



Reading Municipal Light Department
RELIABLE POWER

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Press Release

RMLD Applauds Inclusion of Municipal Light Plants in Historic Climate Bill

Reading, MA – The Reading Municipal Light Department (RMLD) is saluting legislative leaders and Governor Baker and his Administration for their hard work on the Energy and Climate Bill, S.9., signed into law on Friday, March 26, during a virtual Bill signing event at the Statehouse. The RMLD recognizes the significant time and effort to develop this Bill which lays the groundwork for real climate action. Friday's actions bring the Commonwealth to nation-leading climate policy goals that engage all sectors in the energy life cycle.

The Climate Bill recognizes the importance of Municipal Light Plants (MLPs) in the Commonwealth's clean energy future. For the first time, MLPs must comply with state power portfolio regulations, specifically the Greenhouse Gas Emissions Standards (GGES) for retail energy sales. With 41 MLPs representing hundreds of thousands of residents, Section 33 of the new law will formalize the clean energy work already well underway at these utilities.

"While this is the first time MLPs have been subject to regulations for power supply, the RMLD and its fellow MLPs have been voluntary leaders in clean energy for a long time," said John Stempeck, Chair of RMLD's Board of Commissioners. "The RMLD is proud to have championed the non-carbon emitting power supply portfolio standards set forth in the legislation."

"We thank Chairman Thomas Golden for introducing the MLP provisions, and our local legislators including Senator Brendan Creighton, Senator Bruce Tarr, Senator Jason Lewis, Representative Brad Jones, Representative Richard Haggerty, Representative Kenneth Gordon, and Representative David Robertson, for fighting for our inclusion in this Omnibus Bill and recognizing the value of the role of public power in Massachusetts," said Coleen O'Brien, RMLD General Manager.

The Act Creating a Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy sets statewide emissions limits compiling a comprehensive roadmap plan for reaching each limit; and producing regular reports on how well the plans are doing.

It also creates a first-time greenhouse gas emissions standard for municipal lighting plants, requiring them to purchase 50% non-emitting electricity by 2030 and get to “net zero” emissions by 2050.

"While the Legislature worked on advancing this law governing how municipal light plants will support the Commonwealth's net-zero by 2050 commitment, the MLP's continued their significant expansion of procuring renewable and carbon-free electricity" said State Representative Thomas A. Golden, Jr., Former Chairman of the Joint Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy. "MLP's are climate leaders because they are so agile. They now have a formal obligation to meet the new standards and assist the Commonwealth in achieving a clean energy future."

Last month, both the RMLD Citizens' Advisory Board (CAB) and the RMLD Board of Commissioners (Board) voted to approve an update to RMLD's Policy 30, which specifies the procurement requirements of renewable and greenhouse gas reducing power supply. The resulting Policy 30 aligns RMLD with the new MLP requirements contained in the Climate Bill. Two RMLD Policy 30 provisions above and beyond the Climate Bill requirements include RMLD's exclusion of future wood-burning biomass as an acceptable renewable, and the provision to strive for meeting non-carbon goals annually to minimize cost impacts to ratepayers while still meeting the state's decade targets for 2030, 2040, and 2050.

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