

# Cambridge Climate Protection Action Committee

## CPAC BULLETIN

April 2015

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**MEETING:** The next meeting of the Climate Protection Action Committee is scheduled for April 9, 6:00 pm, City Hall Annex, 344 Broadway, 2<sup>nd</sup> floor meeting room. The meeting will include presentations by the finalists in the MIT Climate CoLab Urban Heat Island Mitigation Contest, review of the final Net Zero Task Force recommendations, and consideration of a recommendation on solar energy.

### EVENTS & MEETINGS

- **Harvard Climate Week** – A series of talks and events, April 6 to 13, culminating with the President's Panel on Climate Change. For more information, [click here](#).
- **Boston Area Sustainability Group** – April 7, 6:00 – 9:00 pm, The Venture Café, One Broadway. *Topic:* Supply Chain Logistics, Big Data & Megacities with Dr. Edgar Blanco, Research Director at the MIT Center for Transportation & Logistics. For more information and to register, [click here](#).
- **Path Towards a Net Zero Cambridge** – April 8, 6:00 – 8:00 pm, City Hall, 795 Mass. Ave., Sullivan Chamber. The Getting to Net Zero Task Force will present its 25-year action plan for reducing GHG emissions from building operations citywide. The task force is seeking public input on the plan. The draft report is available by [clicking here](#). For more information, contact Ellen Kokinda at [ekokinda@cambridgema.gov](mailto:ekokinda@cambridgema.gov) or 617-349-4618.
- **British Columbia Carbon Tax** - April 13, 1:00 pm, Walker Memorial-Morss Hall, MIT, 142 Memorial Drive. A panel featuring the Premier of British Columbia on “Pricing Carbon to Combat Climate Change: What Can We Learn from British Columbia?” Presented by Massachusetts Campaign for a Clean Energy Future and hosted by the MIT Energy Initiative and MIT Center for Energy and Environmental Policy Research.
- **Clean Energy Standard Hearings** – April 14, 1:00 pm, DEP offices, One Winter Street, Boston. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is proposing a new clean energy standard to increase the amount of non-fossil fuel generated electricity for consumers. The standard is part of the Commonwealth's efforts to achieve an 80 percent reduction in GHG emissions statewide by 2050. [For more information, click here](#). The deadline to submit written comments is April 27.
- **The Pursuit of Sustainable Living** – April 16, 8:00 am – 4:00 pm, Devens Common Center, Devens, MA. This conference is the combined Sustainable Communities and Sustainable Campuses conferences held the past several years. For information, including registration, [click here](#).
- **Cambridge Science Festival** – April 17-26. This is the ninth annual Cambridge Science Festival – the first of its kind in the U.S. Over 160 events are scheduled including some focused on climate change and sustainability. For more information and the calendar of events, [click here](#).
- **MIT Sustainability Summit** – April 24 & 25, MIT. The 2015 summit is focused on local and global agricultural systems. For more information, [click here](#).
- **National Adaptation Forum** – May 12-14, 2015, St. Louis. This is the second national meeting on climate change adaptation organized by a group of public and private sector professionals. [For more information, click here](#).
- **Fresh Pond Day** – May 30, Fresh Pond Reservation, 250 Fresh Pond Parkway. A City sponsored celebration of water, wildlife, and sustainability to connect residents with watershed, urban wild, and local

community resources. The event includes music, wildlife demos, tours, and a parade. Organizations interested in participating in the event should contact Kirsten Lundquist, 617-349-6489 or [register here](#).

- **Climate Ride Northeast** – September 17-21. This event raises funds for climate action organizations, raises awareness of climate change, and promotes sustainable lifestyles. The Northeast bicycle ride follows a 320 mile route from Bar Harbor, Maine to Boston. Riders can choose from among more than 100 beneficiaries to support. [For more information, click here](#).
- **Friends of Alewife Reservation Walks** - Friends of Alewife Reservation is a stewarding and educational non-profit for the Alewife Reservation in northwest Cambridge and for the surrounding city natural resources of marshes and wetlands abutting Belmont and Arlington. Free wildlife and history educational tours, clean ups and conservation initiatives for the silver maple forest. "Virtual" Tour of the Reservation: [click here](#).
- **Walk/Ride Day Corporate Challenge** – Annual workplace competition in which organizations throughout Cambridge and surrounding cities and towns compete one day each month from April through October to have staff check in their commute online and consider healthier and more environmentally friendly choices (transit, bicycle, walk, etc.) Data show significant green shifts among participants on Walk/Ride Days and other days throughout the month. Promoted by Green Streets Initiative, a Cambridge-based grassroots group. [Register your company for the Challenge here](#).
- **350MA.Org** - 350 Massachusetts is a volunteer-led, campaign-focused initiative connecting and organizing a strong grassroots coalition to address climate change and build a just and secure future beyond fossil fuels. Meetings are held every two weeks. All meetings are held at First Church Cambridge, 11 Garden Street, Cambridge, MA and begin at 6:30 PM. More info at [www.350MA.org](http://www.350MA.org).
- **Green Cambridge** - Green Cambridge is a 501(c)(3) not for profit organization and a founding chapter of the Massachusetts Climate Action Network (MCAN). Green Cambridge works to create a more sustainable Cambridge, and to protect the environment for the health and safety of all. Green Cambridge meets monthly at the Eastern Bank community room in Harvard Square, usually on the first Thursday of every month at 6:30pm. All are welcome and invited to attend! For more information and a listing of community events, please visit: <http://www.greencambridge.org/>.

