

PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION DESIGNATES COMMONWEALTH'S FIRST OFFICIAL "GREEN COMMUNITIES"

35 cities and towns across the state are ranked as clean energy leaders, eligible for municipal renewable power and energy efficiency grants

HOPKINTON - Tuesday, May 25, 2010 - Governor Deval Patrick today designated 35 cities and towns from the Berkshires to Cape Cod as the Commonwealth's first official "Green Communities" - a status that makes them eligible for \$8.1 million in grants for local renewable power and energy efficiency projects. The projects promise to create green jobs and advance both municipal and state clean energy goals. "I am pleased to honor the vision and hard work of our first group of official Green Communities," said Governor Patrick. "These pioneers are notable not only for their commitment to a cleaner, greener Massachusetts, but also for their diversity. From tiny towns to major cities and suburbs in all regions of the state, Massachusetts communities recognize the benefits, for the economy as well as the environment, of making clean energy choices."

"It's great to see so many communities dedicated to saving energy, making new construction as energy efficient as possible, and accommodating clean energy investment and jobs in support of a stronger, more sustainable future for Massachusetts," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray.

"Taking the initiative to make the changes necessary to promote energy efficiency and encourage renewable energy is critical to a community's future both environmentally and economically. The cities and towns designated 'Green Communities' have taken this challenge seriously and succeeded in their efforts. They are examples I hope that other communities across the commonwealth will follow," said Senate President Therese Murray.

The signature program of the landmark Green Communities Act of 2008, the Department of Energy Resources' (DOER) Green Communities Grant Program uses funding from auctions of carbon emissions permits under the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative to reward communities that win Green Communities designation by meeting five clean energy benchmarks:

- Adopting local zoning bylaw or ordinance that allows "as-of-right-siting" of renewable energy projects;
- Adopting an expedited permitting process related to the as-of-right facilities;
- Establishing a municipal energy use baseline and a program designed to reduce use by 20 percent within five years;
- Purchasing only fuel-efficient vehicles for municipal use, whenever such vehicles are commercially available and practicable; and

- Requiring all new residential construction over 3,000 square feet and all new commercial and industrial real estate construction to reduce lifecycle energy costs (i.e., adoption of an energy-saving building "stretch code").

May 14 was the deadline for municipalities to apply for Green Community designation in order to qualify for the first round of \$8.1 million in Green Communities grants. Today's Green Communities designees - Acton, Arlington, Athol, Andover, Becket, Belchertown, Cambridge, Chelmsford, Easthampton, Greenfield, Hamilton, Hanover, Holyoke, Hopkinton, Kingston, Lancaster, Lenox, Lexington, Lincoln, Lowell, Mashpee, Medford, Melrose, Montague, Natick, Newton, Northampton, Palmer, Pittsfield, Salem, Springfield, Sudbury, Tyngsboro, Wenham, and Worcester - have until June 4 to submit applications for grants that will be awarded in late June.

"These 35 cities and towns have already distinguished themselves as leaders," said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Ian Bowles. "With the help of Green Communities grant funding, they'll be able to go further - saving energy costs for their residents, reducing the environmental impact of municipal operations, and validating the Commonwealth's reputation as a national clean energy leader."

"We are confident that these 35 municipalities - and the projects they will undertake with Green Communities grants - will serve as shining examples to the Commonwealth's other 316 cities and towns, all of which we hope will also work toward becoming Green Communities and reaching their clean energy goals in the months ahead," said DOER Commissioner Phil Giudice.

In addition to grant eligibility, each Green Community designated today will receive a Big Belly solar waste compactor, to be delivered by June 30 in time for the summer parks and beaches season. Purchased with DOER energy efficiency funding, Big Belly compactors can hold several times more trash and litter than similarly sized regular trash receptacles - thereby reducing the number of garbage truck trips required to empty them. Each municipality will also receive a certificate from the Commonwealth congratulating it on becoming an official Green Community.

DOER will take additional applications for Green Community designations and grants later this year. [Click here](#) for more information on DOER's Green Communities program.