

Community Power Delays Dirty Peaker!

Over the past 2 months, MCAN has taken on a new campaign, **Clean the Peak**. Since introducing this campaign in our March 2021 newsletter, a lot has happened! We are having an impact!

The Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC) petitioned the Department of Public Utilities to approve \$170 Million to build a new natural gas and oil powered peaker plant and compressor station. MMWEC refers to this project as Special Project 2015A (DPU Docket # 21-29).

Peaker plants are power plants that only operate 100--300 hours a year when energy demand is higher than the existing power plant is able to supply -- like hot summer days or cold winter evenings.

Financing the proposed Peabody Peaker will contribute to worsening air pollution and to worsening health for local Peabody residents. MMWEC can do better!

We are gaining traction!

On April 26, 2021, DPU held a public comment hearing. MCAN mobilized over 25 clean energy and climate health advocates, including two state legislators, to submit written and spoken comments.

Compelling concerns were made by **Peabody residents**, who had only recently heard of this proposed financing contract. They were outraged that their public utility district had not shared information about the proposed peaker plant. Community Action Works, our partner organization in this effort, has been supporting Peabody residents in defying their campaign to stop the dirty peaker plant.

Other advocates raised concerns about the likelihood that the dirty powered peaker will be out of compliance with clean energy requirements passed in the Next Generation Roadmap Bill signed by Gov. Baker in March.

Many people fear the peaker will become a stranded asset – a source of pollution that the ratepayers keep paying off even after the plant is forced to cease operations due to new clean energy and emissions reductions laws.



The Proposed Peaker Plant will:



- Operate approximately 250 hours a year and spew tons of particulate matter, including PM 2.5 (otherwise known as soot) into a region that is half a mile from at least two designated environmental justice areas in Peabody, MA.
- Emit nearly 51,000 tons of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas, into the atmosphere every year - the equivalent of adding 11,000 combustion engine cars to Massachusetts' roads each year;
- Require the installation of a natural gas compressor, a new 200,000 gallon oil tank, a 90-foot smokestack and a 2,500 to 7,500 gallon tank to hold either aqueous urea or aqueous ammonia, a hazardous gas.
- Commit ratepayers to paying for 30 years of high priced capacity, at a time when lower cost and cleaner alternatives are readily available and when the new climate law will make the plant noncompliant with strategies for municipal light plant districts to meet net zero emissions by 2050.
- Be financed with 2 revenue bonds (\$85 Million each) in a 30-year contract signed by 14 municipal light plant districts.

APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTER



Several physicians spoke about the health threats of PM 2.5 – otherwise known as soot – that will lodge in the lungs of the elderly and young, contributing to asthma and making recovering from COVID-19 even more difficult if this plant is built.

Rep. Sally Kerans reminded DPU Commissioners that this community “was traumatized by a chemical plant explosion in 2008 that knocked people out of their beds in the middle of the night and was heard and felt several miles in every direction from Salem to North Andover. The blast destroyed several houses and displaced hundreds of people for well over a year and longer, in some cases. Miraculously, no one was killed.”

On May 11, 2021, two weeks after a public meeting with the Department of Public Utilities, the MMWEC Board voted to approve a minimum 30-day pause on this project!

MMWEC stated in a [press release](#) their commitment to meet with stakeholders to consider clean energy alternatives for the proposed natural gas and oil powered peaker plant.

However, at an emergency MMWEC Board meeting held on May 12, the public was not allowed to attend the Executive Session that was called at the beginning of the meeting.

In other statements to the press, MMWEC has expressed their commitment to building the Peabody Peaker plant this year.

We have been successful in delaying the financing process of this project.

Two municipal light plant districts have petitioned the DPU to transfer the sale of their shares of the contract’s 60 MW hours.

But the threat of this plant being built remains. We must keep the pressure on!

What does the + 30-day pause mean? It means we keep fighting!

MCAN continues to support local advocates in municipal light plant districts that signed the MMWEC contract in asking their light boards to vote on withdrawing from the MMWEC contract. There is no unified position among the municipal light plants on the value of the dirty peaker. The commitment to clean energy and the new climate law that now requires municipal light plants to be net zero emitters by 2050 make investing in this plant a risky and unnecessary expense for ratepayers.

Community Action Works continued to support the Peabody resident group, Breath Clean North Shore, on their campaign to halt the financing of Special Project 2015A.

Please sign [our petition](#) and share it widely in your networks! Our petition calls on Ronald Decurzio, the CEO of MMWEC, to withdraw the proposal to build this dirty peaker and assess clean alternatives.

