

# Article 4: Milton Climate Goals

2025 October Special Town Meeting

# Massachusetts is acting to reduce climate-warming pollution

The [2021 Massachusetts Climate Roadmap Act](#) set state-wide greenhouse gas emission limits, targeting

- at least 50% reduction from 1990 levels by the year 2030
- at least 75% reduction from 1990 levels by the year 2040
- net-zero carbon emissions by the year 2050

Targets are based on the scientific consensus established by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)  
See Chapter 2, <https://www.ipcc.ch/sr15/>



The Climate Action Planning committee advises and engages the Milton community on how to reduce emissions and mitigate the damaging impacts of climate change.



**Alternate Transport**



**Clean Grid Electricity**



**Solar Panels**



**Electric Vehicles**



**Battery Storage**



**Heat Pumps**



# Every community has a role to play

- The 2021 Climate Roadmap Law directs state agencies, not towns
- BUT, towns can access incentives and support through the [Climate Leader Communities program](#)
- Qualifying brings funding, tools, support



<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/climate-leader-communities>



# Climate Leader program incentives

- **Accelerator** grants:
  - \$1,000,000 for projects that reduce municipal GHG emissions
- **Technical Support** grants:
  - \$150,000 for planning and engineering designs
- Both grants can be received once per grant cycle, as much as **\$10 million over 25 years**.

# Grants can be used for clean energy projects

- On-site solar
- Renewable heat such as heat pumps or solar thermal
- energy storage (e.g. batteries) and energy resiliency projects
- other building emission reduction or energy efficiency activities

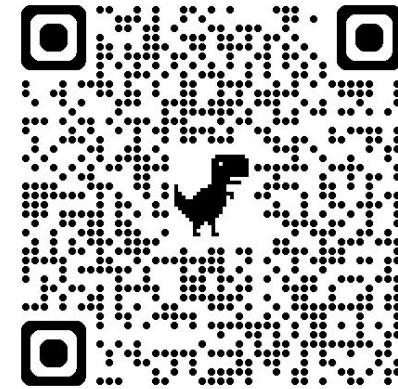
# Climate Leader Communities Eligibility Requirements

	Eligibility Requirement	Notes
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	#1 Be a Green Community in “good standing”	Milton has been a Green Community since 2010
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	#2 Establish a local committee to advise, coordinate, and/or lead clean energy and climate activities	The Climate Action Planning Committee was formed in 2023
	#3 Commit to eliminating on-site fossil fuel use by the municipality by 2050	<b>Satisfied by passage of this article</b>
	#4 Complete a Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap study	A well-defined planning process with free technical assistance available from DOER
	#5 Adopt a zero-emission-vehicle first policy	To be considered separately
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	#6 Adopt the Specialized Stretch Energy Building Code	Adopted at May 2024 Town Meeting

# Passing this article...

- advances Milton toward **Climate Leader Certification** and eligibility for **millions in state grants** for necessary energy projects
- **is non-binding**: the town retains full discretion on future investments
- **has minimal direct costs**
- **encourages and empowers** local leaders to creatively and responsibly pursue climate goals

We invite you to help guide Milton's next steps on climate



Milton's draft climate action plan can be downloaded from: <https://www.miltonma.gov/584/Climate-Action-Planning-Committee>

# FAQ

# What is a Greenhouse Gas Inventory?

A greenhouse gas emissions inventory is [a standardized measurement and reporting process](#). It uses data about activities that generate emissions — like how much fuel and electricity people use, and how much driving happens in town — and combines that information to calculate the community's total emissions. It shows the big picture of our climate impact in a clear, measurable way. Milton's 2017 and 2022 Greenhouse Gas inventories can be found on the town website's [Climate Action Planning](#) page.

In a Greenhouse Gas Inventory, total emissions are measured in **MTCO<sub>2</sub>e** means “*metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent*.” MTCO<sub>2</sub>e combines all greenhouse gases into one scale, so we can see their total impact in the same “currency” as carbon dioxide.

- A **metric ton (MT)** is about 2,200 pounds, roughly the weight of a small car.
- **CO<sub>2</sub>e** is a way to compare all greenhouse gases by expressing their warming effect in terms of carbon dioxide.

Some gases trap far more heat than CO<sub>2</sub>. For example, the refrigerant **R-410A** (commonly used in air conditioners) has a global warming potential (GWP) of about 2,088.. That means 1 pound of R-410a warms the planet as much as 2,088 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub> over 100 years.

