



EXECUTIVE OFFICE of ENERGY
& ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

2024 END OF YEAR REPORT



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“On behalf of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, I am honored to share with you our 2024 End of Year Report. This is a compilation of our collective efforts over the last year to build a stronger, healthier, cleaner Massachusetts. As you will see in the pages ahead, we do this work with a shared focus, drive, passion, and urgency.

This year, Governor Healey signed landmark climate legislation — a significant milestone on our state’s path to a clean energy future. This new law codifies the recommendations of our Commission on Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting, a shining example of what can be achieved when stakeholders representing differing viewpoints come together and work hard to reach consensus. We stand ready to implement this law to ensure that its ambitious objectives are met.

Since the devastating floods in 2023, EEA has worked with urgency to arm our communities with the best defense against unpredictable, intense weather events. This year, our administration awarded over \$75 million in grants to fund inland and coastal municipal climate resilience projects, repair or remove dams and seawalls, and replace undersized culverts — the largest ever commitment to these resilience programs.

We also worked to ensure that all our residents have the opportunity to experience the beauty of Massachusetts by expanding our inclusive and accessible outdoor programming, providing grants for urban forests, and convening the first-ever Massachusetts Agriculture Youth Council. And, to advance our mission to safeguard our prized, nature-rich state for the next generation, we worked to establish nation-leading biodiversity goals, convened a new land conservation coalition, and completed the 23-mile Blackstone Greenway Trail.

With the launch of our first Environmental Justice Strategy, we continued to advance environmental justice and equity in our programs, policies, and decision-making. This included launching the First People, First Stewards Partnership to build relationships with Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations.

I want to thank the dedicated team of public servants who are on this journey with me as we advance our mission every day. I am proud of our work at EEA and the experienced professionals who make it possible.



Secretary Rebecca Tepper



LEGISLATIVE WINS

CLIMATE LAW

In November 2024, Governor Maura Healey signed into law a landmark climate bill, championed by the Massachusetts Legislature. This legislation will accelerate clean energy development and bolster the community engagement process, an initiative guided by expert recommendations from the Governor's Siting and Permitting Commission. The new law also allows the administration to explore procurements for clean energy with other states and for battery storage.

The new law also marked an important step forward for environmental justice. The DPU will be working to establish an intervenor fund to support under-resourced communities engaging in the siting process, as well as requiring cumulative impact analysis for large projects.

The legislation is also an important win for consumers. The law includes provisions to lower energy costs for families and businesses, including expanding bill discounts to middle-class households and expanding access to solar, heat pumps, and electric vehicles.

The 2024 climate law will continue Massachusetts' climate leadership and grow our clean energy economy.

MASS LEADS ACT

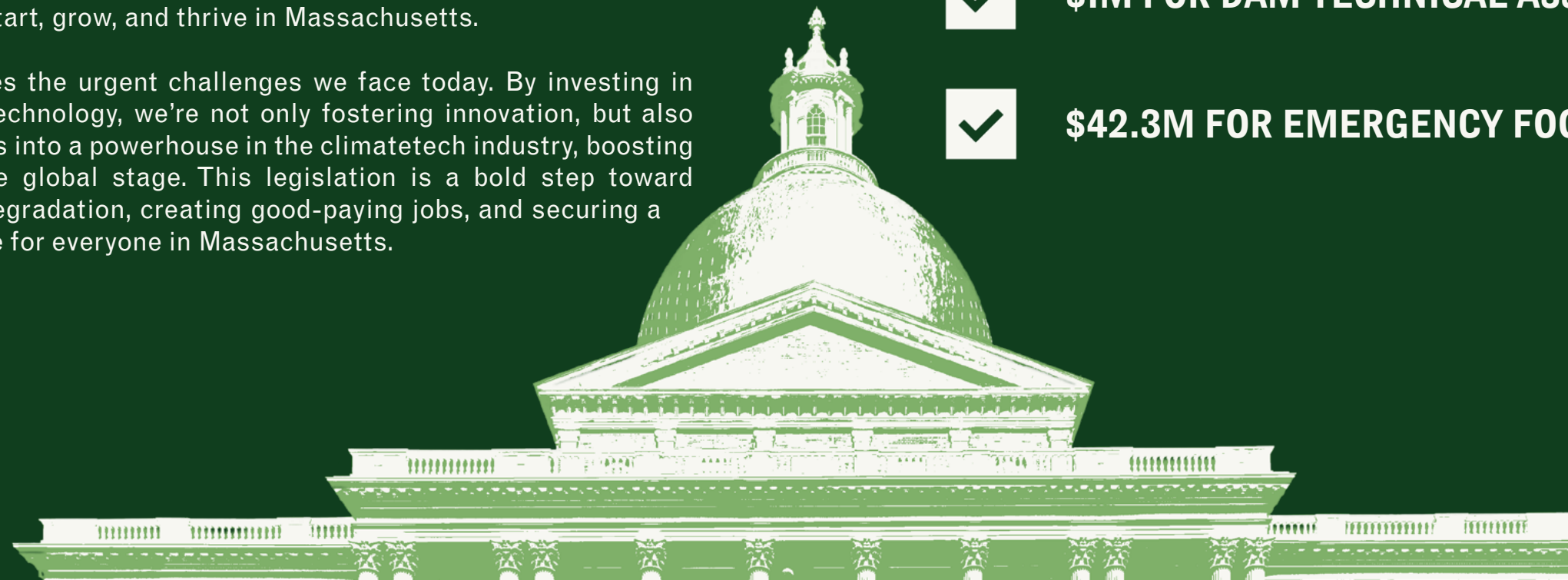
Governor Healey's economic development initiative will harness \$1 billion so innovative companies can start, grow, and thrive in Massachusetts.

The Mass Leads Act tackles the urgent challenges we face today. By investing in clean energy and climate technology, we're not only fostering innovation, but also transforming Massachusetts into a powerhouse in the climatetech industry, boosting our competitiveness on the global stage. This legislation is a bold step toward combating environmental degradation, creating good-paying jobs, and securing a sustainable, healthier future for everyone in Massachusetts.

GOVERNOR HEALEY'S FY25 STATE BUDGET

For the second year in a row, EEA secured a historic 1 percent of Governor Maura Healey's state budget. This \$555 million investment in energy and the environment dedicates:

- ✓ **\$20M FOR MASSCEC, WORKER TRAINING, WIND TECHNOLOGY, ELECTRIFIED HOMES**
- ✓ **\$10M FOR FOOD SECURITY GRANTS**
- ✓ **\$8.7M FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**
- ✓ **\$14M FOR DISASTER RELIEF FUND**
- ✓ **\$2.8M FOR BRIDGES AND CULVERTS**
- ✓ **\$1M FOR DAM TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE**
- ✓ **\$42.3M FOR EMERGENCY FOOD ASSISTANCE**



ELECTRIFICATION

MODERNIZED SITING AND PERMITTING

After decades of red tape holding up clean energy development, the 2024 climate law marks an important turning point in Massachusetts' transition away from fossil fuels. The Legislature passed groundbreaking siting and permitting reform this year, based on the Governor's Commission on Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting.

The Commission on Clean Energy Infrastructure Siting and Permitting brought together stakeholders representing a wide range of interests – land use, agriculture, environmental justice, clean energy developers, utilities, real estate, and local government – to broker a historic compromise to end the years of delays for clean energy development, while advancing significant reforms to protect our natural and working lands, strengthen community engagement, and create an environmental justice-informed siting process.

