



In Massachusetts, Clean Energy Is Not a Distant Dream

Phil Giudice

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Clean Energy is not some distant dream awaiting federal decisions; in the state of Massachusetts, we have gotten busy. Massachusetts has a long been a hot bed of innovation. Under Governor Deval Patrick, our innovative zeal has turned full force to our energy challenges, and the early results are impressive.

Eliminating energy waste

First and foremost, our focus is on finding every cost-effective intervention to reduce energy waste. These energy efficiency efforts were unleashed through the Commonwealth's passage of the Green Communities Act in 2008—comprehensive clean energy legislation that, among other things, mandates that electric and gas utilities procure all cost-effective energy efficiency on behalf of their ratepayers. With more than 20 years of substantial and continuous experience investing in cost effective energy efficiency, we have capable and committed partners in our utilities, contractors, vendors, and other stakeholders to help us figure out exactly how best to find and deliver all energy efficiency that makes economic sense.

Last year, the Department of Public Utilities approved three-year energy efficiency plans developed in partnership with my office and a host of other stakeholders. Among the ambitious goals embodied in the plans is a projected 2.4 percent annual savings in electric consumption. While Massachusetts is already extraordinarily frugal in terms of energy consumption, delivering about \$200 of gross state product out of every million Btus of energy consumed (approximately twice the national average), our success in reducing energy waste even more will help us grow our economy while demonstrating energy and environmental leadership.

Developing renewables

Our second focus is to develop more renewable energy sources through a variety of methods. Activities to date have included establishing a rebate program for solar photovoltaic (PV) and now transitioning to an RPS [renewable portfolio standard] market structure for PV, establishing utility-owned PV as an additional development model, and requiring utilities to enter into long-term renewable output contracts for the express purpose of facilitating the financing of renewable power projects. These policies have put us on track to increase solar power 20-fold over a four-year period—from 3.5 megawatts to 70 megawatts—and wind power 10-fold. At the same time, they have resulted in a more than doubling of solar employment and a fourfold increase in companies installing solar energy here.

Supporting the local level

We are also focused on mobilizing all constituents in these energy opportunities. For instance, our Green Communities Division has deployed regional support staff to provide counsel and expertise to cities and towns considering renewables development, energy procurement and consumption monitoring, and energy efficiency. In the first round of designation, 35 municipalities rose to the challenge of becoming official Green Communities by meeting high standards of energy management and commitment to renewable energy, including adopting a local-option high-efficiency “stretch” energy code for new construction. This made them eligible for a share of \$8.1 million in grants to help these communities do even more to go green in their energy use.

In Massachusetts, we’re not waiting for anybody—we’re creating our clean energy future today.

Phil Giudice (DOER.Energy@State.MA.US) is the Commissioner of the Department of Energy Resources in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.