

Advocacy at a Glance: Rebuilding and Reimagining Federal Climate and Air Protections for Massachusetts

Climate change is here, and we're feeling its effects every day, in every corner in the Commonwealth. Last summer, playgrounds sat empty while raging wildfires in Canada painted our skies orange with harmful pollution, making it harder to breathe. This summer, we're breaking heat records nearly every week. And extreme heat is making air quality worse, especially in communities already experiencing health, economic, and environmental burdens. To fix these local problems, we need both local and national solutions. As we seek to address and adapt to climate change and its harmful effects, we need to center the needs of overburdened communities. My team is on it. Alongside our multistate partners, we have been hard at work fighting to rebuild and defend strong federal measures to protect Massachusetts residents from climate change and air pollution. Here's just a snapshot of our important national work, and how it helps you here at home.

Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell



Climate Change: *Did you know?*

The 2022 Federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) marked the nation's largest **investment in clean energy and climate action** ever. So far, we've seen millions of dollars invested in Massachusetts communities—like \$450 million funding heat pumps,¹ \$156 million funding solar programs that empower low-income and disadvantaged communities,² and \$10 million supporting energy efficiency in low-income housing.³

- *The AGO team has led a multistate coalition in pushing the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Department of Treasury, and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to center equity in implementing the IRA's historic federal funding opportunities.*⁴

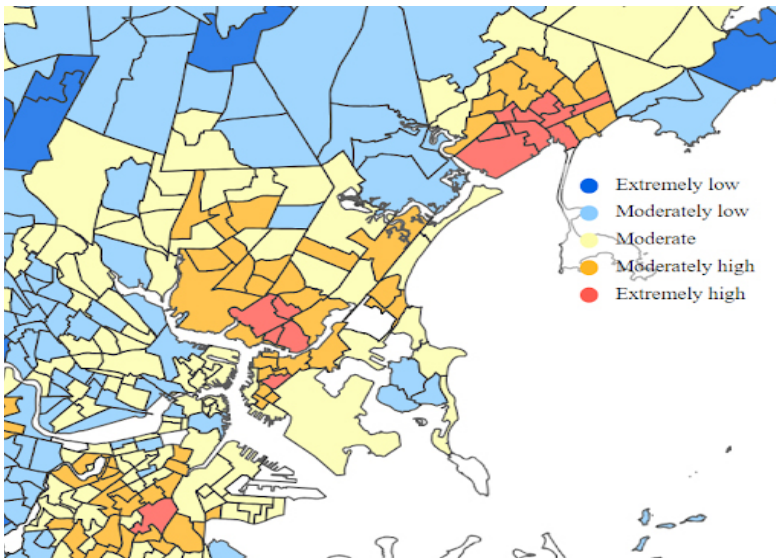


Power plants are responsible for about a quarter of U.S. greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. That's 23 times all of Massachusetts GHG emissions combined! And **oil and gas infrastructure** across the country rampantly leaks methane, a climate super pollutant that has 84 times more global warming potential than carbon dioxide on a 20-year time scale.⁵

- *For well over a decade, the AGO has advocated to curb GHG emissions from these sectors, which are contributing to the dire impacts of climate change in our communities.*⁶ *And now, we're in court defending EPA's new, common-sense rules.*⁷

Cars and trucks are a major contributor to climate change. Massachusetts has adopted strong vehicle emission standards, which have reduced Massachusetts greenhouse gas emissions by more than 4 million metric tons (~14%!) between 2010 and 2021 and decreased harmful pollution from our roads and neighborhoods.⁸ EPA's new emission standards for larger trucks and buses for model years 2027 through 2032 will cut carbon dioxide emissions by 25% to 60%⁹ and provide \$13 billion in net benefits in the form of fewer hospital visits, lost work days, and deaths.¹⁰

- *We secured a court victory that allows Massachusetts to keep strong standards for cars and small trucks.¹¹ And we're in court defending strong federal vehicle emission and fuel economy standards.¹²*



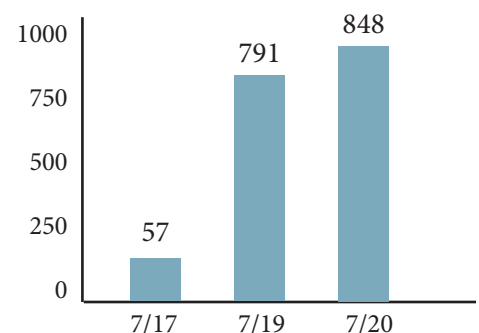
Map showing how vulnerable the Greater Boston area is to extreme heat based on exposure, social and economic conditions, and ability to adapt¹⁶

Extreme heat is more common than ever. Between 1971-2000, Massachusetts experienced only 4 days per year with temperatures over 90° F.¹³ In 2022, Logan Airport recorded 21 days with temperatures of 90° F or higher, and we've already endured over a dozen days over 90° F this year.¹⁴ As the thermometers hover near 90, many workers face serious heat-related injuries or even death.

