



September Newsletter

Preserving Our Past by Protecting Our Future

Back to Work



After a Marblehead summer filled with gardening (sunflower above grown in the Glover School Organic Garden), sailing, swimming and hopefully relaxing, we emerge from vacation into a changed landscape for climate activism. Political elections and legislative victories have improved the environment for reaching our net zero emissions goal.

Two important pieces of legislation were approved in August: the federal Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and the Massachusetts Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind (summary below from our Advocacy Committee). In the coming months, Sustainable Marblehead Working Groups will study how the new legislation affects us here in Marblehead and how we can best access the clean energy savings offered. To get a head start, go to Rewiring America's [IRA calculator](#).

Following the municipal elections, the current makeup of the Marblehead Municipal Light Commission made it more proactive on clean energy and strategic electrification issues. An additional member to replace Karl Johnson, who resigned in early July, will be voted in by the combined Select Board and Light Commission on September 14. At its recent meetings, the Commission has adopted a policy to replace the Village Street electric substation with equipment that will permit growth of electric demand in Marblehead to allow for transportation and building electrification.

Marblehead has also elected its representative for the 8th Essex District in the Massachusetts Legislature, who lists climate change, coastal resiliency and energy independence as among the most critical issues we face. And we have a new Town Administrator who is enthusiastic about clean energy and is keeping sustainability in mind as he takes stock of the state of the town and makes plans to move forward (profile below).

We have exciting work to do in the months ahead. Click on Volunteer at the top of our [website](#) to tell us how you can help.

Report on Federal and State Legislation

3 ways the IRA incentivizes greener investments



Go electric with your appliances



Get money back from home energy rebate programs



Invest in heat pumps, rooftop solar, electric HVAC and water heaters



Get tax credits



Buy a new or used electric vehicle that meets requirements



Get money off at the point of sale



Source: Summary of the Energy Security and Climate Change Investments in the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022

Graphic by Megan McGrew/PBS NewsHour

August was a busy month for important climate legislation. The Sustainable Marblehead Advocacy Committee prepared this summary.

Federal Inflation Reduction Act

The climate provisions of this legislation, signed into law by President Biden on August 16, are intended to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent below 2005 levels by 2030 – a significant improvement over the prior goal of 25 percent. The bill includes tax credits and other financial incentives aimed at making clean energy options more accessible for consumers, with a particular focus on those who are lower- to middle-income. They include:

- \$9 billion in home energy rebates to help people electrify their home energy systems and appliances, with a focus on low-income consumers.
- Consumer tax credits over 10 years to make heat pumps, rooftop solar, electric HVAC and electric hot water heaters more affordable.
- \$4,000 in consumer tax credits for lower- and middle-income individuals who buy used electric vehicles, and up to \$7,500 in tax credits for new EVs.
- \$1 billion grant program to make affordable housing units more energy efficient.

Additional funding includes tax credits for US manufacturers to accelerate production of clean tech products.

Massachusetts Climate Legislation: An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind

Signed by Governor Baker on August 11, this legislation will stimulate the clean energy economy and strengthen the state's ability to meet its carbon emissions targets. Sustainable Marblehead advocated for passage of an omnibus bill that would incorporate proposals from both the House and Senate. We worked closely

with Senator Brendan Crighton, participated in State House events and wrote to members of the House-Senate Conference Committee.

Its major provisions include the following:

- Developing a Massachusetts-based offshore wind industry with investments in infrastructure, workforce development and economic inclusion.
- Preventing wood-burning biomass plants from qualifying for clean energy incentives in the Renewable Portfolio Standard.
- Reforming ratepayer-funded efficiency programs by reducing incentives for fossil fuel equipment starting in 2025 and increasing accountability in energy efficiency services to low-income ratepayers and households.
- Requiring large buildings (20,000 sq. ft. and larger) to report annual energy usage.
- Creating a pilot program for whole home building retrofits in low- and moderate-income buildings, effective July 2023.
- Allowing 10 municipalities to pilot fossil-free new construction and major renovations projects, excluding life science labs, health care facilities and hospitals, provided each community meets a standard around inclusionary housing policy.

While the bill represents real progress, it did not address the building retrofit issue comprehensively. We will continue to encourage the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to adopt a statewide net zero building code that sets standards on fossil fuel usage in new construction and major renovations.



New Town Administrator is Clean Energy Enthusiast

Sustainable Marblehead Board members Lynn Bryant, Eileen Mathieu and Louise Yarmoff met with Marblehead's new Town Administrator Thatcher Kezer on August 30.

Kezer served as mayor of the city of Amesbury (where he still lives) from 2006 to 2013, and as chief operating officer for the city of Framingham from April 2018 to December 2021. From a sustainability point of view, he joins Marblehead at a critical time, as the Green Marblehead Committee finalizes its action plan for reaching net zero carbon emissions by 2040. Kezer is a member of the committee

and is rapidly familiarizing himself with its proposed recommendations.

