

# News from the Green Communities Division



## Green Communities 2022 Designation Deadline Set

Across the Commonwealth, cities and towns are reaping the benefits of clean energy leadership as designated [Green Communities](#). DOER expects to expand this number with its annual fall Green Community designation round. [Guidance for aspiring Green Communities](#) regarding how to meet the five criteria for designation specified in the Green Communities Act is posted on the Green Communities website, and the deadline for municipalities to apply for 2022 designation is **September 30 at 5 p.m.**

Prior to submitting an application, municipalities may request a preliminary consultation with the Green Communities Division to discuss their progress toward meeting any or all of the five designation criteria. To schedule a preliminary consultation, contact your Green Communities [Regional Coordinator](#). Documents must be submitted prior to August 26 for preliminary consultation.

## Changes to Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy

Since the inception of the Green Communities program, police cruisers have been exempt from complying with the MPG requirements of the **Fuel-Efficiency Vehicle Policy**. Criterion Four of the Green Communities Program states that communities must “purchase only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable.” Criterion 4 guidelines also note that municipalities must “commit to purchasing fuel-efficient cruisers when they become commercially available.”

As of the writing of this notice, there are three pursuit-rated police vehicles available on the Massachusetts [Statewide Contract for the Purchase of Vehicles \(VEH110\)](#) that meet the Criterion 4 MPG standards. Given that fuel-efficient police vehicles are now commercially available, **police cruisers will no longer be exempt starting in Fiscal Year 2024**. Therefore, any new police cruisers acquired after June 30, 2023, having a manufacturer’s gross vehicle weight rating (GVWR) of less than 8,500 pounds, will need to comply with the most recent MPG criteria published in the [Criterion Four Fuel-Efficient Vehicle Policy Guidelines](#).

## DOER Seeks Feedback on Proposed Stretch Energy Code Changes

DOER is seeking public comments on the Stretch Energy Code and Specialized Stretch Code Draft Regulation, released on June 24, 2022, to inform the final code language.

Written comments will be accepted until **5 PM on August 12th, 2022**. Please submit written comments on the regulations electronically to [stretchcode@mass.gov](mailto:stretchcode@mass.gov) with the words BUILDING CODE COMMENTS in the subject line.

Alternatively, comments can be submitted via mail to: Ian Finlayson, Department of Energy Resources, 100 Cambridge Street, Suite 1020, Boston, MA 02114.

For more information, please visit DOER's [Stretch Code webpage](#).

DOER will hold three public hearings to receive verbal feedback. Click on the date listed below to register:

Date	Time	Location
<a href="#">July 22, 2022</a>	9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.	Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, 1 Rabbit Hill Road, Westborough, MA 01581
<a href="#">August 2, 2022</a>	5:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.	Thomas Crane Public Library, 40 Washington Street, Quincy, MA 02169
<a href="#">August 8, 2022</a>	1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.	<a href="#">Virtual</a>

## MassSave Webinars for Communities and Residents

Saving money on energy is a growing priority for all Massachusetts communities. The Sponsors of Mass Save are working to **enhance access to and knowledge of energy efficiency products and services** and are offering two webinars to share updates on the [Massachusetts 2022-2024 Energy Efficiency Plan](#). The 90-minute webinar will highlight new energy efficiency opportunities for communities and organizations to help residents connect with energy efficiency services.

Click on the date to register for a webinar, which will be held 11:30 am – 1:00 pm on [Thursday, July 14](#); and 6:00 – 7:30 pm on [Tuesday, July 19](#).

## Mass DEP Offers Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) Grants

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is issuing a [grant opportunity](#) for diesel emissions reduction projects under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Diesel Emissions Reduction Act (DERA) program. MassDEP's implementation of this program is designed to **accelerate the retirement**

**of less efficient and more polluting vehicles, engines, and equipment, and replace them with zero emission vehicles and equipment.** Diesel emissions can result in serious health conditions like asthma and respiratory illnesses and exacerbate global climate change, and often disproportionately affect environmental justice communities that already are impacted by environmental hazards. Replacement with full electric vehicles and equipment will maximize emissions reductions and will best help the State reach its climate action goals. The application deadline is **August 24, 2022**.

## MassSave Offers Community Education Grant

Through the new [MassSave Community Education Grant](#), the Sponsors of Mass Save are supporting Environmental Justice Communities to bring energy efficiency education programs to their residents.

Grant funding and support serves to **increase awareness and access into the energy efficiency programs, as well as engage with community-based organizations** to promote energy efficiency-focused educational and culturally relevant opportunities.

The Sponsors of Mass Save are prioritizing increased engagement with local communities through energy efficiency education and literacy to help equitably reduce the energy burden and carbon footprint across Massachusetts Environmental Justice Communities.

Interested applicants are encouraged to attend an informational webinar to learn more. [Register here](#) for the **6 pm July 13** webinar; and [register here](#) for the **10 am July 14** webinar.

## MassDEP Offers Gap III Energy Grants

Under the leadership of MassDEP, the **Clean Energy Results Program (CERP)** is an integrated energy and environmental partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources and the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center that reduces regulatory or other barriers to clean and energy efficient development across the state.

The [Gap Grant](#) is a cornerstone of this partnership and is a streamlined energy grant funding model that has helped **municipal water and wastewater utilities reduce their energy usage and operating costs, and improve the environment**. The grant is designed to fill the last “gap” in project financing, enabling and encouraging facilities to use energy utility incentives as well as funding from other sources to install selected energy efficiency and clean energy generation projects.

Applications from water/wastewater utilities are due **Friday, July 15**. Click [here](#) to learn more.

[green.communities@mass.gov](mailto:green.communities@mass.gov)