

Information on Article #16 - Resolution in Support of 100% Renewable Energy (Lee Jennings et al., for Amherst Mothers Out Front and Climate Action Now)

100% Renewable Energy

The Resolution in Support of 100% Renewable Energy asks Town Meeting to support the goal of transitioning our town and state energy supply to 100% renewable energy. The intent is to increase the speed at which Massachusetts reaches 100% and to propel Amherst to move even more swiftly.

States and municipalities must take the lead in meeting our share of the Paris agreement. Our legacy depends on planning and taking meaningful action to create the climate we want to leave our children and grandchildren. Now is the time.

Our reliance on dirty energy like oil, gas, and coal is changing our climate faster than scientists predicted. From dangerous heat waves and droughts to rising sea levels and extreme hurricanes like those we've seen this fall, global warming is already affecting our communities, and scientists predict it could get much worse.

The good news is that every day we see more evidence that a future powered entirely by renewable energy is within our reach. According to a [new report](#)* released by Environment Massachusetts Research & Policy Center, solar and wind, along with emerging technologies like electric vehicles and energy storage, will help us transition to 100 percent clean, renewable energy faster than many had thought possible. This resolution supports state legislation that would help accelerate achieving 100% Renewable Energy in Massachusetts.

In Massachusetts, 5 communities have already made a commitment to 100% renewable energy. And more than 40 other U.S. cities have committed to 100% renewable energy goals.

How Can Amherst Move Toward 100% Renewable Energy?

This resolution calls for Town to consider our progress toward 100% renewable energy in all decisions. The intent is that major investments should not slow down our progress or increase our reliance on fossil fuels.

Amherst has been a Massachusetts Green Community for years. This resolution calls for continued progress in making existing Town buildings energy efficient and in encouraging greater energy efficiency in private residences and commercial buildings.

Community Choice Energy - A Means to Achieve Local 100% Renewable Energy

Community Choice Energy (CCE) is a way to buy more renewable energy at competitive rates with local control and benefits. It is considered the single most powerful action municipalities can take to drastically quickly reduce community greenhouse gas emissions.

WHAT is proposed?

This resolution asks the Town to consider working with other towns on a long-term plan for jointly meeting our local energy needs with 100% renewable energy. The resolution suggests a goal of owning, using, and controlling our own electric power. Collectively buying and managing our electricity is possible through a state law allowing community choice aggregation of electricity. Through CCE, we can:

- purchase energy that is as green as possible while offering competitive rates
- continually add local distributed energy resources such as solar and wind and
- provide smart, targeted energy efficiency services.

This model of CCE has been used successfully both in California and on the Cape, by Cape Light Compact. It could add to the growing ambition to make Amherst and the Valley an energy innovation hub with potential for tourism and business opportunities.

HOW does it work?

CCE is an energy supply model that works in partnership with a community's existing electric company, which continues to deliver power, maintain the grid, provide consolidated billing and other customer services. The CCE buys electricity in bulk for all consumers, and appears on customers' electricity bills as the supplier.

WHAT are the benefits?

- Swift carbon emissions reductions
- Community ownership and control
- Low and middle income customer participation, consumer protection
- Local jobs, local finance, business opportunities, community wealth retention and more reliable power
- Long-term electricity rate reduction

HOW do we pay for it?

Because CCE is revenue-based—not government subsidized—CCE programs are self-supporting. There are startup costs in the first year to hire a consultant to study the communities' energy profiles, develop a plan for the CCE, and shepherd the plan through the state approval process. Once the CCE is operational, the revenue pays for administration plus reducing consumers' electricity rates, and over time, developing energy resources in the communities.

See WMAcce.wordpress.com for more information.

*<http://environmentmassachusettscenter.org/reports/mae/renewables-rise>