

Patrick-Murray Administration Energy Officials Present Green Communities Award

Westwood receives Green Communities designation and \$138,875 in grant funds

WESTWOOD – Monday, April 1, 2013 – Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) Secretary Rick Sullivan today presented the town of Westwood with a \$138,875 Green Communities grant to fund municipal clean energy projects.

“Westwood is now one of the 110 Green Communities across the Commonwealth making smart investments in clean energy,” said Governor Deval Patrick. “Community by community, we are protecting our environment, reducing municipal costs and making Massachusetts a clean energy leader.”

“Westwood is now among the leaders taking charge of their clean energy future,” said Secretary Sullivan, whose office includes the Department of Energy Resources (DOER). “The Patrick-Murray Administration continues to support towns that are cutting energy use, creating jobs and protecting the environment. Their efforts are critical to the Commonwealth’s clean energy revolution.”

Westwood received a certificate from the Commonwealth and four road signs identifying it as a Green Community. DOER’s Green Communities Division designated the town as an official Green Community in December, recognizing its achievements in meeting five clean energy benchmarks.

“Massachusetts’ clean energy revolution continues its momentum in large part because of leadership at the local level,” said DOER Commissioner Mark Sylvia. “It’s always a good day when we recognize the efforts cities and towns are making to save money and energy for their residents and businesses while reducing harmful greenhouse gas emissions.”

The grant is part of a package of more than \$1 million in funding awarded to the state’s seven newest Green Communities. In addition to Westwood awarded today, the towns of Wendell, Westminster, Whatley and Rockland were previously awarded. Petersham and Winthrop will also receive awards this spring.

Once designated by DOER as official Green Communities, cities and towns are eligible for awards to fund local renewable power and energy efficiency projects that advance both municipal and state clean energy goals. Grants awarded so far assist an array of projects across the state, including the installation of solar panels on town office buildings, weatherization at schools and municipal buildings, installation of high-efficiency street lights, and a host of energy efficiency upgrades. Including this sixth round of designation grants and a round of competitive grants last spring for previously-designated Green Communities, the Patrick-Murray Administration has awarded approximately \$24 million in grants to the Commonwealth’s 110 Green Communities. DOER will be reviewing applications for the second round of Green Communities Competitive Grants throughout this spring.

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 is equal to taking nearly 31,000 cars off the road.

"I am pleased to see the intention of the Legislature's Green Communities Act is being preserved and that its goals are being attained", said Senator Mike Rush. "The Patrick-Murray Administration has done a wonderful job identifying communities committed to clean energy projects. I am proud that Westwood is one of those towns achieving clean energy benchmarks, furthering the protection of our environment and natural resources."

"As a supporter of the Green Communities Act I am grateful of Governor Patrick's commitment to the citizens of Westwood," said Representative Paul McMurtry. "I am proud to represent a community that recognizes and appreciates the importance of maximizing energy efficiency initiatives."

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

The program is funded through auctions of carbon emissions permits under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative, as well as Annual Compliance Payments made by electricity suppliers under the state's Renewable Portfolio Standard.

The Green Communities Act also required the state's utilities to prepare energy efficiency plans. The estimated energy reductions from the 2013-2015 plans is comparable to the environmental benefits achieved by eliminating the energy use of approximately 487,000 homes, or of taking approximately 336,000 cars off the road over the same time period as the energy efficiency measures. These initiatives and others earned Massachusetts the #1 ranking in the nation for energy efficiency by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy (ACEEE) in 2011 and 2012.

Further reducing our reliance on foreign energy sources, Massachusetts has 243 megawatts of solar power installed, with more than 130 megawatts installed in 2012 alone. That's enough electricity to power more than 38,000 homes and, when compared with fossil fuel-generated electricity, the equivalent of eliminating the greenhouse gas emissions from 26,126 cars per year. Massachusetts is now 97 percent of the way to its 2017 goal of 250 megawatts of solar power.

There has been an increase in wind energy from 3 megawatts to 100 megawatts since 2007, enough to power more than 30,000 homes and eliminate greenhouse gas emissions from more than 20,000 cars annually.

Massachusetts sits at the end of the energy pipeline, spending billions of dollars annually to import all of its fossil fuel based energy sources from places like South America, Canada and the Middle East. That is 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.

To learn more about the Green Communities program visit <http://www.mass.gov/eea/energy-utilities-clean-tech/green-communities/>.