# What does a Greenhouse Gas inventory cost?

- 2017 and 2022 inventories were funded by \$50K community compact grant in 2023
- Can be completed with publicly available calculators and data

# How much does Milton need to reduce its emissions to meet the state goals?

In 2017, the baseline year for Milton's Greenhouse Gas inventory, Milton emitted 282,031 million tons of CO<sub>2</sub>-equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e). By 2017, Massachusetts had already reduced its annual statewide GHG emissions to 22.4% below the 1990 level. While an emission baseline for Milton from 1990 is not available, if we assume that Milton's emissions reductions followed the statewide trend over that period, we find that Milton would need to achieve the following emissions reductions to align with the Massachusetts goals:

- 36% reduction from 2017 levels by 2030, or 181,721 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e
- 68% reduction from 2017 levels by 2040, or 58,544 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e
- 87% reduction from 2017 levels by 2050, or 7,544 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e.

**In 2022, Milton's emissions had increased 3.6% from 2017, to 292,120 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e.** We are headed in the wrong direction, and action is needed to start bringing these numbers down.

## What are the impacts of a “Zero-emission vehicle first” policy?

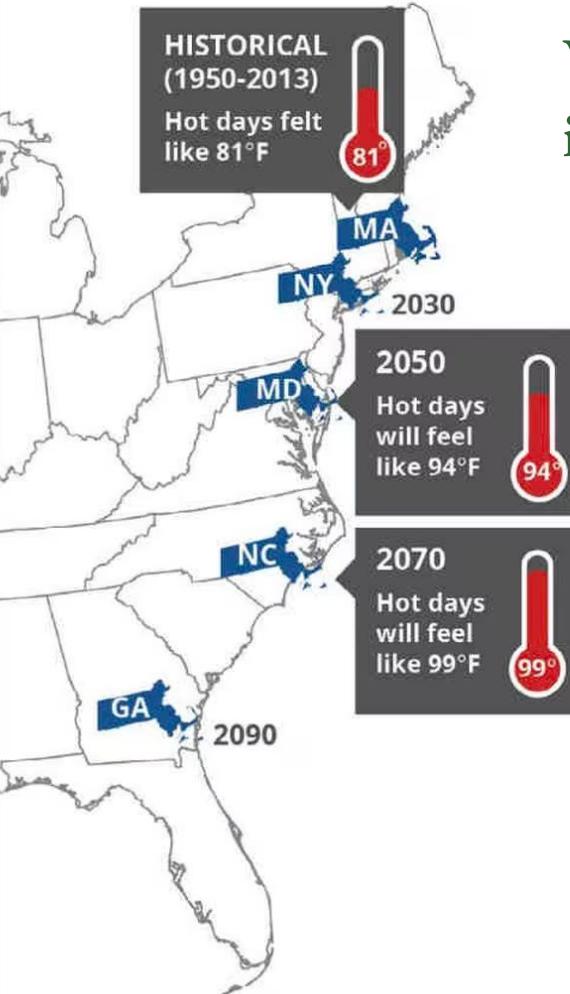
- This article **does not** mandate a ZEV-first policy, will be considered separately
- A ZEV-First policy would be gradual and flexible
- Policy would apply only to new purchases as vehicles retire
- Exemptions for vehicles that are unavailable, impractical, or too costly
- Planning help available from utilities and state programs
- Milton already follows a fuel-efficient purchasing policy with similar exemptions

# What does a Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap require?

- No-cost technical assistance available through Department of Energy Resources (DOER) provides consultants to help complete the roadmap
- Catalogs town's fossil-fuel equipment, fleet, and energy infrastructure
- Roadmaps lifespans and models replacement costs and options
- Identifies accelerator grant opportunities
- Creates a sound, data-driven basis for future budget decisions

## Are the state's climate goals realistic? What happens if they aren't met?

- State targets are daunting but non-punitive — no fines for missing them
- Goals provide strategic clarity and coordinate statewide action
- Milton's goals would adjust automatically if state law changes
- Progress matters more than perfection — sooner is better than later
- We shouldn't let timeline anxiety be an excuse not to get started



# What are the anticipated impacts of climate change in Massachusetts?

- **Health and cognitive damage from extreme heat**, including premature death and learning loss.
- **Damage to infrastructure and buildings** from heavy rainfall, high winds, flooding, and heat stress
- **Degradation of forests, freshwater, marine, and coastal wetland ecosystems** due to pests, invasive species, warming waters, sea-level rise, storm surge, drought, and increased runoff
- **Reduction in state revenues coupled with increasing demand for services**: reduced property tax base as costs of climate migration, emergency response, food assistance, and state-sponsored health care increase
- **Reduced ability to work**, particularly for outdoor workers during extreme heat, as well as commute delays due to damaged infrastructure.
- **Reduced housing availability** from direct damage, rising insurance costs, and the scarcity caused by increased demand.

## Sources:

- 2022 Massachusetts Climate Change Assessment Vol 1, [Executive Summary](#), page 10
- "State report shows climate change will take massive toll on Mass. without urgent action", [Boston Globe](#), December 2022

# Where do Milton's emissions come from?



**53%**  
Transportation

