



Summer Report

A chance to keep Mass. on the path to solar

Action needed to lift cap on new solar installations

Solar is growing by leaps and bounds here in Massachusetts—and we're determined to keep it growing by lifting a state-imposed cap on new solar.

Solar power is on the rise, but Massachusetts still gets less than 1 percent of its electricity from the sun—and more than 90 percent from dirty and dangerous sources, such as coal and nuclear power. Environment Massachusetts has launched a campaign to install 50,000 solar roofs by 2017 and get 10 percent of our energy from the sun by 2030, and this spring, we took steps toward achieving our goal.

Environment Massachusetts advocates and organizers took our solar campaign across the commonwealth to demonstrate the importance of expanding the most effective solar program in the state.

Expanding MA's top solar program

Massachusetts' net-metering program allows homeowners, businesses and municipalities to build solar installations and sell their excess capacity back to utility companies. This program provides a strong incentive to install solar panels, and it has been wildly successful since its introduction in 2008. Since then, the commonwealth has seen a 24-fold increase in the number of solar installations. However, we can do better: the current net-metering program imposes outdated limits on the amount of solar energy the utility companies will buy back. The solar industry is growing at an astounding rate, and we should be benefiting from this growth, not holding it back.



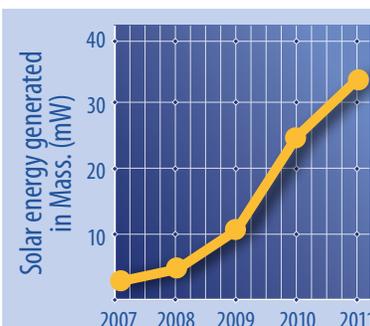
Green Massachusetts, Creative Commons

▲ *Westford Solar Park. Environment Massachusetts has launched a campaign to install 50,000 solar roofs by 2017 and get 10 percent of our energy from the sun by 2030.*

We began our efforts to expand Massachusetts' solar programs last fall by releasing a report from the Solar Foundation detailing the tremendous growth in the solar sector in Massachusetts and across the country. Over the winter, 60 solar businesses signed a letter to the Legislature in support of our bill. After that, we took our campaign to local communities. As of this writing, 17

cities and towns across Massachusetts, from Salem to Cambridge to Otis, have passed resolutions in support of our efforts.

This summer, Environment Massachusetts canvassers plan to talk to 1 out of every 10 Massachusetts households about the importance of passing critical legislation to increase our net-metering cap.



Data from Mass DOER

solar energy on the rise

◀ *Since 2008 when Massachusetts' current solar programs were enacted, the number of solar installations in the commonwealth has increased 24-fold. Take action online, and tell your representatives to support a clean energy future for Massachusetts: www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org.*



To our members

This winter certainly didn't feel like the Massachusetts winters I have come to know—and it only reinforced the urgency of doing everything we can to avoid the worst effects of global warming. This spring, my staff and I spent a week in Washington, D.C., meeting with our congressional delegation. We urged them to oppose efforts to roll back the Clean Air Act and move forward on important federal policies to support renewable energy.

Our work is not always easy, and while federal gridlock is sometimes frustrating, I have been inspired by the hard work of my staff, our activists and volunteers, and the progress we've made at the state level. We believe that shifting to a cleaner, healthier energy future begins at home, in our cities and towns, and in our state. And we believe the progress that Massachusetts is making, from Cape Wind to the growth of solar, is proving us right.

None of what we do would be possible without your support. Thank you for making it all happen.

Ben Wright, Advocate

Recent action

President announces clean vehicles initiative

This spring, President Obama announced a new initiative to encourage the production of alternative fuel vehicles, demonstrating his commitment to finding clean alternatives to fossil fuels.

The initiative includes a \$1 billion National Community Deployment Challenge, which will reward communities for deploying alternative fuel vehicles. The initiative will also make clean energy vehicles more affordable for the average American. And, with the goal of making clean cars as convenient and affordable as gas vehicles within a decade, the president's initiative will make it less costly for companies to produce electric vehicles.

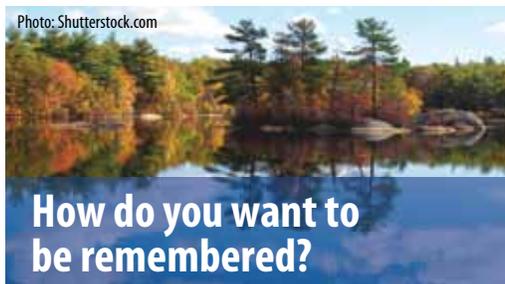
“With the environmental and economic cost of our oil dependence out of control, the race is on to build high tech clean vehicles that will get us off oil—and President Obama is leading the charge,” said Daniel Gatti, our Get Off Oil Program Director. “At every step, the Obama administration has faced down the cynics with the confidence that American technology and manufacturing is powerful enough to overcome our addiction to oil and lead the world in building the vehicles of the future.”

Tax plan levels playing field for renewable energy

President Obama released his framework for corporate tax reform on February 22, which includes provisions to eliminate tax breaks to the oil and gas industries and seeks to expand the manufacturing of clean energy technologies.

Federal Clean Energy Advocate Courtney Abrams issued the following statement in response: “By cutting tax breaks to oil and gas companies—that for decades have profited at the expense of our health and environment—and instead investing in burgeoning clean energy industries, the administration recognizes that we can both grow our economy and ensure a future with cleaner air and water for all Americans. We applaud the Obama administration's commitment to responsibly developing truly clean energy sources like wind and solar power.”