Over the course of six months, the Commission met 15 times, held two public listening sessions, and provided a comprehensive set of recommendations to Governor Healey, which formed the basis for legislation that was signed into law in November 2024. This historic compromise streamlines local and state permits, strengthens community engagement, and protects natural and working lands.

These reforms also will usher in a new era of environmental justice-informed siting practices with the establishment of an intervenor fund to support under-resourced communities to engage in the siting process and a new requirement for cumulative impact analysis of large projects. The Healey-Driscoll Administration looks forward to putting these ideas into practice in 2025.

“In the face of extreme heat, storms, and floods, it can be easy to feel overwhelmed by climate change. But our new campaign reminds us that we can all take action in big and small ways to protect our communities and reduce emissions.”



Massachusetts Climate Campaign South Station Takeover, April 1, 2024

Governor Maura Healey

MASSACHUSETTS CLIMATE CAMPAIGN

The Healey-Driscoll Administration launched the “Climate Action is for All of Us” statewide media campaign aimed at spreading the word about climate change awareness and highlighting the many resources available for taking meaningful climate action as individuals.

The campaign's integrated marketing strategy featured a website, digital and physical advertisements, and in-person events for Massachusetts residents to learn what they can do to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. EEA's Climate Team and Springfield Partners for Community Action won the Alliance for Climate Transition's Partnership of the Year award for multilingual community engagement efforts, advertisements, and campaign resources that educate and inspire.

ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING DEPLOYMENT AND INNOVATION

In February 2024, EEA, in coordination with the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council, awarded \$50 million to initiatives to build out electric vehicle charging infrastructure across Massachusetts. The funding supported innovative programs at the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center to expand access to charging curbside, for taxi and TNC drivers, mobile charging, and electric trucks, and van fleets. The Healey-Driscoll Administration is also working across government to electrify the state fleet.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

“YOUR VOICE MATTERS” EDUCATIONAL CAMPAIGNS

in Brockton, Springfield, Lawrence, Holyoke, New Bedford, and Lynn

The Office of Environmental Justice and Equity (OEJE) launched the “Did You Know?” and “Your Voice Matters” educational campaigns to build trust and strengthen relationships with stakeholders within environmental justice communities and beyond.

The “Did You Know?” campaign informs residents about the services provided by the EEA, helping them understand the support available to them. The “Your Voice Matters” campaign creates spaces for dialogue and empowers residents to understand their rights and engage with the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act (MEPA). This understanding enables them to provide feedback and advocate for their communities.

Through these campaigns, we foster transparency, promote active participation, and ensure that all voices – especially those historically marginalized – are included in decision-making. By building trust and awareness of available resources, we ensure everyone can contribute to shaping effective solutions.

AIR QUALITY SENSORS IN EJ COMMUNITIES

MassDEP invested \$775,000 to install affordable air quality sensors across the state, focusing on environmental justice communities. These PurpleAir sensors, roughly the size of a softball, measure fine particulate matter that can harm at-risk populations. The advanced multi-pollutant sensors can also track diesel emissions, soot, carbon monoxide, ozone, and nitrogen dioxide with heavy truck traffic. These investments will provide real-time air quality data that helps inform policy and permitting decisions and protect public health.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE LIASONS IN ALL AGENCIES

In February 2024, EEA launched its first Environmental Justice (EJ) Strategy to advance environmental justice and equity in its programs, policies, and regulations. EEA agencies are working to hire EJ liaisons and representatives at each agency to assist OEJE in implementing environmental justice and equity throughout the secretariat.

OEJE meets with each EEA agency to assess their efforts. They hold regular meetings to offer support to the EJ liaisons. OEJE, DFG, and DPU have created Language Access Plans to make public materials and meetings available in different languages. They also developed Public Involvement Plans to help communities engage effectively. Regular meetings allow EJ liaisons to share their challenges and successes and collaborate on the EJ Strategy Annual Progress. OEJE will continue to work with EEA EJ liaisons to find lasting solutions and to update the EJ Strategy every three years.

URBAN AND COMMUNITY FORESTRY GRANTS

DCR awarded more than \$426,000 to seven organizations to increase the urban tree canopy in environmental justice communities. The grant program, part of a \$1.5 billion investment in the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Program from the federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), will be used for the planting and care of more than 500 trees in Waltham, Ludlow, Medford, Somerville, Boston, Oxford, South Hadley, and Westborough.

INTERACTIVE STORYMAP

The Massachusetts Office of Technical Assistance developed an interactive StoryMap that illustrates the impact of historical siting practices on the geographic distribution of facilities using toxic chemicals in close proximity to environmental justice populations. The StoryMap complements OTA’s existing chemical safety and climate vulnerability mapping tool, which was updated this year to include language access data layers, including data from the American Community Survey and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Both maps allow users to better understand the landscape of toxic chemical use in Massachusetts, identifying priority locations where toxics use reduction activities could reduce chemical hazards and prevent exposures that disproportionately impact environmental justice populations, while enhancing community resilience to climate change. In 2024, OTA also recruited a candidate to fill an environmental justice representative seat on the Toxics Use Reduction Act (TURA) Advisory Committee, a seat created by the TURA Administrative Council in 2023.

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

EEA's Climate Team is leading efforts to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 and build resilience to climate change impacts.



Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Climate Team

COMMUNITY CLIMATE ADVISORY COUNCIL

In 2024, EEA's Climate Team launched the Community Climate Advisory Council (CCAC) comprised of 35 members representing municipalities, regional planning agencies, and community organizations from every region across the state who are advancing local climate action.

The Council engages with EEA on climate planning, capacity-building, technical assistance, funding, and policy efforts early on so that initiatives are shaped from the start to address and respond to community needs and priorities. Topics that the CCAC has focused on include: how to increase municipal capacity, opportunities to streamline climate-focused grant applications, community challenges to decarbonization, and how to apply Indigenous Cultural Easements in land conservations.

RESILIENTMASS

Recognizing every \$1 spent on resilience generates \$13 in avoided damages and economic savings, EEA's Climate Team is pursuing unprecedented resources for resilience. The FY2025 Capital Investment Plan included a 7-fold increase in state investments to implement ResilientMass, the statewide hazard mitigation and climate adaptation plan, including investments to make affordable housing and DCR facilities more resilient to climate impacts.

Finally, EEA, OCIR, MassDOT, and A&F launched a ResilientMass Finance and Investment Strategy to evaluate statewide investment needs for projects that reduce flood and heat risk and identify new ways to generate revenue and finance this work.

DAMS AND SEAWALLS GRANTS

On September 26, 2024, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced \$13.9 million in grant awards to 23 projects across Massachusetts to repair or remove dams, seawalls, and levees. The projects included repairs to critical water supply dams, removal of obsolete dams, reconstruction of seawalls, and repairs to a levee system. These projects will help to reduce flood hazards while preparing for increased sea level and storm events.

CLIMATE SCIENCE ADVISORY PANEL

The Healey-Driscoll Administration launched a Climate Science Advisory Panel through the new Massachusetts Office of Climate Science (OCS) to provide expertise on statewide climate science and future projections that inform state and local climate adaptation planning and projects.

The Panel is comprised of experts within Massachusetts and across the region who will advise OCS on the latest advances and applications in climate science related to hazards such as extreme heat, flooding, sea level rise, and health impacts to inform the state's climate adaptation and resilience strategy.

