

Patrick-Murray Administration Celebrates Seven New Green Communities

Seven towns earn clean energy leadership status in sixth round of designations

[Map of Green Communities](#)  1MB

Boston – December 13, 2012 - The Patrick-Murray Administration today designated seven new Green Communities, bringing to 110 the number of Massachusetts cities and towns committed to five clean energy leadership criteria spelled out in the Green Communities Act, including cutting energy use by 20 percent over five years.

With the Department of Energy Resources' (DOER) designation, Petersham, Rockland, Wendell, Westminster, Westwood, Whatley and Winthrop will be eligible for more than \$1 million in grants for local renewable power and energy efficiency projects. Nearly half of Massachusetts residents, or 45.2 percent, now live in a Green Community.

"I congratulate these communities on joining the over 100 Green Communities across the Commonwealth as they make smart investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy," said Governor Deval Patrick. "Community by community, we are protecting our environment, reducing municipal costs and making Massachusetts a clean energy leader."

"As we add seven new communities to the list of those committed to cutting energy use and saving municipal dollars, we are reminded that the clean energy revolution is growing in Massachusetts," said Secretary Rick Sullivan. "By investing and supporting these communities, we ensure that municipalities will see energy savings and their quality of life will improve over time."

DOER's Green Communities Designation and Grant Program, which is a result of the Green Communities Act signed by Governor Patrick in 2008, rewards communities that win Green Communities designation by meeting five clean energy benchmarks:

- Adopting local zoning bylaw or ordinance that allows "as-of-right siting" – allowing a project to proceed without requiring a special permit or any time of discretionary approval – for renewable and/or alternative energy research and development facilities, manufacturing facilities or generation units;
- Adopting an expedited permitting process related to the as-of-right facilities;
- Establishing a municipal energy use baseline and a program to reduce use by 20 percent within five years;
- Purchasing only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use, whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable; and
- Requiring all new residential construction over 3,000 square feet and all new

commercial and industrial real estate construction to reduce lifecycle energy costs (i.e. adoption of an energy-saving building “stretch code”).

To date, the 110 Green Communities have committed to a total energy reduction equivalent to the annual energy consumption of over 13,600 homes. In greenhouse gas reduction terms, this commitment equates to taking nearly 31,000 cars off the road.

Massachusetts sits at the end of the energy pipeline and imports all of its fossil-fuel based energy sources – some from areas unstable or hostile to the U.S. Of the \$22 billion Massachusetts spends annually to buy the energy that runs its power plants, buildings and vehicles, 80 percent flows out of state to places like South America, Canada, and the Middle East. That’s nearly \$18 billion in lost economic opportunity that Massachusetts stands poised to reclaim through investments in home-grown renewable energy and energy efficiency projects such as those supported by Green Communities grants.

“When the Patrick-Murray Administration launched the Green Communities program in 2010, we knew it had the potential to transform the municipal energy landscape in Massachusetts but never imagined that, two and a half years later, nearly half the state’s citizens would be residents of Green Communities,” DOER Commissioner Mark Sylvia said. “These cities and towns are leading the way – saving money for taxpayers while safeguarding the environment for future generations.”

Grants for the communities designated today will be funded by Alternative Compliance Payments (ACP) made by electricity suppliers who don’t meet their statutory Renewable Portfolio Standard obligation to purchase a sufficient percentage of renewable energy. Green Communities grants also receive funding from proceeds of carbon allowance auctions under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI).

Using a formula that caps awards at \$1 million and provides each community with a \$125,000 base grant – plus additional amounts based on other criteria, DOER notified the qualified communities of their eligibility for the following funding:

Petersham - \$138,425
Rockland - \$185,425
Wendell - \$138,125
Westminster - \$141,500
Westwood - \$138,875
Whately - \$137,950
Winthrop - \$169,625

In addition to grant eligibility, each Green Community designated today will receive a certificate from the Commonwealth and four road signs identifying it as an official Green Community.

[Click here](#) for more information on DOER's Green Communities program.