



MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

June 15, 2023

Tonya Jarrett, Principal
Fitchburg High School
140 Arn-How Farm Road
Fitchburg MA 01420

Dear Principal Jarrett,

Congratulations to the Fitchburg High School Envirothon Team for their hard work and success at the 2023 Massachusetts Envirothon! In addition to participating in the competition, the team was one of 5 teams across the state completing requirements for the Mass Envirothon [Community Engagement Award](#) for their work on the 2023 [Current Issue Climate Change in Your Community](#).

2023 participating team members – all from Fitchburg – included:

Frank Gallo IV
Estella LeBlanc
Natalia Giordano
Jack Mara
Alyssa Medley

The team was coached by Fitchburg teacher Sarah Johnson.

The Mass Envirothon Community Engagement Award recognizes teams who engage in thorough and wide-ranging community investigations in preparation for their Current Issue presentation AND THEN take this new knowledge and put it to work in an action project in their community. Participating teams' work exemplifies the integration of science and civic knowledge, connections, and skills that is so critical for addressing environmental issues in a democratic society.

Qualifying for this award in 2023 required teams to conduct in-person interviews, visit local sites with significance for climate issues, comb media sources, and research pending state legislation relevant to climate change. Documentation of teams' work – and reflection on what they found – is collected on the [Research and Action Checklist](#). In addition to documenting their research, Envirothon Community Award teams participate in a zoom interview that offers the chance for a wider public to learn about the teams' work and perspectives.

The award aims to recognize high school youth (and their advisors) who meet the goal of student-led civic engagement under the Massachusetts 2018 [Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement](#).

What they did: The Fitchburg team investigated a variety of climate-related issues in their community – from flooding and wastewater management, to the slow development of new renewable energy infrastructure, to biodiversity protection at the municipal airport. But they kept coming back to the importance of food and food waste as a climate issue. They have found a willing partner in Sodexo, the company that manages the school's food service, and they are planning on working with their community partners to reduce food waste and implement a composting program at the high school in the next year.

Envirothon teams gain strong environmental knowledge and community connections through their research and action experiences. They develop teamwork, stewardship values, and skills for civic engagement. They show that they are capable of college level work and that they can make a real contribution to their communities. Their coaches deserve special commendation for the time and care they put into working with the team.

Thank you for your support of the Fitchburg team and their coach! More about the Envirothon can be found at <https://www.massenvirothon.org>. More documentation of the Fitchburg team's work can be found at <https://www.massenvirothon.org>. I can be reached at wsnyder@umass.edu.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Will Snyder". The script is cursive and fluid.

Will Snyder
Massachusetts Envirothon Steering Committee

cc: Robert Jokela, Superintendent
Sarah Johnson, Envirothon Coach
Jill Lucius, Head of Nutrition Services, Fitchburg Schools
Representative Michael P. Kushmerek
Senator John J. Cronin
Chad Garner, Communications Director, Fitchburg Public Schools
Rebecca Tepper, Massachusetts Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Stephanie Cooper, Undersecretary for Environment, Massachusetts EEA