DER 15TH ANNIVERSARY

This year marks the Division of Ecological Restoration's 15th Anniversary. Since 2009, DER has spearheaded over 150 projects, removing over 50 dams, replacing more than 20 culverts, reconnecting 700 river miles, and restoring over 3,000 acres of wetlands and salt marshes. Today, DER has over 70 active projects, over half of which support environmental justice communities.

\$52.4 MILLION

FOR MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS GRANTS

In 2024, the Healey-Driscoll Administration awarded a landmark \$52.4 million, the largest ever amount of Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness action grants to fund local climate resilience projects, with a special focus on inland flooding.

\$24.6 MILLION

FOR FOOD SECURITY INFRASTRUCTURE GRANTS

In October 2024, the Healey-Driscoll Administration announced \$24.6 million in grants to 163 Massachusetts food system enterprises, helping to sustain Massachusetts' food production and distribution sectors in the face of climate change, while at the same time working to ensure that fresh, healthy, local food is available to all residents.

CONSERVATION

AGENCY'S FIRST INDIGENOUS PEOPLES PARTNERSHIP COORDINATOR

DCR hired Leah Hopkins as the agency's first Indigenous Peoples Partnership Coordinator. Hopkins, an enrolled member of the Narragansett Indian Tribe with nearly two decades of experience building bridges between institutions and Tribal Nations, is the agency's liaison to the state's many Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations.

She is launching the First People, First Stewards Partnership, a new effort by DCR to better acknowledge and understand the role of the lands the agency stewards in the cultural continuity, well-being, and sovereignty of Indigenous Peoples. She is focused on helping DCR build relationships with Indigenous communities and Tribal Nations and forging connections between DCR land management, traditional ecological knowledge, and Indigenous culture. She is working to expand the agency's engagement with Indigenous people and to elevate the Native voice in the DCR's stewardship of the land and waters of Massachusetts.

RESILIENT LANDS CONSERVATION COALITION

EEA's Division of Conservation Services and Mass Audubon have co-convened the Resilient Lands Conservation Coalition (RLCC), a statewide public/private land conservation partnership formed to accelerate the pace and magnitude of conservation statewide.

Under the RLCC, strategic actions are conceived through the dual lenses of climate response and addressing environmental justice inequities. The Coalition will engage and coordinate municipalities, land trusts, and other nonprofit conservation partners in advancing the land conservation goals of the Resilient Lands Initiative, the state's Clean Energy and Climate Plans, ResilientCoasts Plan, Forest as Climate Solutions Initiative, and Farmland Action Plan. The RLCC will deploy four work groups — each with public and private co-leads: forests/landscapes, farms/food, urban, and coastal.

RED-BELLIED COOTER HEADSTART PROGRAM

MassWildlife's landmark Northern Red-bellied Cooter Headstart Program celebrated its 40th anniversary and 5,000th endangered turtle released into the wild. One of the longest and most intensive endangered freshwater turtle conservation programs in existence, this program has restored the population from just 300 in 1984 to over 2,000 adults today.

NEW PROTECTIONS FOR HORSESHOE CRABS

In 2024, the Division of Marine Fisheries increased protections for horseshoe crabs. A beloved Massachusetts species, horseshoe crabs evolved over 350 million years ago, and many are captivated by their annual displays on our coastal beaches. For the first time, DMF created a total closure to harvest for the entirety of spawning season, strengthening prior lunar closures and maintaining strong bait and biomedical quotas. DMF estimates the new closures will protect over 90% of spawning horseshoe crabs and boost their populations long-term as they face habitat loss from sea-level rise.

RIGHT WHALE MONITORING PROGRAM

This year, DMF launched an innovative, coastwide monitoring program for supporting the recovery of critically endangered North Atlantic Right Whales, deploying three passive acoustic monitoring buoys to better understand populations in Cape Cod Bay.

FORESTS AS CLIMATE SOLUTIONS

As part of the Forests as Climate Solutions Initiative, EEA is allocating \$50 million to advance forest conservation, incent municipal and private landowners to adopt climate-oriented management approaches, and support local economies. As recommended by the Climate Forestry Committee's report, Forests as Climate Solutions aims to designate 10 percent of Massachusetts forests as reserves, where active management is limited and natural processes play out. EEA's Division of Conservation Services awarded over \$5 million in grants to ten land trust organizations and municipalities for new forest reserves. These forests will mitigate climate change impacts by sequestering and storing carbon as well as supporting biodiversity.

This funding will help the state reach its climate goals as set forth in the Clean Energy and Climate Plan, including conserving 40 percent of Massachusetts' by 2050.

ON THE NATIONAL STAGE

From historic offshore wind procurement to building out the nation's clean energy workforce, 2024 was a milestone year for federal funding and collaborative efforts that crossed state lines.

EEA's strategic partnerships and federal support have not only enhanced our state's capacity for green innovation but is a national model for regional cooperation. This year, EEA secured significant federal funds for clean energy technologies and infrastructure, setting a robust foundation for sustainable development across the Northeast.

Massachusetts' collaborative spirit and commitment to securing the clean energy transition continue to drive our progress in the fight against climate change and to work to lower costs for residents.

FEDERAL FUNDING WINS

- ✓ **\$156M FOR SOLAR FOR ALL**
from the EPA to reduce energy costs, support clean jobs, and reduce emissions
- ✓ **\$389M FOR POWER UP NEW ENGLAND**
from the Department of Energy for offshore wind transmission and energy storage
- ✓ **\$53.5M FOR DRINKING WATER CONTAMINANTS**
from the EPA to help address drinking water contaminants like PFAS, lead, and others
- ✓ **\$1.2M FOR PUBLIC ACCESS EV CHARGING STATIONS**
from USDOT for up to 40 EV charging stations at DCR properties across the state
- ✓ **\$450M FOR NEW ENGLAND HEAT PUMP ACCELERATOR**
from the EPA to Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Maine, and Connecticut to lower the cost of heat pumps
- ✓ **\$45M FOR LAND CONSERVATION**
from the USDA to EEA and Mass Audubon to protect farmlands, forests, and wetlands
- ✓ **\$5M FOR CLIMATE-SMART FOREST MANAGEMENT**
from the USDA to expand DCR's Climate Stewardship Incentive Program that helps the state's forests adapt to climate change

COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVES

JOINT OFFSHORE WIND PROCUREMENT

On September 6, 2024, Massachusetts and Rhode Island selected over 2,878 MW from three offshore wind projects in a joint procurement — enough to power 1.4 million homes in the state. This was the largest offshore wind selection in New England history.

