

# Massachusetts Envirothon 2024

## Community Engagement Award

## Research & Action Checklist

The Mass Envirothon **Community Engagement Award** recognizes your team's research and action related to **Clean Energy for a Sustainable Future**, the 2024 **Mass Envirothon Current Issue**. To meet the standard for the award, your team must show that you have investigated a wide range of sources and used a variety of research strategies. Your team must also show that you have taken new ideas and connections based on your research and put them to work to benefit your community.

[Community Engagement Award](#)

[Clean Energy for a Sustainable Future](#)

[Massachusetts Envirothon Current Issue](#)

**Use this Checklist to document your work.**

[This Guide to Research and Action Strategies will help you put your 2024 research into action.](#)

**There are three parts to this checklist:**

**1) RESEARCH.** This checklist provides a list of required tasks to be completed to show that your investigations have been wide-ranging and rigorous. The checklist also gives you lots of choice in the direction and depth of this research. You may decide to pursue your own tasks that take you deeper, or in different directions. If your team departs from this checklist, be ready to explain how your work qualifies for the award.

**2) ACTION.** Your team must provide a description of the action project you are undertaking, and some form of evidence of your work (for example, a letter from a community partner)

**3) REFLECTIONS.** These items -- accompanying each research and action item -- are your team's opportunity to show the ideas, local savvy, and informed opinions you gained from your research and action experiences. Consider all the items throughout the checklist and respond briefly to five that resonate most with your experience. Yes, you can respond to more than five. You can also devise your own reflection questions. Be ready to talk to your Envirothon reviewers about any of the items listed.

**To certify your Community Engagement Award, you must:**

- \* Make a copy of this Checklist google sheet, and rename it using your team name.
- \* Share the Checklist with your team and complete it, including all research, all action, and at least five reflection items.
- \* Make a copy of the Registration form google sheet, rename it using your team name, and fill it out:

[Community Engagement Award Registration form](#)

- \* Share the completed Checklist and Registration form with [wsnyder@umass.edu](mailto:wsnyder@umass.edu) by end of day Thursday, May 16.
- \* Send any additional items (see 6 and 7 below) by email to [wsnyder@umass.edu](mailto:wsnyder@umass.edu) by end of day Thursday, May 16.
- \* Bring yourselves, and examples of your community engagement, to an interview via zoom that will be scheduled for a time convenient for your team sometime in the week of the competition.

Questions? Contact Will Snyder, [wsnyder@umass.edu](mailto:wsnyder@umass.edu) or 413/387-2371.

Name of your School/Organization/Team

Name of the municipality(ies) you are researching

# RESEARCH

**1. LOCAL PROJECTS & INITIATIVES:** A wide range of local government boards, state agencies, utilities and other businesses, community groups, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are involved with the energy transition. Action is underway in every community! Efforts may take a variety of forms: construction projects, retrofitting work, public education programs, advocacy campaigns, audits and research. Two good starting places for research:

a. The statewide **Green Communities Program** provides Massachusetts cities and towns with energy efficiency and renewable energy opportunities. Their website includes a current **map of Green Communities and Grant Summaries**.

[Green Communities Program](#)

[Map of Green Communities and Grant Summaries.](#)

b. Local government web pages. For example, look for your town's: Energy Committee, Sustainability Committee, Conservation Commission, Planning Board, Zoning Board, even the School Board. Different entities may take the lead in different towns.

**We became familiar with (at least) THREE local energy transition projects and initiatives (look for projects that show a diverse array of kinds of solutions in the energy transition):**

## Project #1

Project Name

Organizational partners and/or key players

Goals and/or expected results

If this project is happening in a particular place, use a mapping app or cell phone to get latitude & longitude.

Latitude:

Longitude:

Describe the major project activities (what are they doing?):

This person (include name and organization, if any) was especially helpful to us as we researched this effort:

Contact phone or email

## Project #2

Project Name

Organizational partners and/or key players

Goals and/or expected results

If this project is happening in a particular place, use a mapping app or cell phone to get latitude & longitude.

