



NEWS RELEASE

MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL WHOLESALE ELECTRIC COMPANY

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At State House Event

Municipal utilities support state initiatives, integrating emerging technologies

Boston, MA – June 25, 2019 – Massachusetts municipal utilities are leading the way in integrating carbon-free technologies into their power portfolios, contributing significantly to achievement of the Commonwealth's energy goals, according to speakers at a State House event sponsored by the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC), the joint action agency for Massachusetts municipal utilities.

Approximately 14 percent of electric consumers in the state are served by municipal light plants (MLPs), a valuable part of the electric utility industry that deliver low-cost, reliable electric service to consumers. MLPs are non-profit and owned by the people they serve. Locally appointed or elected boards of commissioners maintain decision-making authority for each light department.

MMWEC Chief Executive Officer Ronald C. DeCurzio outlined the clean energy projects included in the MLP portfolios, dating back to the 1984 construction of a 40-kilowatt wind project built by the Princeton municipal utility.

"Municipal utilities have been at the forefront of the carbon-free energy movement for some time," DeCurzio said. "MLPs have recognized trends and implemented emerging technologies in an efficient, economic manner in the best interest of their customers."

In just a few weeks, a new municipal utility wind project will commence commercial operation. Phase Two of the Berkshire Wind Power Project in Hancock, MA will add 4.6 megawatts (MW) to the existing 15-MW wind farm. The project, the second largest wind farm in Massachusetts, is owned by a cooperative consisting of 16 municipal utilities and MMWEC.

By the end of 2019, MMWEC member utilities will have 67.8 MW of wind generation, 48 MW of solar and 26.2 MW of energy storage – nearly 15% of the 2020 target of 200 MW of storage in place in Massachusetts. Three of MMWEC's members utilized a total of \$1.64 million in grants through the Advancing Commonwealth Energy Storage (ACES) initiative, a coordinated effort between the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center and the state Department of Energy Resources, to fund their energy storage projects. A fourth municipal utility took advantage of declining energy storage costs to install an energy storage system without the help of state grants or federal tax incentives, a first amongst municipal utilities in Massachusetts.

State Representative Thomas A. Golden, Jr. (D-Lowell), Chairman of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy, also addressed the legislators and state and municipal utility officials attending the event.

"Municipal light plants are a true asset to the Commonwealth that have leveraged their unique combination of flexibility, expertise, and local decision-making authority to be early adopters in the state's clean energy future," said State Representative Thomas A. Golden, Jr. (D - Lowell), Chairman of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy. "I commend MMWEC and their members and look forward to working with you facilitate further opportunities to build upon your clean energy accomplishments to date."

Judith Judson, Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, addressed some of the ways the state and the MLPs have worked together.

(more)

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“The Baker-Polito Administration has been proud to partner with municipal utilities to address the Commonwealth’s energy needs as Massachusetts shifts to a cleaner, affordable and resilient energy future,” said Department of Energy Resources Commissioner Judith Judson. “Continued collaboration between state government and municipal utilities through programs including the Municipal Light Plant Solar Rebate Program will ensure that residents and businesses across the Commonwealth have access to initiatives that support the expansion of renewable energy, lower emissions, and reduce rates.”

MMWEC launched an electric vehicle program in 2017, and currently has ten MLPs participating. The program encourages electric vehicles by lowering the cost of adoption through negotiated pricing incentives on vehicles through local dealerships and free or deeply discounted home chargers. The participating MLPs represent just 2% of the state population served, but account for over 5% of the electric vehicles sold in the state so far in 2019.

MMWEC’s peak load forecasting and remote dispatch services enable the automated dispatch of batteries and other distributed energy resources during peak demand hours. This reduces peak loads, which determine a utility’s transmission and capacity costs, resulting in savings for consumers. Currently, MMWEC is remotely dispatching 19 distributed energy resources for 12 member utilities. In 2018, MMWEC’s peak load forecasting and remote dispatch programs resulted in \$4.3 million in avoided costs for participating members.

Much of this work has been accomplished through MMWEC’s Emerging Technologies Initiative, which is an innovative partnership with member utilities to integrate distributed energy resources and related technologies into municipal distribution systems efficiently and economically. Through this initiative, MMWEC works with individual municipal utilities, providing customized services to analyze, plan, finance, install and operate various distributed energy initiatives. In addition to EV incentives and grid scale storage, MMWEC’s ET team is also developing incentive programs for heating electrification and residential load shedding.

“MMWEC created this initiative to optimize its member utilities’ adaptation to the evolving hybrid grid,” DeCurzio said. “The initiative’s approach facilitates integration of these new technologies without disruption.”

MMWEC is the joint action agency for public power in Massachusetts, providing a variety of power supply, financial, risk management and other services to the state’s consumer-owned, municipal utilities. MMWEC was created in 1969 and through an act of the state legislature became a nonprofit, public corporation and political subdivision of the Commonwealth in 1976, empowered to issue tax-exempt bonds to finance energy facilities for the benefit of municipal utilities and their customers.

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