CLIMATE READY WORKFORCE INITIATIVE

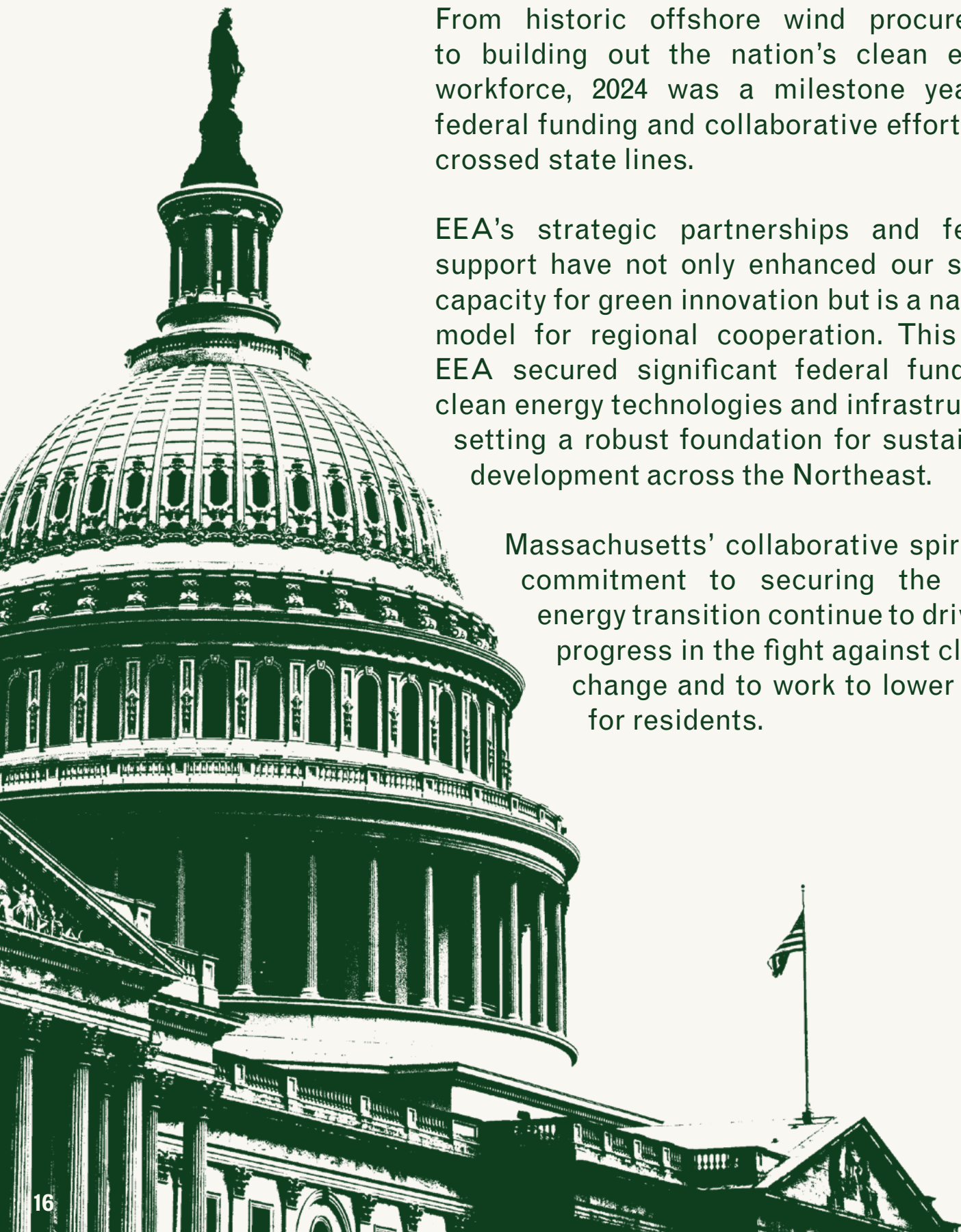
On September 26, 2024, Massachusetts joined US Climate's Climate-Ready Workforce Initiative with 23 other states. The initiative has a goal of training 1 million new registered apprentices by 2035.

CONFLUENCE OF STATES

In 2024, Massachusetts along with Pennsylvania, Minnesota, and North Dakota joined 16 other states as the newest members of the Confluence of States, a bipartisan coalition to grow the outdoor recreation economy and champion conservation efforts across the nation.

ISO NEW ENGLAND LONGER-TERM TRANSMISSION

On December 13, 2024, the New England states unanimously joined together to request that our regional grid operator issue a transmission procurement in 2025 to unlock onshore wind resources in Maine, enhance system reliability, and reduce costs. This request follows a milestone Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) 2024 order that approved an innovative new process and key partnership between states and ISO New England on transmission investments.



MEETING THE MOMENT

HUMAN RESOURCES TRANSFORMATION INITIATIVE

Through the Human Resources Transformation Initiative (HRTI), HR is working to increase transparency, process efficiently, boost employee satisfaction, and enable data-driven decision-making. In partnership with IT, HR is also working on the development of a case management system for tracking and expediting employee requests.

HR Shared Services mission is to build brand recognition to attract and retain talent, while maintaining trust, and supporting strategic growth.

MASSABILITY AWARD

EEA's Chief Information Officer, Greg Martin accepted an award from MassAbility on behalf of EEA on June 28 at their "Igniting Workforce Success" event in Norwood.

Information Technologies and Facilities have led the way in hiring individuals with disabilities through MassAbility. To date, EEA has hired 8 individuals from MassAbility's Career Services division as contractors and/or full-time employees.

Greg was also honored to speak at the event as part of the Business-to-Business panel discussion. Disability hiring is not only the right thing to do, but strategically advantageous for our IT department from a skill-diversity perspective.



MassAbility Award received by Greg Martin

CELT INITIATIVE

In 2023, Governor Maura Healey and staff visited Ireland and had the chance to see successful university-industry partnerships supported by the Irish government in action.

This trip inspired the Healey-Driscoll Administration to launch the Clean Energy & Environment Legacy Transition Initiative with UMass Lowell and Boston University.

The CELT Initiative, backed by \$5.7M in funding from the Department of Energy Resources, connects state resources with university expertise to drive equitable decarbonization, grow a diverse clean energy workforce, and help communities execute geothermal projects.

EEA'S FIRST KIDS' DAY



ABOVE: Children of EEA staff pictured with Governor Maura Healey, August 16, 2024. BELOW: EEA kids look out on the Boston Common.



In 2024, EEA hosted our first Kids' Day — a vibrant event designed to spark an early passion for energy and the environment. The day was packed with engaging activities that introduced the children to critical work performed by their parents and other EEA staff.

We kicked off the day with a tour of the Massachusetts State House led by rangers from the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. The excitement continued as the children and parents had the opportunity to meet with Governor Maura Healey.

After a pizza break, kids and parents participated in educational sessions focusing on key environmental concepts such as recycling, clean energy, and biodiversity. These sessions were interactive, featuring hands-on activities that allowed kids to directly engage with the topics. The day concluded with a local Massachusetts ice cream treat.

OUR TEAM

The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs encompasses six regulatory agencies responsible for advancing Massachusetts' environmental, natural resource, and energy goals. EEA also houses and collaborates with a variety of specialized offices and quasi-public organizations to maximize the secretariat's impact.

Together, these entities help keep our air and water clean for our residents, promote and protect the state's biodiversity, build a strong food system, provide a wealth of outdoor recreation opportunities, drive the clean energy transition, and strengthen our resilience against climate change.



REBECCA TEPPER
EEA SECRETARY



STEPHANIE COOPER
ENVIRONMENT UNDERSEC.



MARÍA BELÉN POWER
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE UNDERSEC.



MICHAEL JUDGE
ENERGY UNDERSEC.



KATHERINE ANTOS
DECARB. & RESILIENCE UNDERSEC.



ASHLEY RANDLE
MDAR COMMISSIONER



BRIAN ARRIGO
DCR COMMISSIONER



BONNIE HEIPLE
DEP COMMISSIONER



TOM O'SHEA
DFG COMMISSIONER



ELIZABETH MAHONY
DOER COMMISSIONER



MELISSA LAVINSON
OET EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



JAMIE VAN NOSTRAND
DPU CHAIR



CECILE FRASER
DPU COMMISSIONER



STACI RUBIN
DPU COMMISSIONER



ALISON BRIUZIS
CZM DIRECTOR



JASON MARSHALL
FREA DEPUTY SECRETARY



WEEZIE NUARA
FREA ASST. SECRETARY



PAUL JAHNIGE
MOOR DIRECTOR



TORI KIM
ASST. SEC. / MEPA DIRECTOR



EMILY REICHERT
MASSCEC CEO



FRED LASKEY
MWRA EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



CHRISTOPHER MASON
MEP COLONEL

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES



AGRICULTURE YOUTH COUNCIL

The Massachusetts Agriculture Youth Council was created to cultivate and foster the next generation of leaders in the agriculture industry. The council brings together high school juniors and seniors to discuss agricultural issues, hear from industry professionals, learn about the legislative process, attend special events and tours, discover career opportunities, and enhance professional skills.

