



MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

June 15, 2023

Dr. Andrew Stephens, Principal
Lexington High School
251 Waltham Street
Lexington MA 02421

Dear Dr. Stephens,

Congratulations to the Lexington High School Envirothon Teams for their hard work and success at the 2023 Massachusetts Envirothon! In addition to placing 1st overall 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 Lexington – included:

Jaime Yu

Caroline Ehmann

Chris Yoo

Jocelyn Chen

Eileen Ho

Kaavya Moogala

Neo Chatterjee

Veohm Patel

Erin Suh

Tomer Elkayam

The team was coached by Lexington teacher Steve Wilkins.

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](#).

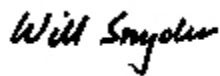
What they did: The Lexington Envirothon team interviewed an impressive number of local elected and appointed officials and citizen activists. They visited sites that exemplified the diverse reach of climate issues: composting, stream daylighting, and net zero buildings. They found important text resources that laid out the issues clearly. The town of Lexington has been a leader in climate action, and the team learned about the power to be found in joining forces with ongoing climate efforts in the wider community. With their new perspectives they contributed public comments in favor of placing solar

arrays over parking lots and on rooftops in town instead of a large solar farm by Cambridge Reservoir. They are also developing a proposal to curb energy consumption by discouraging the building of large new single-family residences in town. In both these action projects they are becoming expert at the details of the trade-offs and the legal and zoning issues that stand in the way of sustainable development in Massachusetts.

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 Lexington team and their coach! More about the Envirothon can be found at <https://www.massenvirothon.org>. More documentation of the Lexington team's work can be found at <https://massenvirothon.org/2023-community-engagement-awards/>. 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: Dr. Julie Hackett, Superintendent
Steve Wilkins, Envirothon Coach
Representative Michelle Ciccolo
Representative Kenneth Gordon
Senator Michael Barrett
Senator Cindy Friedman
The Colonial Times Magazine
Rebecca Tepper, Massachusetts Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Stephanie Cooper, Undersecretary for Environment, Massachusetts EEA