

Patrick Administration Outlines Winter Energy Resources for Residents, Announces Additional Funding to Expand Energy Efficiency And Renewable Energy Opportunities

Massachusetts Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Maeve Vallely Bartlett today announced a \$5.1 million investment to expand energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities for the Commonwealth’s residents as the winter season approaches. The Patrick Administration also encouraged Massachusetts residents to take advantage of existing programs to reduce energy waste and help manage energy costs.

“The Commonwealth offers a wide range of robust programs to help residents and businesses control their energy costs through efficiency measures,” said Secretary Bartlett. “The Patrick Administration wants to make sure everyone is aware of what is available to them and, in light of recent price spikes, provide them with additional support.”

The newly expanded resources will be available later this year and are in addition to existing services provided through Mass Save® and ongoing programs through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC), aimed at reducing residential energy use and managing costs. The funding for these programs has been allocated by the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) through Alternative Compliance Payments and Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative auction proceeds.

“Individuals and families have many choices for reducing their energy use and taking control of what they spend,” said DOER Acting Commissioner Meg Lusardi. “Between energy efficient improvements and renewable energy heating equipment upgrades, we are working to make the Commonwealth a better place to live, this winter and well into the future.”

"High-efficiency heat pumps and renewable heating and cooling technologies allow homeowners to take control of their energy futures, while saving money during the cold winter months," said MassCEC CEO Alicia Barton.

Energy Savings Program	Program Administrator	Investment	Eligible
Expanded rebate program for air source heat pumps	Massachusetts Clean Energy Center	\$1.6 million	All Massachusetts residents in 1-4 unit homes
Bonus rebates for efficient natural gas boilers and furnaces	Mass Save	\$2.5 million	Eligible Mass Save customers
Air source heat pumps for public housing	Department of Housing and Community Development	\$300,000	Public Housing Authorities
Wood pellet stoves and air source heat pumps	Low-Income Heating Assistance Program Administrators	\$700,000	LIHEAP recipients

The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) has awarded the \$300,000 in DOER funding for local housing authorities to install air source heat pumps at electrically heated homes. The improved technology will increase energy efficiency and significantly reduce heating costs for public housing. The following communities have been awarded funding for the new heating systems:

- The Town of Orange, eight family apartments, \$108,000
- The Town of Groton, 20 elderly apartments, \$135,000
- The Town of Athol, three family apartments, \$40,500
- The Town of Mansfield, two family apartments, \$27,500

“I’m very glad that we will be able to help some of the Commonwealth’s most vulnerable citizens with their electric bills this winter,” said DHCD Undersecretary Aaron Gornstein. “These air source heat pumps will make a big difference for our elderly and low income public housing residents.”

DOER created a web page with quick access to resources that consumers can access to make homes and businesses more energy efficient, including tips, financing options and fuel assistance, as well as information on new heating choices. Resources include energy efficiency programs and rebates, do-it-yourself options, help with utility/fuel bills and fuel assistance. The page can be found at: www.mass.gov/EEA/WinterEnergyResources

As a result of natural gas constraints, winter electricity prices are expected to increase across all utilities through basic service rates this season. The Patrick Administration continues to advocate for a long term solution to constraints with continued investments in a diverse, clean energy fuel mix.

The basic service rate refers to the commodity portion of a customer’s bill. Unlike the distribution portion of the bill, the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) does not set the prices for basic services. The DPU reviews and approves the process for which the utilities procure the commodity through a competitive bid process.

The Commonwealth has been ranked number one in energy efficiency for three consecutive years, a result of the Patrick Administration’s nation-leading 2008 Green Communities Act, which required utilities to invest in all cost-effective energy efficiency. In 2007, Massachusetts had just over 3 megawatts each of solar and wind capacity installed. Today there are more than 600 megawatts of solar installed, with a goal of tripling that by 2020. We have installed 106 megawatts of land-based wind and are poised to be home to the nation’s first offshore wind farm.