Students gain insights into Massachusetts' diverse agricultural sectors, emerging trends, and innovation in farming while connecting with youth councils across the United States. Members of the council also have the opportunity to share ideas to help shape MDAR programs. Key topics include direct-to-consumer markets, climate resilience, and food security.

In its inaugural year, the 13 members of the council participated in tours of the state's cranberry, dairy, and value-added sectors, engaging with legislators, business owners, farmers, and policy advocates. All council members plan to pursue a career in agriculture or a related field.

HPAI TESTING

Massachusetts has been at the forefront of testing local dairy cattle for the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI). We were the first state in the nation to test all 95 of our licensed dairy herds and return 100% negative results, demonstrating the stringent safety and biosecurity measures and protocols that our dairy farmers practice.

Testing was conducted in collaboration between MDAR, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, and the Broad Institute.

MASSACHUSETTS ICE CREAM TRAIL

The Massachusetts Ice Cream Trail celebrates the state's rich ice cream history and encourages residents and visitors to explore more than 100 ice cream destinations across Massachusetts that feature products made with local ingredients. MDAR developed the Trail in partnership with the Massachusetts Dairy Promotion Board and the Massachusetts Office of Travel & Tourism (MOTT).

The Trail supports the 95 Massachusetts dairy farms that contribute more than \$61 million to the state economy annually. Dairy farms, primarily small and family-owned, produce more than 20 million gallons of fresh milk each year, fostering a sustainable local food system.

Many farms also create value-added products on-site, connecting consumers to fresh, local goods while promoting local development and public health.

DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND RECREATION



BOSTON HARBOR ISLAND CLEANUP

In a landmark environmental restoration initiative, DCR and the Center for Coastal Studies brought together the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and Boston Harbor Now for a historic public-private partnership focused on cleaning up five key islands in the Boston Harbor: Great Brewster, Middle Brewster, Outer Brewster, Calf, and Lovell Islands. The project will remove substantial marine debris from the Islands and ensure the sustainable disposal of collected waste to help restore coastal bird nesting areas and enhance the ecological health of the islands. This project will also revitalize recreational areas on the Islands for local residents and visitors providing sustainability for future generations. DCR staff and volunteers collected 95 one-ton super sacks of debris, including Styrofoam, plastic bottles, buoys, and even lobster traps. As part of the sorting, local artists, and fishermen repurposed usable debris.

SUMMER NIGHTS TENTH YEAR

DCR marked the 10th anniversary of its signature youth engagement program, Summer Nights, by expanding the program to its largest year yet. This year, DCR provided \$2.6 million to 100 organizations in 28 communities that provided more than 8,500 hours of free welcoming and engaging recreational and educational programming to more than 22,000 young people across the state during July and August. DCR expanded Summer Nights into 11 new communities this year: Attleboro, Bridgewater, Chicopee, Easthampton, Everett, Norwood, Pittsfield, Revere, Salem, Somerville, and Westfield. Programming featured a wide range of activities including basketball, yoga, martial arts, fishing, swimming, camping, rowing, storytelling, tutoring, and health and wellness sessions. Summer Nights exemplifies DCR's commitment to providing families and children across Massachusetts with safe, inclusive, and supportive spaces.

BLACKSTONE GREENWAY

DCR cut the ribbon on a \$14 million project completing the final link to the Massachusetts border within a 23-mile intrastate greenway. The project runs from the Saint Paul Street Bridge in the Town of Blackstone to the Rhode Island border and was the final half-mile of an approximately 4.2-mile section of DCR's Blackstone River Greenway, creating an accessible trail for users of all abilities.

This section of the greenway is critical for the connection to Rhode Island's Blackstone River Bikeway and also provides a regional connection to Douglas, MA, and Connecticut through the Southern New England Trunkline Trail, a recreational trail owned and managed by DCR and one of the longest trails in southern Massachusetts.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION



CUMULATIVE IMPACT ANALYSIS REGULATIONS

MassDEP became the first state in the nation to require an analysis of the cumulative impacts of air permits. People are exposed to pollution through various pathways, and over time, those exposures add up. When combined with existing health and socioeconomic conditions, adverse health impacts can be more prevalent in certain areas. This is especially true in environmental justice communities, where residents often experience higher instances of health issues. By requiring new and expanding facilities that will emit air pollution to conduct a cumulative impact analysis, residents will be empowered with information about potential impacts to their health and community.

FOOD WASTE REDUCTION

Massachusetts was recognized as a national leader in food waste reduction, according to a 2024 peer-reviewed study published in Science by researchers from the University of Texas and University of California-San Diego. The study found that the state's food waste ban has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 25.7% per ton of disposed food waste. Each year, over 380,000 tons of food waste are diverted, preventing more than 3,300 tons of methane emissions.

The Massachusetts food waste ban, enacted by MassDEP in 2014, initially required businesses generating more than one ton of food waste per week to divert it from landfills. In 2022, the threshold was lowered to a half-ton per week, expanding the program to more businesses. Diverted food waste is either donated, used as animal feed, composted, or repurposed in other ways. The state has invested over \$7.3 million in supporting infrastructure and programs, creating new jobs and economic opportunities in the process.

DRINKING WATER SAFETY

Through Massachusetts' State Revolving Fund, MassDEP has authorized nearly \$510M in funding in 2024 to fund 125 projects across Massachusetts in lead service line replacement inventory, asset management planning, community septic management, drinking water construction, clean water construction, and drinking water and clean water planning studies.





BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION GOALS

In 2023, Governor Maura Healey signed Executive Order No. 618, which calls for DFG to develop nation-leading biodiversity conservation goals for 2030, 2040, and 2050. Throughout the year, DFG has embraced diverse input to develop an ambitious whole-of-government approach to halt and reverse biodiversity loss while sustaining our health and well-being, economy, and food security. In 2025, we will deliver our recommendations to the Governor and launch this initiative.

CULVERTS AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE

DER awarded a record \$4.5M to replace undersized culverts in 36 cities and towns. This increased investment affirms the Administration's commitment to climate resilience and biodiversity — each project will improve fish passage, flood resilience, and public safety. This year also marks DER's 15-year anniversary. Since 2009, DER has spearheaded over 150 projects: 50 dam removals, 20 culverts replacements, 700 river miles reconnected, and 3,000 acres of wetlands and salt marshes restored.

SALEM WILLOWS FISHING PIER

In 2024, DFG celebrated the grand opening of the Salem Willows Fishing Pier. Since 2020, the Division of Marine Fisheries, the Office of Fishing and Boating Access, and the City of Salem have partnered to rebuild the historic pier in Salem Willows Park. Supported by \$2 million raised from the sale of recreational saltwater fishing permits, with additional funds from the City of Salem, USFWS Sportfish Restoration Program, and Seaport Economic Council, this world-class pier will provide vital public access for thousands of visitors annually in the heart of Salem, an environmental justice community.



