Climate Framework and Laws

Through the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act, the Commonwealth set nation-leading, aggressive greenhouse gas emissions limits of 25% below 1990 baseline level by 2020 and 80% by 2050. 2016’s Executive Order (EO) 569 committed the Commonwealth to develop an integrated climate change strategy that addressed both climate change mitigation and adaptation. The Commonwealth has also promulgated new regulations to ensure compliance with 2020 emission reduction targets and committed to a new Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative Program plan.

Energy

Massachusetts has passed comprehensive energy diversity legislation (An Act Relative to Energy Diversity, H. 4568) and implemented a range of comprehensive energy policies. These include the RPS and energy storage targets, in addition to its 2017 Clean Energy Standard, requiring utilities and competitive suppliers to obtain at least 16% of electricity from clean energy sources in 2018 and 80% by 2050. Investments in solar and storage continue through the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) and the Affordable Access to Clean and Efficient Energy (AACEE) Initiative, which includes a $15 million commitment to expand clean energy opportunities for low- and moderate-income residents.

Energy Efficiency

In 2017, Massachusetts was named the most energy-efficient state for the 7th year in a row by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy. The first nine years of the energy efficiency program are expected to return more than $20 billion in ratepayer benefits. The 2016–2018 Three Year Energy Efficiency Plans established nation-leading savings levels for both electricity (2.93% of retail sales) and gas (1.24% of retail sales). In 2008, Massachusetts developed one of the first “stretch” energy codes which almost 60% of Massachusetts municipalities have adopted.

Transportation

Massachusetts is engaged with several regional initiatives to reduce transportation sector emissions, including with the Transportation Climate Initiative, the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers and the Multi State ZEV Taskforce. With a target of 300,000 ZEV vehicles by 2025, the state offers rebates of up to $2,500 to residents who purchase or lease electric vehicles. Governor Charlie Baker also recently established the Commission on the Future of Transportation to advise on transportation and climate change planning.

Resilience

The 2017 Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness program helps cities and towns plan and build more resilient communities and has already awarded over $9 million to 43 percent of state municipalities. Massachusetts is also developing and implementing a first of its kind integrated State Hazard Mitigation and Climate Adaptation Plan, based in the best science and data to develop operational, on-the-ground strategies. Governor Charlie Baker also recently established the Commission on the Future of Transportation to advise on transportation and climate change planning.

Climate Finance

Since 2008, Massachusetts has reinvested $306 million in RGGI auction proceeds to increase the energy efficiency of residences and businesses, provide clean-energy solutions to over 180 “Green Communities,” and support the implementation of alternative energy resources.

Natural and Working Lands

Over the last two years, Massachusetts permanently conserved 26,515 acres (41 square miles) and is investing $1 million annually in grants to improve local land use practices. The Commonwealth is also working to track changes in terrestrial carbon to evaluate the efficacy of land use policies.