## NEWS

- **Cambridge Vulnerability Assessment Public Meeting** - The City of Cambridge held a public meeting on March 17<sup>th</sup>, attended by about 140 people, to present interim findings from the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment. The presentation focused on the “climate stress test” approach of the assessment, the climate change scenarios used, and the findings about physical and social risks related to increased temperatures and precipitation driven flooding. The presentation slides are [posted on the project webpage](#). Following the presentation, attendees participated in break out groups to respond to the presentation and discuss next steps. A summary report and technical appendices will be released in about a month. A summary report about the public meeting will also be posted shortly. The next steps for the project include completing the storm surge projections for 2070 and performing a vulnerability assessment based on that scenario, conducting small group meetings with community stakeholders to develop a better understanding of the meaning fo the assessment, and launching the Climate Change Preparedness and Resilience Plan process.
- **BYOB Ordinance Enacted** - The Cambridge City Council enacted the [Bring Your Owen Bag Ordinance](#) (see item #3 on the Committee Reports) on March 30<sup>th</sup>. The ordinance bans the use of single-use plastic carryout bags, with some exceptions, and requires that retail stores charge 10 cents per paper and compostable bags. The stores will keep the charge to help cover costs. The intent of the ordinance is to reduce plastic pollution in marine and aquatic environments and to promote the use of reusable carryout bags. The ordinance will take effect one year from its passage. The Climate Protection Action Committee

had recommended the inclusion of the fee for single-use carryout bags as a means to deter a shift to paper bags, which involve greater greenhouse gas emissions in their manufacture, and to promote the use of reusable bags.

- **Building Energy Use Reporting Deadline** – May 1<sup>st</sup> is the first reporting deadline for private buildings under the Building Energy Use Disclosure Ordinance (BEUDO). The ordinance requires larger buildings to benchmark their building energy use and report it to the City. This year the ordinance applies to non-residential properties containing 50,000 square feet or more and residential properties with 50 or more units. Next year, non-residential properties containing 25,000 to 50,000 square feet will start reporting. This is an annual requirement. Basically, property owners and trustees will have to gather building attribute information (e.g., floor area) and energy and water usage data and enter it into the Energy Star Portfolio Manager tool. Then a report will be sent to the Community Development Department. The first year of data will not be disclosed for individual buildings, but a report will be issued by the department on the aggregate data. In the second year, the data will be posted. The purpose of the ordinance is to provide better building energy use data for local energy and sustainability planning and to make information available to the real estate market about building energy performance. The City is providing technical support in the form of a help desk service and training workshops. In addition, Eversource (formerly NSTAR) has created an energy data portal that makes the gathering of energy use data much easier. Failure to report is potentially subject to penalties. Information about the ordinance and technical support is available on the [BEUDO webpage](#).
- **Global Emissions Level Off** – [According to the International Energy Agency](#), global carbon dioxide emissions stopped rising in 2014, even as the world economy grew. In the past, an emissions reduction has been accompanied by an economic downturn, so 2014 was unprecedented. Global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions held at 32.3 billion metric tons in 2014. It remains to be seen if this will become a trend. It appears, based on cursory analysis, that changes in China's energy consumption patterns played a large role in the leveling off. Some researchers cautioned that the data may be subject to revision and others raised some doubts as to whether the self-reported data from China is accurate.
- **East Antarctic Ice Sheet De-Stabilizing** – The Totten Glacier in East Antarctica appears to be experiencing significant melting from the intrusion of warm ocean water that is reaching the ice base where the glacier meets the sea, thereby accelerating thinning and melting. The Totten Glacier drains enough ice to raise global sea levels by 3.5 meters (about 11 feet). Professor Martin Siegert, Co-Director of the Grantham Institute at Imperial College London stated "It's only one glacier, but it's changing now and it is significant for sea levels globally. ... The 3.5 meter rise may take several centuries to complete, but now the process has started it is likely irreversible. This is another example of how human-induced climate change could be triggering major changes with knock-on impacts that will be felt globally." The East Antarctic Ice Sheet had been thought to be relatively stable compared to the West Antarctic Ice Sheet which is also losing significant amounts of ice annually. [[Science Daily, 3/16/15](#)]
- **Gulf Stream Weakening** – According to a new study by researchers at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, the Gulf Stream off the East Coast of the U.S. is slowing down. Slowing of this ocean stream has implications for exacerbating sea level rise for cities such as Boston and New York and for temperatures in Europe. The slowing is related to ice melt in Greenland which contributes to the freshening of salt water which in turn affects the density of the ocean water and the circulation of the current. Evidence of the slowing is seen in the colder ocean temperatures in the area between Labrador and Ireland due to less heat being transported from the south. [[Washington Post, 3/23/15](#)]
- **New England Plant Species Threatened** – The New England Wildflower Society issued a major new report – [The State of the Plants](#) -- that finds that the region's native plant species face significant threats. For the first time in 200 years, every New England state is losing forest. Of all native plant species in New England, 22 percent are extinct, rare or in a state of decline. A nearly a third of all of the region's plants are from elsewhere and an increasing number are invasive and harmful to native flora. Climate change is expected to accelerate the decline of native species as average temperatures rise by as much as 10