A self-described clean energy enthusiast, Kezer drives an electric car (a Tesla), has installed solar panels and a home battery, and has transitioned to all electric yard equipment (based on the Ryobi interchangeable battery system). He is already in conversations with various Marblehead department heads about the advantages of moving toward electric vehicles and equipment.

We were encouraged to hear that Kezer worked with a Sustainability Coordinator in Framingham and appreciated the value of that position. One of the proposed recommendations of the Green Marblehead Committee is to hire a sustainability specialist to coordinate emissions reduction efforts throughout the town. Kezer cautions, however, that Sustainability Coordinator is just one of several important positions Marblehead has to fill, and other positions may take priority.



Star Worlds Earn Clean Regatta Certification

This weekend and all next week, the Eastern Yacht Club is hosting the 100th anniversary Star World Championships, bringing 85 teams from 13 countries to Marblehead, for a series organized as a “Clean Regatta.”

Since Sailors for the Sea started the Clean Regatta program in 2006, over 3,000 events have shown their commitments to sustainability by becoming Clean Regattas, reaching nearly 800,000 sailors and attendees in 50 countries. Previously this summer, Marblehead Junior Race Week also qualified for Clean Regatta status.

On the best practices checklist for running a Clean Regatta is “involving

local organizations.” Sustainable Marblehead partnered with the Eastern Yacht Club Green Team to staff a sustainability table on two evenings with green boating information (pictured above).

Another main component of a Clean Regatta is eliminating single-use items like plastic water bottles, straws, dinnerware and bags. Race organizers are advised to provide water refill stations. Sustainable Marblehead helped out by making our Water Monster hydration system available for the two-week race period.

For those who want to catch a glimpse of the Stars as they head out to race or when they return, Chandler Hovey Park is a good location. Most boats will probably be sailing out to the starting line about 11:00 am and returning sometime after 4:00 pm.



Glover Organic Garden Party

On August 21, the Sustainable Marblehead Education Group held an event in the new Glover School Organic Garden. Co-chairs Stephanie Zweig-Brown and Kaya Frechette organized rock painting, garden identification tasks and a critter scavenger hunt, and taught the gathered children about the life cycle of a pumpkin.

Throughout the summer, thanks to the group's dedicated Facebook page, families have signed up to water the garden and harvest its produce. Hot peppers were ready to harvest in late August, a reward for garden volunteers, who could take them home to make salsa!



Ring the Bell

Marblehead churches are continuing their monthly bell ringing to sound the alarm about climate change. According to the United Nations Climate Report issued in February, climate change is happening even faster than anticipated and drastic action is needed. Coastal communities such as ours are especially vulnerable to the effects of climate change. So, on the 11th of each month, bells ring at 11am for 11 minutes to call attention to the need to take 11th hour

action about the climate crisis.

The following Marblehead churches are participating in this monthly bell ringing: Old North Church (where Sustainable Marblehead member Mark Adams, pictured above, rang with his grandson), St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, the Unitarian Universalist Church, St. Michael's Episcopal Church and St. Stephen's United Methodist Church. The Lutheran Church and Christian Science Church also support this effort but don't have bells.

A recent interview on Marblehead TV with Sustainable Marblehead member Mimi Hollister explains more about the initiative and can be found [here](#).

How you can make a difference:

- Contact your elected officials and urge them to support environmental initiatives.
- Research environmental positions of candidates this Fall. Vote accordingly!

- Walk, bike, carpool and use public transportation whenever possible.
- Turn off your computer and appliances when not in use.
- Reduce. Reuse. Recycle.
- Visit our website and click on [Take Action in Your Home](#) for more ideas for reducing your carbon footprint.

Upcoming Event

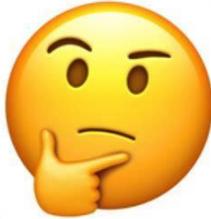


Land & Sea Cleanup – Please Sign Up!

September 17, 2021
10:00 am -- 12:00 pm

Please join Sustainable Marblehead and SPUR for our fourth annual cleanup. We will be mobilizing volunteers to clean trash and debris from our oceans, beaches and parks at over 30 locations.

Click [here](#) for more information or to volunteer, or call 781-451-7787.



Did You Know?

Even if you haven't yet made the transition to an electric car, you can still reduce your carbon footprint by saving gas. For example, eliminating aggressive driving can improve your gas mileage up to 40% in stop-and-go traffic.



What Can You Do?

It should go without saying: Slow down when approaching a red light and accelerate gradually when the light turns green.

Using the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s assumption that 55% of driving is city driving (or 6,306 miles per year), driving safely in stop-and-go traffic can save you from purchasing up to 104 gallons of gas per year and emitting 3,792 fewer pounds of CO₂, compared to driving aggressively.

Support

Sustainable Marblehead is a community organization working to reduce waste and achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2040. Our work is important, and we can't do it alone. Please join us by donating today.

[Donate Today](#)

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