



MASSACHUSETTS ENVIROTHON

June 18, 2024

Andrew C. Baker, Principal
Lexington High School
251 Waltham Street
Lexington MA 02420

Dear Principal Baker,

Congratulations to the Lexington High School Envirothon Team for their hard work and success at the 2024 Massachusetts Envirothon! In addition to winning the overall competition, the team was one of 3 teams across the state completing requirements for the Mass Envirothon [Community Engagement Award](#) for their work on the 2024 [Current Issue Clean Energy for a Sustainable Future](#).

2024 participating team members – all from Lexington – were:

Caroline Ehmann
Eileen Ho
Tomer Elkayam
Jocelyn Chen
Nalini Datta

Chris Yoo
Erin Suh
Kevin Ma
Ananya Chopra

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 and skills, and community connections, that are critical for addressing environmental issues in a democratic society. Teams engage in the kind of student-led civic activity envisioned in the Massachusetts 2018 [Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement](#).

Qualifying for this award in 2024 required teams to become familiar with the transition to sustainable energy sources as it is occurring in their communities. They conducted in-person interviews, visited project sites, investigated and made recommendations on web resources and resource organizations, and researched pending state legislation relevant to clean energy. Documentation of teams' work – and reflection on what they found – was collected using the [Research and Action Checklist](#). In addition to documenting their efforts, 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.

What they did: The Lexington Envirothon team found that the transition to sustainable clean energy is moving forward in several important ways in their town. Planning is underway for a new school building powered 100% by photovoltaics. A feasibility study is looking at the potential for networked geothermal heating. And town meeting passed a fossil fuel free bylaw that says that all new construction and major building renovations must be heated without fossil fuels. The team found several resource people who

were very able to explain the ins and outs of how to make the energy transition happen, project by project, bylaw by bylaw in their town. For their action project, the team chose to join a community push to phase out single use plastics, noting that plastics are a petroleum-based, energy-intensive product.

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 teams.

Documentation of the Lexington team's work can be found at the [2024 Community Engagement Awards](#) webpage.

Thank you for your support of the Lexington team and their coach! More about the Envirothon can be found at <https://www.massenvirothon.org>.

Sincerely,



Will Snyder
Massachusetts Envirothon Steering Committee
wsnyder@umass.edu

cc: Andrew C Baker, Principal
Julie L Hackett, Superintendent
Steven Wilkins, Envirothon coach
Representative Michelle Ciccolo
Representative Ken Gordon
Senator Michael Barrett
Lexington Observer
Rebecca Tepper, Massachusetts Secretary of Energy & Environmental Affairs
Stephanie Cooper, Undersecretary for Environment, Massachusetts EEA