Photo: Shutterstock.com



How do you want to be remembered?

You can be remembered as someone who cared enough to keep up the fight for a cleaner, greener, healthier future by making a bequest to Environment Massachusetts or the Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center.

For information, call: 1-800-841-7299, or email PlannedGiving@EnvironmentMassachusetts.org.



99.8% of Bay Staters live in counties hit by weather disasters

Extreme weather on the rise

After a year that saw many parts of the country hit by scorching heat, devastating wildfires, severe storms and record flooding, a new Environment Massachusetts report documents how global warming could lead to certain extreme weather events becoming even more common or more severe in the future.

The report found that, already, 242 million people—or roughly four out of five Americans—live in counties that were affected by federally declared weather-related disasters between 2006 and 2011. In Massachusetts, every county besides Nantucket was hit with a weather-related disaster in that time period.

Included in this tally of weather-related disasters was Hurricane Irene of August 2011. This storm barreled through the East, dropping torrential rains and causing floods throughout the region. Major disasters were declared for 218 counties in 13 states housing more than 46.6 million people, and Gov. Deval Patrick even declared a state of emergency for Massachusetts. More than 7 million people in the affected area lost power, and the storm caused an estimated \$7.3 billion in damage. When all was said and done, 45 people had lost their lives.

Warming world, worse weather

Frightening storms such as Hurricane Irene are becoming more common, and the likelihood of dangerous flooding is increasing. The report shows that the U.S. has experienced an increase in heavy precipitation events, with the rainiest 1 percent of all storms delivering 20 percent more rain on average at the end of the 20th century than at the beginning. This trend toward extreme precipitation is projected to continue in a warming world.

It's past time to take action

Environment Massachusetts was joined by Sen. John Kerry in releasing the report. He had this to say about global warming and its ties to extreme weather:

“Years and years of peer reviewed scientific studies should’ve been motivation enough for Washington to get serious about climate change instead of denying its consequences and ducking tough choices. This study is the latest and the last red alert that inaction is risking lives here at home. This is not business as usual for Mother Nature. I’ve never in my life seen the extreme weather patterns I’ve witnessed with my own eyes the last years in New England, and I’m sick and tired of politicians ducking the issue and finding excuses for inaction or worse. At this point, you’re either on the side of dealing with reality or you’re against it,” said Sen. Kerry.

“The bottom line is that extreme weather is happening, it is causing very serious problems, and global warming increases the likelihood that we’ll see even more extreme weather in the future,” added Nathan Willcox, our federal global warming program director. “The extreme weather we suffered through in 2011 is a frightening reminder of why we must do everything we can to cut the dangerous carbon pollution that is fueling global warming and lessen the threat of even worse extreme weather in the future.”



interactive map

A recent weather-related disaster has affected every Massachusetts county except Nantucket. You can view the full interactive map online at www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org



Cape Wind to begin construction

Cape Wind has entered into agreements to sell 77.5 percent of the power it generates, paving the way for construction to finally begin on one of the nation's first offshore wind projects. This is a huge victory for clean energy in Massachusetts. But if we are going to clean up our air and avoid the worst effects of global warming, we must tap into the power of offshore wind all along the Atlantic coast.

To get off oil, tap into wind power

Wind power will be essential to getting our state and our country off fossil fuels without creating more pollution.

A report released by Environment Massachusetts and the National Wildlife Federation shows that along the Atlantic coast alone, reaching the Department of Energy's conservative goal of 54 gigawatts of offshore wind power would reduce global warming pollution by the equivalent of taking nearly 18 million cars off the road.

A bold commitment to clean energy such as offshore wind would also significantly reduce harmful air pollution and reduce the risk of oil spills and other fossil fuel-related disasters.

Massachusetts leading the way

Any way you look at it, wind power is good for Massachusetts, good for America, and good for our future. It provides a clean, safe alternative to dirty, destructive energy sources. If we are to achieve a clean energy-powered future, wind power will be essential—and Cape Wind is leading the way.

44 Winter St., Ste. 401
Boston, MA 02108
(617) 747-4400

Environment Massachusetts

Address service requested

NON-PROFIT
ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
BROCKTON, MA
PERMIT NO. 430

Summer Report

VOLUME 6 | NO. 2 | 2012



Liz West, Creative Commons

Environment Massachusetts

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open space. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment Massachusetts. We focus exclusively on protecting Massachusetts' air, water and open space. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

On the verge of a victory for our waterways

Massachusetts is on the verge of winning new protections for hundreds of miles of streams that feed and filter our rivers and lakes. But just as President Obama is about to sign off on the biggest victory for clean water in a decade, some polluter-friendly members of Congress are doing everything they can to block him.

Thanks to two polluter-driven Supreme Court decisions in the last decade, more than half of our streams and hundreds of acres of wetlands—the same waterways that flow into our rivers and lakes—have not been nearly as protected as they once were. Thankfully, last April, the Obama administration proposed new guidelines to restore protections to many of our waterways. And in February, the administration announced that it was in the last stage before officially finalizing these protections. But our work is not done. As we build support for the president to finalize the guidelines, many in Congress are working to stop him. As of May, there were four separate rollback attempts in the House and Senate. Environment Massachusetts is committed to defending these new protections.



◀ *Environment Massachusetts Advocate Ben Wright met with Rep. Ed Markey to discuss protections for our waterways.*

Visit our website and tell President Obama that you want to see all our waterways protected:
www.EnvironmentMassachusetts.org