

PATRICK-MURRAY ADMINISTRATION REACHES 2017 SOLAR ENERGY TARGET, SETS NEW GOAL

BOSTON – Wednesday, May 1, 2013 – Governor Deval Patrick today joined Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Rick Sullivan and other energy officials to celebrate 250 megawatts of solar energy installed – reaching the Patrick-Murray Administration’s goal four years early – and announced a new goal of 1,600 MW by 2020.

“When we set ambitious goals and invest in achieving them, Massachusetts wins,” said Governor Patrick. “The many businesses and homeowners who have taken advantage of cost effective renewable energy installations are helping to create both a safer and a more prosperous Commonwealth for the next generation.”

"By working with our legislative and municipal partners throughout the Commonwealth, we have achieved an ambitious goal far ahead of schedule while also supporting the state’s clean energy economy," said Lieutenant Governor Timothy Murray. "We will build on this momentum, and continue to invest in renewable energy to lead the nation in this growing industry."

Under Governor Patrick’s leadership, the amount of solar energy installed has increased 80 times from the 3 MW installed in 2007. Massachusetts has established strong incentives for renewable energy production that have led to significant cost reductions in solar electricity, making clean energy more accessible to Massachusetts businesses and residents.

“This exciting announcement is a direct result of Governor Patrick’s leadership in the clean energy revolution,” said Secretary Sullivan. “The initiatives and incentives we have established in Massachusetts are saving residents money, creating jobs and protecting our environment.”

“Massachusetts has a lot to celebrate, including the success we’ve had reducing the cost of solar,” said Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Mark Sylvia. “Those businesses, cities and towns, and homeowners who invest in renewable energy will reap the benefits of stable, reliable costs from this clean, local source of electricity.”

The Commonwealth’s Renewable Portfolio Standard (RPS) Solar Carve-Out program has established a strong solar energy market in Massachusetts, with a current cap of 400 MW. As that target approaches, state energy officials are fast-tracking revisions to expand the program.

Residential solar electricity prices dropped 28 percent in Massachusetts in 2012, according to a report

issued by the Solar Energy Industries Association in March 2013. This was the second biggest drop in the nation last year.

In addition to strengthening the RPS, the Green Communities Act, signed by Governor Patrick in 2008, established the Green Communities designation and grant program that provides technical assistance and incentives to support solar development in the Commonwealth's municipalities. There are currently 110 designated Green Communities in the Commonwealth and nearly half of all Massachusetts residents live in a Green Community.

These targeted investments have led to economic growth and job creation. The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center's (MassCEC) 2012 Massachusetts Clean Energy Industry Report showed an 11.2 percent growth in Massachusetts clean energy jobs between 2011 and 2012. Nearly 5,000 clean energy firms employ more than 71,000 clean energy workers.

"The success of the solar industry and the clean energy sector as a whole is a testament to the commitment Massachusetts has made to become a renewable energy leader," said MassCEC CEO Alicia Barton. "While we celebrate the success of one goal, we're excited to tackle the next, creating more local jobs and keeping more energy dollars here at home."

The solar power installed in Massachusetts generates enough electricity to power more than 37,000 homes for a year, and when compared with fossil fuel-generated electricity, is the equivalent of eliminating the greenhouse gas emissions from nearly 26,000 cars a year.

When the new goal is reached, 1,600 MW of installed solar will generate enough electricity to power approximately 240,000 homes annually – the equivalent of 97 percent of Boston households – and reduce the greenhouse gas emissions produced by about 166,000 cars.

"The Solar Energy Industries Association (SEIA) applauds the Commonwealth's phenomenal success in attracting investment, innovative companies and jobs while driving down costs," said SEIA Senior Vice President of State Affairs Carrie Cullen Hitt. "Massachusetts ranks number seven in the nation for solar installations (2012) and number two for driving down costs, which dropped over 28 percent in 2012. We look forward to expanding this success with Governor Patrick and his team."

Massachusetts sits at the end of the energy pipeline, spending billions of dollars annually to import all of its fossil fuel based energy sources from places like South America, Canada and the Middle East. That is lost economic opportunity that Massachusetts stands poised to reclaim through investments in home-grown renewable energy programs.

