

# Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

## CPAC BULLETIN

### December 2011

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**MEETING:** The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for Thursday, December 8, 6:00 pm at City Hall Annex, Second Floor. The agenda will be posted on the [CPAC webpage](#). The agenda includes a presentation by Charlie Heaps of the Stockholm Environment Institute on climate action analyses done for Seattle and Massachusetts and continued deliberation on new climate goals for Cambridge.

#### EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **HarvardThinks Green** – December 8, 5:00 – 6:30 pm, Sanders Theatre, Harvard University. Six all star faculty will talk about their big green ideas: Eric Chivian, Rebecca Henderson, Robert Kaplan, Richard Lazarus, James McCarthy, and Christoph Reinhart. For more info, click [here](#).
- **Building Energy 12** – March 6 to 8, 2012, Seaport World Trade Center, Boston. The annual conference and trade show on renewable energy and green buildings of the [Northeast Sustainable Energy Association](#).
- **Green Streets** – This initiative encourages people throughout Cambridge (and Somerville and surrounding cities and towns) to use a green form of transportation (transit, bicycle, walk, skate) on a designated day of the month and to wear a green-colored item of attire. The goal is to make Cambridge and neighboring cities safer, quieter, and friendlier for pedestrians and cyclists, and to minimize the use and impact of cars. Generally, the designated day is the last Friday of the month. Check the [Cambridge Green Streets Initiative website](#) for more info and incentives.

#### NEWS

- **Greened Up CRLS Dedicated** – The green-renovated [Cambridge Rindge & Latin School](#) was dedicated on October 1. The renovated high school, which will be applying for a LEED Silver certification, includes many green features including an efficient HVAC system featuring chilled beams for cooling, a 30 kilowatt solar PV system with lobby displays, daylight sensors on lighting through the complex, a white roof, a 75 kilowatt cogeneration system that provides domestic hot water during the school year and helps heat the War Memorial swimming pool during the summer, dual flush toilets, and other LEED-eligible measures. The new design is projected to reduce energy use by an estimated 1.3 million kilowatt-hours of electricity and 44,000 therms of natural gas. Because of all the energy-saving features, NSTAR provided the City with a rebate of over \$226,000.
- **Squirrel Brand Installs Solar Hot Water** – The [Squirrel Brand](#) multi-family complex, an 18-unit building housing 40 residents at 12-18 Broadway in the Area 4 neighborhood, is the site of a new solar hot water system. The system was installed under the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's Low Income Solar Thermal Program. MassCEC, which administers the state's Renewable Energy Trust, has rolled out new incentives for residential and commercial solar hot water projects as well. The Squirrel Brand installation supplies about 800 gallons per day of hot water and cost \$86,250. The project was selected and managed by the Low Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN) with technical consulting from BEAM Engineering

and Paradigm Partners. S&H Construction, of Cambridge, was the primary installation contractor. For information about the residential and commercial solar hot water programs, click [here](#).