- *We successfully urged the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to propose standards for extreme heat to ensure basic protections—like water and shade breaks—for our most vulnerable workers.¹⁷*

Climate change also poses grave threats to our **economy, financial markets, and investments**. For example, inland flooding due to climate change could cause \$9.3 million in statewide damage each year by 2030 and, by 2050, annual damages could total \$64 million.¹⁸ Extreme heat will also harm our economy, with high heat days expected to result in over 10 million hours of work lost by the end of 2090, equating to over \$778 million in lost wages.¹⁹

- *The AGO is leading the charge to help defend a new rule from the Securities and Exchange Commission that requires many large publicly traded companies to provide reliable, decision-useful information to investors about how these and other climate risks affect their businesses.²⁰*



During a heat wave this summer, emergency room visits in Massachusetts went from 57 per 100,000 residents on June 17 to 791 on June 19 and 848 on June 20.¹⁵

Local Solutions:

Since AG Campbell was sworn in, the AGO has funded nearly \$1 million in community projects including efforts to address and adapt to climate change—like de-paving heat-absorbing parking lots, planting community gardens, and asthma prevention. And we successfully advocated for new legislation so we can direct state court judgment and settlement funds back to disadvantaged communities across the Commonwealth.

Air Quality: *Did you know?*



192 Massachusetts waterbodies are under mercury-related fish consumption advisories. Mercury is a neurotoxin especially harmful to pregnant women, children, Tribal communities, and subsistence fishers.²¹

- ***The AGO is leading a coalition in court defending EPA's rules to reduce emissions of mercury and other toxic air pollution that spews out of power plants.***²²

We've had 5 air quality alert days in Massachusetts this summer due to ozone,²³ which causes significant negative health effects, including coughing, throat irritation, and lung tissue damage, and aggravates existing conditions, such as asthma, bronchitis, heart disease, and emphysema.³²

- ***That's why we're in court defending EPA rules that prevent upwind ozone pollution from power plants from traveling downwind into our borders, making it harder to breathe.***²⁴

Particulate matter pollution is released into the air from many sources like school buses and wood heaters, penetrating deep into the lungs, and causing and exacerbating asthma and other respiratory and cardiac diseases. This is a big problem; nearly 10% of Massachusetts school-aged children had asthma as of 2023.²⁵ And it's dangerous; between 2015 and 2020, Massachusetts saw an average of almost 35,000 emergency room visits for asthma per year.²⁶ Approximately 30,000 Massachusetts households burn wood to heat their homes.³⁰

- ***We negotiated a major settlement that, if approved by the court, will order EPA to set new emission standards for wood heaters.***²⁸
- ***And that's why the AGO is defending EPA's strong air quality standards for fine particulate matter,²⁷ as well as strong emission standards for cars and heavy-duty trucks noted above.***



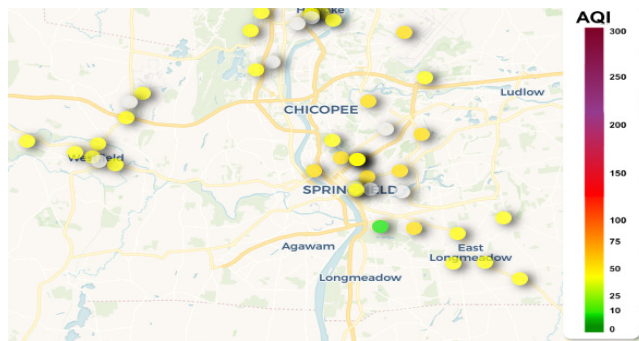
Massachusetts experienced 35 air quality alert days in the 2023-2024 winter.²⁹

69 facilities across Massachusetts communities store large amounts of "extremely hazardous" chemicals on site.

- ***We're in court supporting important protections against chemical accidents at these facilities, especially those communities living near facilities in industries with high accident rates.***³¹

Local Solutions:

We're empowering communities to understand and report local air quality problems. It's why we funded the [air quality monitor network in the Pioneer Valley](#) and created [our idling tip form](#).



Snapshot of the Real-Time Pioneer Valley Healthy Air Monitoring Network (Aug. 15, 2024)³³

Endnotes

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- ⁷ *West Virginia et al. v. EPA*, D.C. Cir. No. 24-1120 (power plant carbon dioxide); *West Virginia et al. v. EPA*, D.C. Cir. No. 24-1054 (oil and gas methane).
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- ²² See *North Dakota et al. v. EPA*, D.C. Cir. 24-1119 (and consolidated cases).
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