MASS SAVE ®

DOER, as Chair of the Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC), worked with stakeholders and the Mass Save® Program Administrators over the course of 18 months on the proposed 2025-2027 Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plan for Massachusetts' nation-leading energy efficiency programs. That work culminated in a unanimous vote by the EEAC in October 2024 to support the new plan.

The groundbreaking plan prioritizes electrification, affordability, and customer experience. It will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 1 million metric tons, invest almost \$5 billion in Massachusetts, and deliver \$13 billion in total benefits to customers, including a historic \$1.9 billion, or 40% of program funding, dedicated to equity-related initiatives. Low- and moderate-income customers will benefit from \$1.3 billion in incentives, with renters eligible for more than \$615 million in incentives.

A new goal of this proposal is to install heat pumps in nearly 120,000 Massachusetts households and weatherize over 180,000 homes. 21 new "Equity Communities" will be designated, making more than 2.1 million residents eligible for enhanced services and incentives from the Mass Save® program, including no-cost energy efficiency upgrades and no-cost heat pumps, all delivered through a managed program designed to fully support customers through the process.

HISTORIC OFFSHORE WIND SELECTION

In September, Massachusetts, along with Rhode Island, selected 2,878 megawatts of offshore wind. This was the largest offshore wind selection ever in New England and the first coordinated procurement of its kind. Massachusetts selected 2,678 MW in total from three projects, which represents nearly twenty percent of our overall electric demand or more than 1.4 million homes.

This procurement could reduce the state's carbon emissions by the equivalent of taking one million gas-powered cars off the road. Together, the projects will create thousands of jobs and generate billions of dollars of economic activity. This solicitation marked the first time DOER was primarily responsible for drafting the RFP, leading the evaluation team, and selecting the winning bidders.

**2025-2030
STRATEGIC PLAN**

DFG released Connections: Working Together for Nature, a bold five-year strategic plan for conserving nature for people and wildlife. Created collaboratively across the four divisions, this plan focuses DFG's efforts on solutions at the intersection of biodiversity, climate change, and environmental justice.

**HUNTERS SHARE
THE HARVEST**

In 2024, MassWildlife's Hunters Share the Harvest program expanded its impact — with hunters generously donating over 6,000 pounds of venison, providing over 24,000 meals to families facing food insecurity across the state. The program now has 16 distribution partners statewide — including food pantries, veterans' organizations, and Tribes.

**AFFORDABLE HOUSING
GRANT PROGRAM**

DOER is working to tackle two big problems facing Massachusetts — housing and climate change. In July, DOER awarded \$26 million to five organizations through the Affordable Housing Decarbonization Grant Program and added \$40 million of additional funding to the program. The grants will lower energy bills and improve air quality in 625 homes.

DOER has helped decarbonize more than 1,300 affordable housing units through this program to date. Under the program, these homes remain affordable and the families that live in them enjoy more comfortable living spaces and better indoor air quality through updates like efficient heating and cooling, improved insulation, and solar panels.



RATE CHANGES TO SUPPORT ELECTRIFICATION AND AFFORDABLE ENERGY

In 2024, DPU made significant strides in reshaping rate structures to advance electrification and make energy more affordable.

The DPU prioritized affordability and inclusivity in its orders in 2024. The DPU increased discounts for low-income customers of Unitil and approved a program of tiered discounts for National Grid customers, recognizing that a fair energy transition must be accessible to all. Additionally, the Capital Investment Project Orders introduced cost allocation methods that fairly distribute infrastructure upgrade expenses between ratepayers and large solar developers, reinforcing grid capacity and improving access to renewable energy for environmental justice populations.

In recent orders involving Unitil and National Grid, the DPU introduced rate changes that support cleaner energy adoption, including specific heat pump rates designed to encourage shifts from fossil fuel-based heating to efficient electric alternatives. Such targeted rates play a crucial role in driving Massachusetts toward a sustainable energy future.

These rate changes reflect DPU's commitment to creating an energy landscape where sustainability and accessibility go hand-in-hand, laying a foundation for a responsible, inclusive energy transition for Massachusetts.

DPU ROAD SHOWS

In 2024, the DPU launched the "DPU Road Show," a proactive outreach initiative to directly connect with and learn from communities across Massachusetts while educating the public on crucial energy issues. Held in Boston, Salem, Pittsfield, and Quincy, these events offered an inside look at our work on solar energy, streamlined approval of municipal aggregation plans, pipeline infrastructure, transportation electrification, and more. Through informative sessions, the DPU team explained complex regulatory topics, making the DPU's role more accessible and fostering discussions on the future of energy in Massachusetts.

The Road Shows highlighted the DPU's renewed focus on public engagement and transparency. These events fostered open dialogue, enabling the commission and staff to gather valuable feedback that has directly informed enhancements to existing projects. The Road Shows not only built trust but also empowered attendees to actively participate in the energy transition. They were a pivotal step in bridging knowledge gaps, promoting understanding, and enhancing public involvement in Massachusetts' energy transition.

ESTABLISHED FOCUS AREAS

This year, the Office of Energy Transformation (OET) established three focus areas for its work aligned with its mission that will result in tangible, demonstrable, and transformational change:

- Transitioning away from reliance on the Everett Marine Terminal LNG Facility
- Decarbonizing how we meet peak electric demand
- Establishing alternative mechanisms to finance the future grid transition

ENERGY TRANSFORMATION ADVISORY BOARD

The Energy Transformation Advisory Board was established to help guide and advise the work of the OET and include a broad cross-section of stakeholders, including labor, business, finance, environmental justice, utilities, technology providers, building owners and developers, and generators.

Together, these groups will work to deliver an equitable, affordable, sustainable, and just transition of the energy ecosystem.

ABOUT OET

The Office of Energy Transformation's mission is to accelerate the clean energy transition, with a focus on gas-to-electric transition, electric grid readiness, and an affordable and just transition for workers, businesses, and communities.





COASTAL HABITAT RESTORATION

In 2024, CZM led efforts to successfully secure more than \$5 million in federal funds to transform retired cranberry bogs into resilient coastal wetlands, while managing two previously awarded federally funded coastal habitat restoration projects of nearly \$4 million. In April, two projects received grants through the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal Zone Management Habitat Protection and Restoration with funds provided by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The Upper Bass River project in Yarmouth was awarded \$4.7 million to restore coastal habitat, tidal flow, and fish passage through removal of structures restricting water flow and restoration of 57 acres of retired cranberry bogs.

The Puritan Bog project in Bourne received \$338,000 to advance the restoration of a retired cranberry bog by completing planning and permitting to address multiple tidal restrictions, restore wetland, and facilitate marsh migration. The funds were secured by CZM with multiple partners. For the Upper Bass River, this includes the Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), Town of Yarmouth, and Friends of Bass River. Partners for the Puritan Bog project include the Town of Bourne and the Buzzards Bay Coalition. This project was supported in earlier phases by the DER Regional Restoration Partnerships Program.

With \$1.6 million from last year's BIL grants, the Manchester-by-the-Sea project will enhance fish passage, restore salt marsh, and protect the fire station and other town assets through shoreline stabilization. The project is complementary to work to reconstruct the Central Street bridge and remove a tide gate. The \$2 million grant for the Pamet River Restoration Project in Truro is being used to advance modeling, design, and permitting to restore tidal flow at five locations restricted by road crossings to restore hundreds of acres of highly productive salt marsh and estuary habitat and improve resilience of both habitat and infrastructure to climate change impacts.

