



# MUNICIPAL LIGHT PLANT REPORT CARD

The transition to clean electricity is an urgent priority for Massachusetts, but not all electricity customers have had the opportunity to contribute to this effect. That's because 14% of the electricity used in the Commonwealth is provided by Municipal Light Plants (MLPs) that are not keeping pace with the State's clean energy policies and goals. The Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN) is working to change that.

Up until this point there has never been a centralized survey, data collection, or ranking of Massachusetts MLPs on climate solutions. As a supporter of municipal leadership on climate action and local decision-making, MCAN set out to explore the potential of Municipal Light Plants (MLPs), public electric providers owned and controlled by municipalities, to lead the way on climate action. This report provides the first comprehensive examination of how MLPs are addressing clean energy.

We graded all 41 Municipal Light Plants on their clean energy supply portfolios, their energy efficiency programs, their transparency to their customers, and the extent to which they plan to reduce their dependence on dirty energy over time. Our research reveals major deficiencies:

- **MLPs overstate their green content.** Despite claims of more green content than many investor-owned utilities (IOUs), the 2017 portfolios of all 41 MLPs actually include less renewable energy content than the IOUs. No MLP had enough renewable energy to meet the Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) in 2017. On closer inspection the majority of the non-emitting resources claimed by MLPs is attributed to old nuclear generation, not a source of green energy that the Massachusetts Clean Energy Standard or Renewable Portfolio Standard accept.
- **No MLP is yet running an effective energy efficiency program.** MLPs have very low kilowatt-hour (kWh) savings as a percentage of sales when compared to investor-owned utilities. With the exception of four towns, fewer than 2% of each MLP's customers actually use the energy efficiency rebates offered. It appears that many MLPs are not even tracking the results or of their rebate programs.
- **At least 16 MLPs obscure or misrepresent information about how much clean energy they are actually providing,** giving different information to their customers than they give when reporting greenhouse gas emissions to the state.

Some MLPs, however, have made better progress toward clean energy goals. Concord Municipal Light Plant has established strong, forward-thinking climate goals based on the town's clean energy plan, and Belmont Light has adopted a policy to voluntarily meet the Clean Energy Standard regulation. Ten Municipal Light Plants supply between 1% and 9% renewable energy to their customers, and five have applied for and received grants for energy storage projects that will reduce their need for gas-peaking plants. These successes offer a path forward.

We know that energy efficiency is the cheapest, most abundant energy resource. Renewable energy portfolios provide long-term cost benefits to customers and funnel customers' money into local renewable energy jobs. And yet, these results illustrate that for a variety of reasons, customers in MLP territories have been excluded from reaping the benefits of energy efficiency and renewable energy.

The need to find local solutions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions has become even more urgent. The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report confirms that without action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the world could be headed for catastrophic climate danger. Rollbacks on greenhouse gas regulations and other climate policies at the federal level have left little hope of meaningful federal action in the next two years. Now more than ever, states, cities, and towns around the country must be the innovators of bold strategies to advance clean energy to benefit our health, economy, and environment—MLPs can lead this innovation.

The scoring methodology and criteria can be found in the full report. The full report is available at <http://bit.ly/mlpreport>.

## REPORT CARD

Municipal Utility	Total Score
Belmont	89
Concord	87
Holyoke	70
Braintree	65
West Boylston	64
Hingham	59
Shrewsbury	57
Ipswich	56
Reading	56
Merrimac	51
Wakefield	51
Mansfield	50
Chicopee	49
Princeton	49
Wellesley	48
Boylston	48
North Attleborough	46
South Hadley	45
Sterling	45
Middleborough	44
Templeton	43
Russell	42
Ashburnham	41
Danvers	40
Hudson	40
Groton	39
Rowley	39
Paxton	38
Taunton	37
Marblehead	37
Peabody	36
Hull	36
Groveland	35
Holden	34
Westfield	32
Chester	31
Littleton	31
Georgetown	29
Norwood	27
Middleton	26
Gosnold	-

COLOR KEY

- Excellent
- Fair
- Average
- Poor

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