Latitude:

Longitude:

Describe the major project activities (what are they doing?):

This person (include name and organization, if any) was especially helpful to us as we researched this effort:

Contact phone or email

### **Project #3**

Project Name

Organizational partners and/or key players

Goals and/or expected results

If this project is happening in a particular place, use a mapping app or cell phone to get latitude & longitude.

Latitude:

Longitude:

Describe the major project activities (what are they doing?):

This person (include name and organization, if any) was especially helpful to us as we researched this effort:

Contact phone or email

### **Project #4 (This is beyond the requirement. Bravo!)**

Project Name

Organizational partners and/or key players

Goals and/or expected results

If this project is happening in a particular place, use a mapping app or cell phone to get latitude & longitude.

Latitude:

Longitude:

Describe the major project activities (what are they doing?):

This person (include name and organization, if any) was especially helpful to us as we researched this effort:

Contact phone or email

**REFLECTION: The most valuable contribution being made by a project/effort (which one?) was this:**

**REFLECTION: We were surprised to learn about this obstacle to making important changes:**

**REFLECTION: A change we would suggest in one of these projects/efforts (which one?):**

**REFLECTION: The most DISTRESSING example we saw of natural resources issues (soil, water, forest, wildlife) interacting with the energy transition was this:**

**REFLECTION: The most HOPEFUL example we saw of natural resources issues (soil, water, forest, wildlife) interacting with the energy transition was this:**

**REFLECTION: We were intrigued to learn about this use of a sustainable energy technology in the built environment:**

**2. PEOPLE** (firsthand connections): **We interviewed (at least) THREE people involved with the energy transition in our community**, representing a wide range of roles, backgrounds, and perspectives (These people may be listed elsewhere in this checklist, but **more people = more complete perspective on the issue**. Interviews may be in person or via video link. Collect the following information about each person):

**Name #1**

Organizational affiliation

Contact phone or email

Special interest and/or expertise related to energy

What they do to further the energy transition

**Name #2**

Organization (if any)

Contact phone or email

Special interest and/or expertise related to energy

What they do to further the energy transition

**Name #3**

Organization (if any)

Contact phone or email

Special interest and/or expertise related to energy

What they do to further the energy transition

**Name #4 (This is beyond the requirement. Hooray!)**

Organization (if any)

Contact phone or email

Special interest and/or expertise related to energy

What they do to further the energy transition

**REFLECTION: We think (name the person) is especially effective (e.g. influencing decisions and/or taking action) around energy issues in our community, and this is why:**

**REFLECTION: We think (name the person) is especially effective at mobilizing missing voices around energy issues in our community, and this is why:**

**REFLECTION: We were inspired by this example of ACTION for the energy transition in our community:**

**REFLECTION: We encountered this genuine, honest difference of opinion on the energy transition in our community:**

**3. PROPOSED STATE LEGISLATION.** State law provides much of the framework in which the energy transition happens. What changes in the law (e.g. new incentives, roadblock removals, tighter regulation, funding, repeals) are needed to further the transition?

- Start by asking the people you have met in your community who are involved in energy transition efforts. What changes in the law would be helpful? Is there legislation that they have their eye on?
- Investigating legislative priorities for advocacy groups, and contacting your state representative or senator, plus the **Legiscan** and the **Mass Legislature** searchable databases, can also help you)

[Legiscan database](#)

[Mass Legislature database](#)

- Proposed local bylaws of interest can be entered under Local Projects & Initiatives (#1 above)

**We learned about this bill (proposed new law) that has been introduced into the Massachusetts legislature and believe that it will have an important impact on the transition to sustainable energy:**

Bill number and name:

A URL that provides more information:

Briefly describe how this proposed law would address the energy transition (Describe the intended effect of the law. Would it change everyday life in some way? Would it make it easier for people to do the right thing for the energy transition? Who would be affected most?)