- **City Receives MassRecycle Award** - The City of Cambridge was the recipient of MassRecycle's 2011 Board of Director's Outstanding Achievement Award in recognition of its "visionary leadership and innovative efforts to improve recycling and waste reduction in Massachusetts." [MassRecycle](#) is a statewide coalition of individuals, businesses, government, and non-profit organizations dedicated to promoting the benefits of reducing, reusing, and recycling waste materials and increasing the utilization of recycled products.
- **Paul Epstein** – The climate change community lost one of the good guys, Paul Epstein, on November 13. Paul was a physician and the Associate Director of the Harvard Center on Health and the Global Environment. He was one of the first to make the connection between climate change and public health and went on to educate people and governments about the issue through books, articles, blogs, and public speaking. For us locally, Paul was always accessible and helpful. He was also instrumental in bringing the ICLEI Cities for Climate Protection program to Boston and the metro area. Paul will be greatly missed. [[Thinking Progress, 11/15/11](#); [New York Times, 11/14/11](#)]
- **Stretch Energy Code Update** – As of November 16, 2011, 104 Massachusetts municipalities have adopted the Stretch Energy Code. These towns and cities encompass 45 percent of the Commonwealth's population. The Stretch Energy Code is the more stringent, optional energy code for buildings in Massachusetts. Compared to the base code, the Stretch Energy Code requires buildings to achieve about 20 percent greater energy efficiency. Adoption of the Stretch Energy Code satisfies one of the criteria for participation in the Department of Energy Resources Green Communities Program. Cambridge was the second community to adopt the Stretch Energy Code, after Newton, and has been designated a Green Community. [[DOER Press Release, 11/15/11](#)]
- **GHG Concentrations in Atmosphere Continue Rising** – According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the [Annual Greenhouse Gas Index](#), which tracks the key global warming gases, rose 1.5% between 2009 and 2010. The index combines the heating effect of the top greenhouse gases. Since 1990, the index has risen 29 percent. The top five heat trapping gases – carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, CFC11 and CFC12 – are responsible for 96 percent of the warming effect. CO2 and nitrous oxide have been rising at a regular rate, although the CO2 emissions rate has increased in recent years. Methane, which had leveled off for several years, has increased annually since 2007, which NOAA attributed to warming temperatures in the Arctic and increased precipitation in the tropics. CFCs – chlorofluorocarbons – have been dropping slowly, probably as a result of the 1989 Montreal Protocol that is phasing out ozone-depleting propellants. The rise in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere is accompanied by a recent report from the [Department of Energy](#) that the global emissions of carbon dioxide jumped by a record 6 percent over 2009 levels in 2010. [[Los Angeles Times, 11/11/11](#)]
- **IEA: On Track for 6 Degree Celsius Increase** – The Chief Economist, Fatih Birol, for the International Energy Agency stated that according to his agency's analysis for the [2011 World Energy Outlook](#), current global energy consumption levels put the Earth on a trajectory to increase average global temperatures by 6 degrees Celsius (10.8 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels by 2100. He termed the potential outcome "a catastrophe for all of us." The projected increase assumes no changes in current energy policies. [[Washington Post, 11/28/11](#)]
- **RGGI is Good** – According to a [report](#) prepared for a group of foundations, the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative has had a positive economic impact on the 10 participating states. The report by the Analysis Group found that the regional economy gains more than \$1.6 billion in economic value added; saves customers nearly \$1.1 billion on electricity bills and additional \$174 million on natural gas and heating oil over the next decade; created 16,000 jobs region wide; and keeps more than \$765 million in the local economy. Massachusetts was a key player in the creation of RGGI. [[New York Times, 11/15/11](#)]

- **Obama Administration Proposes to Double MPG by 2025** – The Obama Administration has proposed new fuel economy standards for vehicles that would increase the average gas mileage for passenger vehicles to 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025. If approved, the standards would be phased in starting with the 2017 model year. Auto makers and unions appear to support the new standards, although dealers are concerned about added costs. The Administration estimates that the new standards would save Americans more than \$1.7 trillion in vehicle fuel costs, or about \$8,000 per vehicle, and could reduce national oil consumption by 2.2 million barrels a day, or about a quarter of current oil imports. [[LA Times, 11/17/11](#)]

## RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **Two Degrees of Disaster** – A [Daily Comment](#) in the *New Yorker* by Elizabeth Kolbert about avoiding a 2 degrees Celsius increase in average global temperature and what life might be like in a world warmed by 4 degrees Celsius.
- **The Great Disruption** – A book recommended by some CPAC members is [The Great Disruption](#) by Paul Gilding. Thomas Friedman reviews the book [here](#).
- **Alliance for Climate Education** – The [Alliance for Climate Education](#) is about educating high school students about the science of climate change and inspiring them to take action to curb global warming. The site includes teacher resources and training tools.
- **Lewes, DE Hazard Mitigation/Adaptation Plan** – The [City of Lewes, Delaware](#) produced the first ever community action plan that combines hazard mitigation and climate adaptation planning processes. The plan was produced with support from ICLEI USA and Delaware Sea Grant.
- **New York ClimAID Report** – The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) commissioned a report on the impacts of climate change across New York. The [ClimAID Report](#) is the result of three years of work by university researchers. A synthesis report is available. [[New York Times; 11/16/11](#)]
- **Nashville Green Infrastructure Master Plan** – An interesting [master plan](#) for green infrastructure in the metro Nashville area addressing the potential benefits and effects of adding trees and vegetation, green roofs, and stormwater BMPs.
- **Aging Infrastructure & Climate Change** – An article in Environmental Health Perspectives on [Stormwater Strategies: Cities Prepare Aging Infrastructure for Climate Change](#). Discussion of Toronto's response to increased frequency of flood events.
- **Peak Stuff** – A study by Fred Pearce, UK Green Party candidate and former McKinsey analyst, finding that resource use in the United Kingdom peaked between 2001 and 2003, taking into account the ecological footprint of imported goods. The paper, titled [Peak Stuff](#), suggests that economic growth is not necessarily coupled with greater resource use. [[Environment360, 11/28/11](#)]
- **Myth of Renewable Energy** – A provocative [article](#) by Dawn Stover in the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists about the limits of renewable energy given the resource requirements for various technologies.
- **Local Energy Efficiency Policy Calculator** – A beta-version [calculator](#) developed by the American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy that estimates the impacts of six local energy efficiency policy options. The calculator can be customized to local conditions. [Thanks to Gwen Noyes for passing along.]

- **IPCC Climate Extremes Report** – The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued a special report on [Managing the Risks of Extreme Events and Disasters to Advance Climate Change Adaptation](#). [[Washington Post, 11/15/11](#)]
- **Check Out Watt Meters at the Library** – Cambridge residents can borrow a “kill-a-watt” meter from the Main Public Library to measure how much electricity their home appliances and devices use. The meters come with a guide on how to use them and information on how to save energy. The meter kits and guide were developed by the [Sprouts of Hope](#) group based at the King Open School.
- **MBTA Rider Tools** – The MBTA has a number of [rider tools](#) that help riders to anticipate arrival times of buses, subways, and commuter trains and to receive alerts of delays. These tools can be used on iPhones, Android phones, text messages, emails, and the Web. There is also a trip planning tool.
- **NSTAR Green** – Residential and small business electric customers of NSTAR can opt to purchase renewable electricity generated by wind energy farms. To sign up for the service, visit the [NSTAR website](#).
- **Cambridge Energy Alliance** – Residents, businesses, and organizations can indicate their interest in the services of the [Cambridge Energy Alliance](#) by going to the website and registering. No obligation is implied. Those who register will receive an email in response with a telephone number to call to schedule an energy audit.
- **Sustainable Business Leader Program** - SBLP is a comprehensive certification program that supports local businesses in improving their environmental business practices and reducing their carbon footprint. For more information please visit the [SBLP website](#) or email to [katrina@sbnboston.org](mailto:katrina@sbnboston.org).
- **MCAN Low Carbon Living Program** – The [Massachusetts Climate Action Network](#) works with its local member organizations to develop teams of 5 to 8 households to assess their household carbon footprints and undertake actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The program is based on the Low Carbon Diet workbook and involves 3 to 4 meetings.

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#### ***About the CPAC Bulletin:***

The Climate Protection Action Committee (CPAC) is a City of Cambridge advisory body appointed by the City Manager to assist in the implementation of the Cambridge Climate Protection Plan. Please forward this bulletin to other interested people. Anyone who would like to be added to the email distribution list should contact John Bolduc at [jbolduc@cambridgema.gov](mailto:jbolduc@cambridgema.gov) or 617-349-4628. For more information about Cambridge climate protection activities, see <http://www.cambridgema.gov/climate>. Recent issues of the CPAC Bulletin are posted on the webpage.