record observations and photos on the digital platform or volunteer to collect on the ground data to help corroborate available satellite data. [Click here](#) to learn more or [register for the event on September 24<sup>th</sup>](#) to explore and recommend

resilience strategies to keep our communities cool.

## Former Beverly Landfill to House Solar Development



Blue Wave Solar is partnering with the city of Beverly to install and operate a 4.9 megawatt DC solar system on the city's closed landfill. The project will lower electric bills for the city and its residents and is expected to have a community solar component that will allow around 500 households to sign up to receive credits on

their utility bills. It will also generate significant revenue for the city—over \$2.7 million—in lease payments over the 20-year term and help lower the city's electric bills.

## Land Conservation

### West Springfield, Holyoke, and Westfield Unite for Tri-City Carbon Sequestration Program



Trees on 15,000 acres of watershed and parkland in West Springfield, Holyoke, and Westfield will be converted into carbon credits as part of the Tri-City Carbon Sequestration Program. Credits—each ton of carbon sequestered is equivalent to one credit—will be sold to developers looking to offset the impact of their projects. The program will sequester carbon equivalent to that produced by over 13,000 cars and allow communities to gain income from their forests without logging.

The three cities will share over \$2 million in earnings over the next decade. Revenue will help fund efforts to improve wildlife migration over the acreage,

eradicate illegal dumping, and boost passive recreation—parts of the land will be opened up to walking and biking. The first initiative of its kind in the country, the Tri-City program was honored at the June National Conference of Mayors Climate Protection Awards.

## Clean Transportation

### Massachusetts to Host Community Engagement Workshops on Transportation and Climate



In August, Massachusetts will host the last three of six regional workshops to seek public input on the Commonwealth's consideration of a regional low-carbon transportation policy through the multi-state [Transportation and Climate Initiative](#) (TCI). The workshops will be held in [Springfield](#) (August 7<sup>th</sup>), [Chelsea](#) (August 13<sup>th</sup>) and [Fall River](#) (August 22<sup>nd</sup>). [Register here](#), to provide input on transportation improvements and clean mobility projects you would like to see in your community.

In December 2018, Massachusetts [joined](#) with nine states and the District of Columbia to work together throughout 2019 to develop the framework for a regional program that would cap and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the transportation sector, and invest proceeds from the program into a cleaner, more resilient and more equitable transportation system. Watch this [TCI 101 webinar](#) from Our Transportation Future coalition to learn more about the “why” and “how” of the Transportation and Climate Initiative.

### Commonwealth Releases Bicycle and Pedestrian Plans



MassDOT released its bicycle and pedestrian plans outlining steps that communities can take to make streets safer and increase the percentage of trips made by walking and bicycling. \$60 million has been allocated in the FY 2019-2023 Capital Investment Plan to implement initiatives to achieve the plan's goals.

Recommendation in the [bicycle plan](#) includes expanding access to bikeshare programs, building safer bike networks and improving the year-round maintenance of bike paths. The [pedestrian plan](#) calls for building safer sidewalks and crosswalks, improving maintenance of existing paths, and making sure that pedestrian safety is considered in all new developments.

## Events

### Renewable Communities Panel Discussion

Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center is hosting a [panel discussion](#) on Friday, August 2 at 9:30



am, where experts will discuss how communities can accelerate the transition to 100% renewable energy, and the role that various sectors — including businesses, government, and nonprofits — can play. The panel discussion coincides with release of a new report “Renewable Communities”,

looking at how municipalities across Massachusetts are taking big steps to increase renewable energy generation. [Register here.](#)

## **Community Campaigns for Renewable Heating and Cooling Technologies**

On August 5<sup>th</sup>, join Part 2 of the [Clean Energy States Alliance \(CESA\)](#) webinar series highlighting the role renewable heating and cooling campaigns play in decarbonizing buildings and in helping states meet their carbon reduction goals. The webinar will feature CESA's recent report, "[Community Campaigns for Renewable Heating and Cooling Technologies: Four Case Studies.](#)" The communities featured in the webinar series are at the vanguard of reducing thermal energy consumption and associated emissions through the widespread installation of residential and small-scale commercial RH&C equipment. Their programs can serve as models for program design and can provide multiple "lessons learned" for launching future campaigns. [Read more and register here](#) for the webinar.

[Subscribe to the Newsletter](#)

---