**REFLECTION: We found the following group(s) advocating for (or against) this change, and these are the main reasons they give for their position(s):**

**REFLECTION: We asked our legislators' position on this bill. This is their position, and why we agree (or disagree):**

**REFLECTION: We found another proposed new law that we think will NOT be helpful in the energy transition, and this is why (include bill number and URL):**

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#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ENERGY EDUCATION AND LITERACY.

**We found that these THREE websites offer especially good resources** for well-presented, accurate information relevant to the energy transition. We have evaluated these using the **SIFT method or other resources** and recommend them as background for people planning to take action in their personal lives or in the wider community (What if you could make THREE (and **ONLY THREE**) recommendations? Provide urls to take the reader to the particular page you most recommend as a resource):

[SIFT method and other resources](#)

Website/page #1 URL:

Ten words on how it is valuable/useful:

Website/page #2 URL:

Ten words on how it is valuable/useful:

Website/page #3 URL:

Ten words on how it is valuable/useful:

**We think this in-person resource (place? program?) offers the best opportunities**, formal or informal, for people in our community to learn about the energy transition so that they can participate in decision-making and take responsible action:

Describe the resource:

Provide a web URL if possible:

Twenty words on how it is valuable/useful:

**REFLECTION: This energy technology or conservation practice captured our imagination! (provide URL if possible) We think it deserves more attention and implementation:**

## 5. SUMMARY OF OUR RESEARCH AND RECOMMENDATIONS (OUR ENVIROTHON

PRESENTATION). Below is a summary of the main point(s) of our Mass Envirothon 2024 Current Issue presentation in 3-4 sentences:

**REFLECTION: AUDIENCE.** These are the specific interests and groups who have the power to make the changes we recommend in our presentation:

**REFLECTION: AN UNEXPECTED FIND!** We were surprised at how important and valuable this person, place, or other resource is for our community's participation in the energy transition:

**REFLECTION: UNEXPECTED HOPE!** Of all the people, places, and online research we did, this is the thing we found that gave us the most hope (Tell us why!):

**REFLECTION: OTHER QUESTIONS** we would like to answer about our research (and our answers):



## ACTION!

Action projects can be as simple as putting your research findings and recommendations into a letter to the editor or to a decision maker, or making your Current Issue presentation to an audience beyond the Envirothon. Many forms of action are possible: community education (e.g. making and sharing a video, or organizing a public event), participating in a project you learned about, lobbying for legislation, or meeting with decision-makers. Teams can plug into an existing community effort or develop a project of their own.

[See these Action Resources!](#)

## 6. THIS IS HOW WE ARE TAKING ACTION BASED ON WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED:

- Best approach: Write and attach a brief news release about your project and/or provide a link to photos and other documents about the work.
- At least: Write a paragraph below presenting the basic facts of your project: who, what, when, where, how, and why.

**REFLECTION: TACTICS.** There is always more than one way to reach a goal. This is why we chose the specific tactics we used for accomplishing our goal:



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**REFLECTION: OUTCOMES.** We see these results (planned and unplanned, in ourselves and in the community) from our research and action:

**REFLECTION: TEAMWORK.** These are the ways we worked best as a team, and these are the ways we could improve:

**REFLECTION: ANOTHER QUESTION** we would like to answer about our action (and our answer):

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## 7. EVIDENCE OF OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- **EITHER** (best approach): Provide a copy of a letter or email from a community partner outside our school about the action we have chosen to take.

[\(Here are some tips for how to ask for a letter\)](#)

Letter writer's name:

Position/Organization:

Letter writer's email address:

- **OR:** Provide a different form of evidence (Please describe):

**REFLECTION: SECOND CHANCES.** If we were going to do this community action over again, this is what we would do the same, and this is what we would change:

**REFLECTION: WHAT'S NEXT?** Based on our experience, this is the next step we recommend for ourselves or other young people in this community: