

Response to Public Comment Opportunity  
Energy Policy Commission  
Town of Easton, Green Communities Committee  
Adrienne Edwards (Chair)

Comments on subjects being considered by the Commission:

Because my work in the realm of energy has centered on municipal energy conservation and community outreach, my comments focus on the importance of creating greater accessibility to resources that would aid cities and towns in the implementation of, and in our case the continuation of, energy conservation and clean energy efforts.

1. Expanding renewable energy in the Commonwealth.

Achievement of this objective might be further expedited if more educational resources were made available to municipalities regarding renewable energy at the local level. Workshops and seminars are particularly helpful. Case studies, experiences, lessons learned, as well as safety policies (particularly regarding photovoltaic installation fires) are a few examples of materials that are relatively rare to come by, yet would be helpful in guiding municipalities towards making the most beneficial and appropriate decisions when planning the construction of renewable energy generation infrastructure.

Permitting Green Communities grant monies to be used for funding photovoltaic installations may contribute greatly towards expanding renewable energy throughout what amounts now to 110 designated Green Communities in the Commonwealth.

2. Promoting energy efficiency in the Commonwealth.

Greater communication between municipal officials and utility representatives on matters relating to energy efficiency programs, rebates, and other incentives would further grow the implementation of statewide energy conservation measures in publicly owned buildings.

An extensive online resource library where cities and towns could learn about comparable communities' experiences implementing energy efficiency projects at similar facilities would be a valuable resource for communities. Ideally, reference materials would include energy reduction plans from each designated Green Community, their policies, and by-laws. Variety in reference resources with regard to type of municipality (i.e. urban, suburban, and rural), and facility (for example: schools, garages, and repurposed historic structures) would be useful to a range of communities.

In addition, information that addresses the concerns which are often raised during the planning of energy conservation upgrades could help to dispel myths and encourage project implementation. This would be helpful particularly when municipalities are considering the implications of energy projects with regard to historic preservation, moisture control, permitting, impact on building esthetics, and other issues.

3. Encouraging business development and job creation in Massachusetts.

Community centered materials that assist local governments in promoting a clean energy economy locally would be helpful to cities and towns looking to attract these businesses. Such information could include downloadable documents, editable flyers and forms, and other materials that could inform communities about other municipalities that have established as-of-right siting and expedited permitting by-laws for manufacturing, and research and design. Massachusetts Green Communities were required to have established such regulations, therefore a web page could post these town's policies as examples for use by communities that have not yet been designated.

A program, similar in structure to Solarize Mass, designed to support partnerships between local governments and clean energy/energy conservation businesses could assist municipalities in attracting companies to "set up shop" in towns. This could help to fill buildings left vacant during the great recession, and build local revenue, while contributing to the State's energy goals.

4. Reducing costs associated with energy programs while maximizing benefits.

*No comment at this time.*

5. Reducing cost of electricity for commercial, industrial and residential customers.

Finalize the establishment of a National Grid LED streetlight tariff (now in progress). This is of particular interest to Easton as the Town recently purchased its above ground street lights from National Grid and has begun the process of retrofitting the community's streetlights with LEDs.

6. Increasing electricity reliability.

*No comment at this time.*