SUPPORT TO COASTAL COMMUNITIES

CZM awarded \$5.2 million in Coastal Resilience Grants for 16 local projects and \$600,000 in Coastal Habitat and Water Quality Grants for five projects. CZM provided technical assistance to coastal communities for these grant programs and completed another 26 previously funded Coastal Resilience and eight Coastal Habitat and Water Quality projects.

CHIEF COASTAL RESILIENCE OFFICER

This year, CZM appointed the state's first Chief Coastal Resilience Officer, Deanna Moran, to help ensure a resilient future for our coastal communities.



POWER UP NEW ENGLAND

Working together with DOER and the Governor's Office, FREA led the successful collaborative efforts of the New England states in applying for federal funding through the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Grid Innovation Program, resulting in a \$389 million award. This is one of the largest awards that DOE has provided through this federal funding program.

Power Up New England features transmission system upgrades to interconnect up to 4,800 megawatts of offshore wind in Southeast Massachusetts and Southeast Connecticut, as well as a battery storage system in Northern Maine capable of discharging clean energy to the grid for up to 100 hours. By proactively identifying and upgrading points of interconnection for offshore wind, we address one of the biggest challenges for offshore wind and other clean energy resources – grid interconnection – significantly de-risking offshore wind investment for developers and helping to lower the cost of offshore wind for consumers.

The multi-day storage project will be deployed behind a transmission constraint to help enable incremental carbon-free energy from onshore wind resources and provide critical reliability benefits to the grid, particularly during periods of prolonged cold weather.

FIRST STATE-DRIVEN REGIONAL TRANSMISSION RFP

In partnership with other participating New England states and our region's grid operator, FREA helped lead the development and implementation of a first-in-the-nation, forward-looking, and state-driven regional transmission procurement process to meet system needs for our future grid.

Through this process, Massachusetts joined with its partner states in late 2024 to request that ISO New England issue a transmission procurement in 2025 to unlock onshore wind resources in Maine and meet growing system demand.

OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION



INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR RECREATION EVENTS GRANTS

This year, MOOR awarded grants supporting 21 non-profit organizations and municipalities, to host several outdoor recreation events. From surf therapy for neurodivergent children and their families to rowing on the Connecticut River to build self-esteem, participants were able gain valuable skills and make lasting memories. In November, the Office also announced its second round of funding, supporting 18 grantees.

TRAILS FOR ALL INITIATIVE

MOOR launched Trails for All, a comprehensive initiative that will review the current state of universally accessible trails in Massachusetts. Through intentional trail planning, the Office plans to promote inclusivity for people with disabling conditions and other mobility considerations by implementing trail improvements such as gentle grades, stable surfaces, and inclusive signage. The initiative will assess the condition of accessible trails to ensure outdoor recreational activities are available to people living with disabilities, low-income residents, and communities of color. MOOR will also convene a multi-stakeholder Trail Access Working Group, conduct an extensive accessible trails assessment, and publish a report on accessible and adaptive outdoor recreation opportunities.

ABOUT MOOR

The Massachusetts Office of Outdoor Recreation (MOOR) seeks to promote Massachusetts as a great place to come play outside for all residents and visitors.



ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT OFFICE



EFFICIENT PROJECT REVIEWS

MEPA conducted efficient environmental reviews of significant real estate, transportation and infrastructure, and coastal and ecological restoration projects, including the Great Marsh Salt Marsh Restoration Project proposed by the Trustees of Reservation.

A total of 242 filings were published between January and November 2024, including 59 (out of 121) new project filings proposed near historically disadvantaged environmental justice communities. The Office averaged 43 days to issue certificates between January and December 16, 2024. MEPA also issued straw proposals in June 2024 to update its greenhouse gas emissions and climate resiliency review protocols, in support of statewide climate change initiatives.

MEPA E-FILING PORTAL

EPA-IT worked with the MEPA Office to launch MEPA e-Filing effective January 6, 2025. This completes a multi-year effort to move project filings to an entirely paperless system without reliance on e-mail. The launch of MEPA e-Filing accompanies prior enhancements to the MEPA Environmental Monitor, a twice-monthly publication that provides notices of new and pending projects under review, to allow for public downloads of full project filings. These upgraded platforms offer improved accessibility and transparency, allowing proponents to easily file with MEPA and the public to stay informed about environmental reviews and decisions.

The MEPA e-Filing Portal also includes fields to track projects proposed near environmental justice populations.

ABOUT MEPA

The Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act Office (MEPA) provides meaningful opportunities for public review of environmental impacts of projects for which agency action is required.

It requires covered agencies to study the environmental impacts of projects undertaken by them or requiring agency permitting, financial assistance or land transfers, and to use all feasible measures to avoid, minimize, and mitigate damage to the environment to the maximum extent practicable. MEPA provides meaningful opportunities for public review of environmental impacts of projects for which agency action is required.

MASSACHUSETTS CLEAN ENERGY CENTER



COMMONWEALTH GREEN LOW-INCOME HOUSING COALITION

MassCEC's EmPower Massachusetts Program helps local organizations increase access to climate solutions in their communities, striving to ensure everyone is part of our clean energy transformation.

Underserved populations have less access to the benefits of clean energy and spend more on energy costs. EmPower works to solve these challenges by providing funding to address resource gaps, facilitate local engagement, and drive collaboration between community members.

Over three funding cycles to-date, EmPower has invested \$13.3 million to support 130 projects, 200+ organizations, and 20+ workshops.

In FY23, Commonwealth Green Low-Income Housing Coalition received a \$25,000 EmPower Grant to hire outreach staff, helping 15 affordable housing and nonprofit organizations access Mass Save® efficiency funding and onsite and community solar opportunities. The coalition connected shelters in Southbridge and Worcester to no-cost LED lighting, insulation, water conservation, and new heating systems. These facilities serve more than 80 unhoused individuals.

The organization is continuing the momentum sparked by receiving the initial EmPower grant. With the assistance of another \$107,000 EmPower FY24 Implementation Grant, the coalition team will expand outreach to 50 additional organizations and ensure at least 25 of them take on a clean energy or energy conservation project.

SALEM OFFSHORE WIND TERMINAL GROUNDBREAKING

In 2024, MassCEC took over ownership of the Salem Offshore Wind Terminal and broke ground on this historic new port. This project will transform a former oil- and coal-fired power plant into Massachusetts' second offshore wind port, which will propel the state toward its clean energy goals and expedite the construction of next-generation wind farms.

The terminal is being built specifically to support the construction of offshore wind farms in New England and future floating turbines in the Gulf of Maine. A \$9 million Community Benefits Agreement and a Project Labor Agreement with the North Shore Building and Construction Trades and the North Atlantic States Regional Council of Carpenters will power the local economy and create good paying jobs for nearby residents.

MASSACHUSETTS WATER RESOURCES AUTHORITY



QUINAPOXET RIVER DAM REMOVAL PROJECT

To support climate resilient projects while also restoring important habitats, the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority is in the process of removing the Quinapoxet River Dam in the Town of West Boylston. The earthen embankment dam, which is 250 feet long, 18 feet high, with a concrete and stone spillway spanning the river, was constructed in 1905 to support the creation of the Wachusett Reservoir. It has outlived its usefulness due to significant upgrades the MWRA has made to its water monitoring, treatment, and transfer systems.

Removal of the Quinapoxet River Dam will restore fish passage to the Wachusett Reservoir where existing populations of Brook Trout and Landlocked Salmon are considered to be genetically isolated as the dam restricts vital migratory patterns. Additionally, an ADA compliant path and platform will also be constructed on the riverbank and interpretive signage will be installed.