What has happened so far:

- **March 3:** MMWEC filed with the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to get approval to issue financing for a dirty peaker plant in Peabody, MA
- **April 7:** MCAN petitioned DPU to allow MCAN status to make a legal case against MMWEC.
- **April 15:** DPU denied MCAN’s request but granted MCAN a quasi-legal status which allows us to file a brief with the DPU and respond to MMWEC’s brief. (DPU has only given this status to one organization in the state).
- **April 26:** DPU held a public comment hearing. MCAN mobilized over 25 clean energy and climate health advocates, including two state legislators, to submit written and spoken comments. Read some of the advocates’ comments below!
- **May 11:** MMWEC Board voted to pause the project for a minimum of 30-days
- **May 12:** MMWEC emergency public Board meeting went into Executive Session with Sec. Theoharides and denied access to the meeting for the 20 ratepayers on the virtual call.

APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTER



An Update from Breathe Clean North Shore by Sudi Smoller

It started with an e-mail alert from the Sierra Club. Without that, I would not be aware of MMWEC's plan to build the Peabody Peaker. And then, it was not until I discovered the key words "Project 2015A" that I could find more information.

For me, it was the lack of transparency and the age of the project that motivated me to join the efforts of MCAN and Community Action Works to fight the plant. Our newly formed group, Breathe Clean North Shore (breathecleannorthshore.org) quickly organized to participate in the May 10 Department of Public Utilities hearing to fund the project. The people who testified at the hearing were informed and committed and I wanted to join them in spreading the word. Hence, we now have a website and Facebook page.



The next step for me was to re-visit the area of the plant, see the Waters River, the Peabody and Danvers neighborhoods nearest the plant and to join activists from Marblehead 350 on a magnificent spring day to distribute flyers about the proposed plant and our Peabody Peaker Community Meeting. The meeting is May 25th at 6:30pm on Zoom. All are welcome. Join us by registering at bit.ly/breathe-clean-meeting.



Who's Delaying Climate Action in Mass?



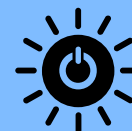
Join 350Mass and partners, including MCAN, on Monday June 14, 7-8:30pm for a webinar on the recent research report by Brown University's Climate Social Science Network, ["Who's Delaying Climate Action in Massachusetts? Twelve Findings."](#)

We'll learn how behind-the-scenes lobbying keeps strong climate legislation, supported by a 90% majority of testimony, from emerging out of committee to receive its day in the sun on the State House floor. Report co-authors Trevor Cuhane, Galen Hall, and J. Timmons Roberts will share their findings, and we'll hear from MA Representative Mike Connolly about what it's like to legislate among the lobbyists. Then it will be time for action, with topical breakout discussions to strategize about how to change this situation. Register [here](#)

APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTER



Net Zero Now, Net Zero For All



With the Next Generation Roadmap bill becoming law in June, MCAN is starting our **Net Zero Now, Net Zero For All campaign**.

DOER and the Baker Administration continue to call for a high energy performance code, which leaves open the possibility for a code that prioritizes energy efficiency and potentially excludes renewable energy options for buildings. A true net zero stretch code has three pillars: energy efficiency, electrification and renewables. Anything less than these three pillars is not a true net zero stretch code.

The May 11, 2021 Boards of Buildings Regulations and Standards public comment meeting was the first opportunity for net zero advocates to make public demands for a true net zero stretch code. While the climate bill directs the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to develop the net zero stretch code, the bill also directs DOER to work in consultation with the BBRS.

At the BBRS virtual meeting, **21 advocates spoke, including 8 municipal representatives. Thirteen were advocating in front of the BBRS for the first time!** You can read MCAN's BBRS comments [here](#).

Our next step will be preparing for the community input process led by DOER. These meetings will begin in Fall 2021.

DOER's strategy on the Net Zero stretch code is going to be a **2 phased approach**. The **first phase** is an update to the existing stretch code to not quite Net Zero. These changes in the "base stretch" code would become automatic in July 2021 for all communities that currently have adopted the existing stretch code. DOER will be pushing very hard on this.

The **second phase** is the opt-in Net Zero stretch code that will be developed over the next 18 months with 5 opportunities for community input. DOER is not in the position to push aggressively for an all-electric code, so we must do so! DOER's priorities for the Net Zero stretch code include reducing energy load through efficiency measures first and then addressing renewables.

MCAN will be creating webinars and virtual organizing meetings as we continue to push the state for a true Net Zero stretch code. MCAN is also working with local community groups on learning more about net zero buildings and net zero stretch code.

If your community group would like to learn more about net zero buildings and the net zero stretch code, please contact Sarah (sarah@massclimateaction.net).

Job Opening at MCAN!

MCAN is still looking for qualified candidates to join our team as the Better Buildings Campaign director! Do you have experience with community organizing and are passionate about the power of building code in the climate movement? Then click [here](#) for the job description. Share with your networks!

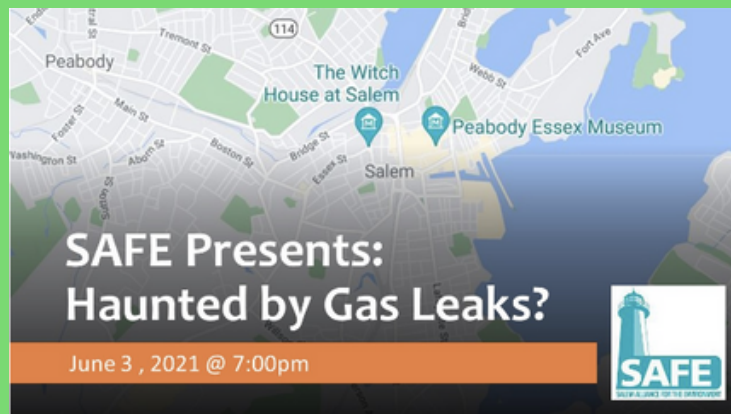
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Upcoming Chapter Events

Salem Action for the Environment

SAFE is hosting "Haunted by Gas Leaks?" on June 3 from 7-8 pm. Join Mayor Kim Driscoll, Jack Nessen-Salem GIS coordinator, Dom Nicholas-HEET GIS specialist, and SAFE Co-Chair Pat Gozemba as they unveil Massachusetts' first online municipal portal that provides detailed information about the location and status of Salem's gas leaks, and offers maps, data, historical information, and safety tips. Read the press and join the meeting here.



Sustainable Marblehead

Sustainable Marblehead is hosting Marblehead Ocean Week from June 5-12. Inspired by the internationally celebrated World Ocean Day, this event will include events every day to highlight issues affecting our waters and offer solutions and activities that raise awareness and inspire action. Learn more at: sustainablemarblehead.org/working-groups/harbor

Sustainable Sharon Coalition

Sustainable Sharon Coalition invites the community to read and discuss Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge and the Teachings of Plants by Robin Wall Kimmerer. They'll be meeting on Zoom on May 26th at 7:00 pm. For more information, visit [the Sustainable Sharon Coalition website](https://www.sustainablesharoncoalition.org/).

Chelmsford Climate Action Team

Chelmsford Climate Action Team and the Chelmsford Public Library are hosting The Science of Building with Mike Simons on June 10th at 1pm. Mike Simons has been involved in building performance for 10 years. Whether serving as a BPI Proctor Mentor, teaching emerging professionals building science, or making heat pump design understandable, Mike tries to put the Fun in Fundamentals of Energy!

Green Newton

Green Newton is hosting a virtual meeting on Thursday, May 27 at 7pm with a representative of the Citizens' Climate Lobby, a non-partisan group of volunteers working to build political will to enact climate change legislation at the federal and state level. Please RSVP to marcia@greennewton.org and we will send you the meeting link.

APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTER



Previous MCAN Events

Energy Equity & Energy Justice: presented at Carbon Countdown event hosted by Sustainable Middlesex, March 13, 2021.

MCAN participated at Sustainable Middlesex's Carbon Countdown Event, speaking about energy equity and energy justice. You can watch the presentation given by MCAN Executive Director Sarah Dooling [here](#).

Clean the Peak Advocates Organizing Meeting: April 14, 2021 and May 11, 2021

MCAN has been convening advocates who are concerned about the health and climate impacts of the proposed Peabody peaker plant. Check out the slides from the April 14th event [here](#) and from the May 11 event [here](#)

Affordable Housing is a Climate Solution Webinar #3: Co-hosted with BSA. April 13, 2021.

For this 3rd Webinar of the Affordable Housing is a Climate Solution Series, Brenda Pike of the City of Boston's Environment Department and Travis Anderson of PlaceTailor present on their experiences in making net zero work for a variety of building types, including affordable housing and commercial buildings. Watch the recording [here](#).

Climate Emergency Declarations Webinar Meeting: April 13, 2021

Learn about Climate Emergency Declarations and how you can pass one in your town! Representatives from Acton and the Cape Cod Emergency Declaration Initiative spoke about the experience of passing Climate Emergency Declarations, why these declarations are useful tools for towns and what next steps to take. You can watch the recording [here](#).

BBRS Advocates Organizing Meeting: April 21, 2021

On April 21, MCAN organized our better buildings advocates to testify in front of the Board of Building Regulations and Standards in support of a true Net Zero Stretch Code. You can access the slides from that event [here](#).

The CECP Plan & Recommendations: Co-hosted with Sierra Club-MA. March 16, 2021.

MCAN and Sierra Club hosted this webinar about the state's 2030 Clean Energy and Climate Plan. Watch the recording [here](#).

Advocacy Tools

- The Climate Mobilization has created a policy toolkit and organizing toolkit that you can check out [here](#).
- Advocate for a real Net Zero stretch on social media using our [Net Zero advocacy toolkit](#)
- Check out the [report](#) by the Clean Energy Group The Fossil Fuel End Game, which charts a pathway to getting rid of fossil fuel peaker plants in New York



APRIL/MAY NEWSLETTER



Chapter Updates

Climate Action Brookline

Climate Action Brookline held a Green Energy Park Party on Sunday, May 16. Volunteers offered ways to help residents make energy efficiency part of their everyday lives. The party featured 100% Brookline All Green Electricity sign up and lawn sign distribution, Black Earth Composting, an all-electric Chevy Bolt, an induction counter top cooking demo, a plant swap, kids activities and fun raffles. Governor Michael Dukakis shown here with allies, Brookline's Mothers Out Front's costumed composters. Efficiency fun!



Sustainable Marblehead

Marblehead's town meeting is coming up and Sustainable Marblehead are advocating for a number of warrant items from limiting leaf blowers to purchasing land to be used for a battery facility. They have also come out as strongly opposed to the proposed Peaker Plant in Peabody!

Green Hanson

Green Hanson has passed their own Community Choice Aggregation program in Hanson! In anticipation of their town meeting vote, they have hosted listening sessions on Zoom, engaged with their community on social media, mailed out fliers to town meeting attendees, and wrote letters to the editor. In addition, the high school environmental awareness club members produced two short videos promoting CCA. Congratulations Green Hanson on this vote and on all your hard work!

Medfield Energy Committee

The Town of Medfield proudly announces the passage of two warrant articles addressing the need to combat climate change, at Town Meeting, May 18, 2021.

The first warrant article passed authorizes the Board of Selectmen to initiate the process to establish Community Choice Aggregation (CCA) for town residents and businesses.

The second warrant article establishes that the Town recognizes the negative impact of climate change and supports the goal of eliminating or offsetting greenhouse gas emissions originating in the Town by the year 2050. The warrant article further encourages all Town Selectmen, Boards, Committees, residents and businesses to take action in developing a Net Zero Action Plan by March 2022 that outlines specific strategies and sets measurable, attainable, and realistic interim targets.



Make Your Voice Heard!

EEAC Public Comment Sessions Begin in June!



The Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC) just released its [statewide Energy Efficiency Plan](#) and 3yr budget for Mass Save programs. Last fall, many of you submitted written or provided spoken comments at the various Public Comment Sessions in support of increased state funding for incentives for deep energy retrofits, reducing barriers to energy efficiency programs for low-income ratepayers and workforce development funds.

The Energy Efficiency Plan lists equity and building electrification as two of their top priorities. Decarbonizing the state's economy involves increasing electrification in the building sector. The Plan prioritizes making sure existing buildings are ready to become all-electric (known as weatherization) and scaling up the installation of heat pumps. The Plan also allocates resources to educating and informing consumers about these programs in order to increase general awareness of and familiarity with heat pump technology. The Plan also invests resources to support the creation of a more diverse and well-trained workforce to do the actual work of installing and maintaining clean energy technologies. The Plan is sensitive to the broader context of energy efficiency and aims to link reductions in greenhouse gas emissions to increases in equitable participation in these programs.

The EEAC is hosting another round of Public Comment Sessions to give advocates an opportunity to provide feedback on the Plan. MCAN will be working with advocates on submitting comments during the upcoming Public Comment Sessions. The EEAC will be holding three Public Comment Sessions in June:

1. Please click [here](#) to register for the meeting on **June 2, 1-2:30pm.**
2. Please click [here](#) to register for the meeting on **June 9, 9-10:30am.**
3. Please click [here](#) to register for the meeting on **June 15, 5- 6:30pm.**

MCAN has joined Clean Water Action in demanding that the statewide Energy Efficiency Plan center the needs of Environmental Justice and low-income communities, and increase access and remove barriers for underserved and language isolated communities across the state. You can sign Clean Water's petition for Energy Efficiency Justice [here](#).

Thank You to All Who Donated in the Past Month!

Dodie Adkins-Perry
Ted Bayne
Tim Brainerd
Piedad Buceta
Jane Dye
Richard Elkin
Brian Foulds
Stephen Frail
Stan Franzeen
Bob Gaumer
Mary Hajjar

Brad Hubbard-Nelson
Elizabeth Hudson
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Shawn Jones
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Tucker Smith
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Sara Wroblewski
Larry Yu

We Appreciate Your Continued Support!