degrees higher. Many species, such as sugar maples, cannot tolerate the higher temperatures and pest insects will proliferate. [[Boston Globe, 3/26/15](#)]

- **MassInc Global Warming Poll** – According to a [new survey of Massachusetts residents by MassInc](#), there is strong support for action to mitigate global warming and prepare for the impacts. But climate change still lags other issues including the economy, health care, and education as high priorities. The poll of 1,004 residents in the Commonwealth found that two-thirds of residents believe global warming is real and caused at least in part by human activities and about three quarters expect serious problems from more intense storms, coastal flooding, and sea level rise. Large majorities favor renewable energy and majorities strongly support stricter energy efficiency standards for new buildings, updating the electric grid, and public investment in public transportation. There is also strong support for hardening critical infrastructure against flooding. Those who call climate change a high policy priority grew to 41 percent from 32 percent in 2011. This is far lower than other major policy issues. The poll also found that residents tend to support broader action compared to changing their own personal behavior to reduce carbon emissions.

## RESOURCES & IDEAS

- **RISE Initiative** – The [RISE Initiative](#) is a UN-sponsored campaign to make all investments risk-sensitive. The initiative will facilitate the exchange of experience and knowledge to implement tangible disaster risk reduction projects through strategies for global business, risk metrics for economic forecasting, industry sector certification, education, principles for responsible investing, resilience of cities, insurance, and resilience of UN programming.
- **Cambridge Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment** – The City is working on preparing a vulnerability assessment that will serve as the foundation for a climate change preparedness plan that will follow. The [project webpage](#) provides background information and documents from meetings. Interested people can send an email to [jbolduc@cambridgema.gov](mailto:jbolduc@cambridgema.gov) to be placed on the project email list.
- **Cambridge Solar Map** – The [Cambridge Solar Tool](#) provides a web-based interactive tool to find out the potential for installing solar photovoltaic systems on rooftops in the city. The tool also evaluates the financial feasibility of installations and makes comparisons to alternative investments. The tool is designed by Mapdwell and based on the research of the [MIT Sustainable Design Lab](#) led by Dr. Christoph Reinhart. The City's [Cambridge Energy Alliance](#) program can assist interested property owners with finding installers and understanding the financial aspects. The Mapdwell tool was upgraded in September 2015 and can now be viewed in Spanish.
- **Opt Out of Unwanted Mail** - Do you get unwanted mail from retailers, credit card companies, or cable/phone companies? You can opt out of mailings from over 4000 companies with Catalog Choice and help reduce waste. For example, you can stop getting weekly circulars from Global Direct, they will honor opt-out requests, so add them to “your choices”. Just register for FREE at <https://cambridge.catalogchoice.org> to create an account to start cleaning out your mailbox. To date, over 3700 Cambridge residents have signed up and opted out of nearly 25,000 different unwanted mailings!
- **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.

- **Cambridge Energy Alliance** – The [Cambridge Energy Alliance](#), a program of the City of Cambridge Community Development Department helps residents, businesses, and organizations to obtain energy efficiency and renewable energy services. You can sign up for energy audits and ask questions through the energy advisor service.
  - **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).
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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.