Other associated benefits include:

- Restoring natural riverine hydrologic processes;
- Restoring bordering vegetated wetlands and riverine habitat;
- Enabling 35 miles of river accessible to fish;
- Eliminating safety concerns related to the deteriorating dam; and,
- Enhancing public access to a popular fishing and recreation area.

The project is supported by both the Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Department of Fish and Game, including the Division of Ecological Restoration, who have provided technical expertise and financial assistance.

LEAD SERVICE LINE REPLACEMENT PROGRAM

In 2016, on recommendation from the MWRA Advisory Board, the MWRA Board of Directors approved an enhancement to MWRA's Local Water System Assistance Program to provide up to \$100 million in 10-year zero-interest loans to communities solely for efforts to fully replace lead service lines. Since the inception of this program, MWRA has provided \$43.7 million in loans to MWRA communities.

In 2024, the Board of Directors approved an additional \$100 million in assistance, and has included a 25 percent grant component for communities who fully fund the removal and replacement of the portion of the lead service line on private property.

The presence of a lead service line connecting a home to the main in the street can lead to elevated lead levels in tap water, especially if that water sits stagnant for an extended period. MWRA's stable water quality and effective corrosion control treatment reduces the risk that a lead service line will cause elevated lead levels; measured lead levels in high-risk homes have decreased by 90 percent since corrosion control was brought online in 1996. However, the risk of elevated levels remains as long as lead service lines are in use.

The approved \$200 million in loan funds is available for distribution to all eligible communities for local lead service line identification/removal projects.

MASSACHUSETTS ENVIRONMENTAL POLICE



UNDERSIZED HADDOCK SEIZURE

During a routine foot patrol in New Bedford by Massachusetts Environmental Police Acting Colonel Patrick Moran on June 24th, an offshore dragger offloading their haddock catch at a processing center was caught with what appeared to be undersized fish in an assembly line ready to be fileted.

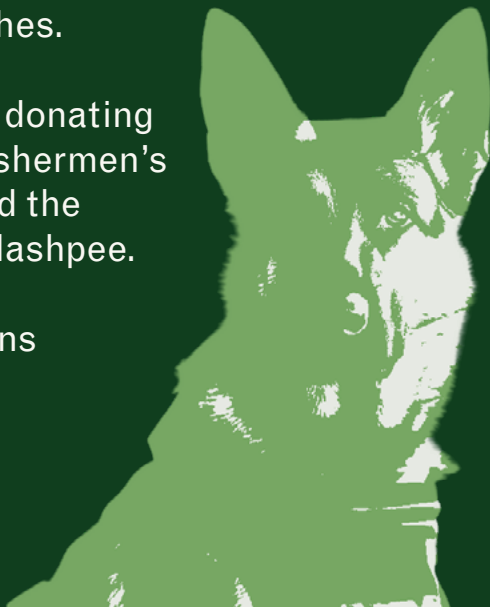
Col. Moran ordered operations at the processing plant to a temporary halt as he measured the fish, determining about 3,000 of the 11,000 total pounds of haddock were under the legal limit of 16 inches.

MEP officers assisted with processing and donating the illegal fish to local food pantries, the Fishermen's Preservation Trust on Martha's Vineyard and the Wampanoag tribes in both Aquinnah and Mashpee.

The boat's captain received a court summons following the seizure.

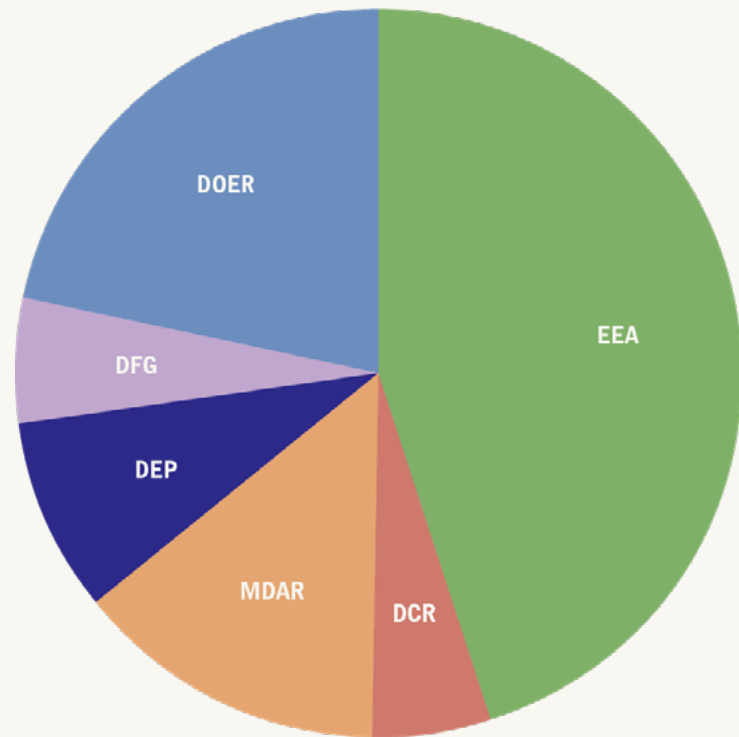
ABOUT MEP

The mission of the Massachusetts Environmental Police is to protect the environment and natural resources of the state of Massachusetts through enforcement, education, and public outreach.



EEA'S IMPACT

2024 GRANTS



TOTAL GRANTS AWARDED: \$240.99M

1,545 INDIVIDUAL AWARDS DISTRIBUTED

EEA coordinates the availability of grant opportunities and completion of grant awards. EEA also works with communities to identify funding opportunities that are the best fit for their local needs.

GRANT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM SOFTWARE

The EEA Grants Office and the EEA IT department procured a vendor to develop a new, secretariat-wide grants management software system. This system will eventually support six agencies and over 85 annual grant programs making nearly 2,000 grant award contracts each year. Users will be able to create profiles, apply for grants, and manage all of their applications and awards from a single portal. Additionally, the updated system will simplify the grants process while supporting over 100 grant staff with automation, security, redundancy, and transparency.

COOLING CORRIDORS GRANTS

EEA's new Cooling Corridors grant program, now in its first year, funds tree-planting projects in municipalities across the state for shade and cooling services, with an emphasis on environmental justice communities, heat islands, and busy walking routes.

The Cooling Corridors program focuses on public health benefits from tree planting, in addition for energy conservation benefits. As such, it also offers funding for the establishment of micro-forests, painting of roofs and other surfaces, and the removal of heat-absorbing materials to create additional planting areas.

In this year's initial grant round, 15 communities were awarded a total of \$1.3 million in grants.



LEFT: Students from Gen. John J. Stefanik Elementary School planting a tree with Governor Maura Healey at the Cooling Corridors launch in Chicopee, MA, April 26, 2024. RIGHT: Students holding artwork created for Earth Day 2024.

FOREST RESERVE GRANTS

The EEA Division of Conservation Services awarded over \$5 million in grants to protect forest land which will be managed as reserves. Ten land trust organizations and municipalities have been awarded grants through EEA's Acquisitions for Forest Reserves Grant Program. These projects are critical to fighting climate change. They will allow forests to mature, strengthening how these habitats store carbon.

The grant program, a result of the Forest as Climate Solutions Initiative, aims to designate 10 percent of Massachusetts forests as reserves, where active management is limited and natural processes play out. Permanently conserving forested land is important, as it provides benefits to wildlife habitats and mitigates the impacts of climate change.

