



Renewable Communities

Massachusetts cities and towns leading the way to 100% renewable energy

New Bedford: Electric vehicles in the municipal fleet

Under the leadership of Mayor Jon Mitchell, New Bedford has emerged as a leader in municipal clean energy action. The city has installed 16 megawatts of distributed renewable electricity generation, including 14.25 megawatts of solar and 2 megawatts of wind, saving taxpayers approximately \$1 million per year in avoided energy costs.¹ New Bedford is positioned to become the hub of Massachusetts' offshore wind industry, with the first project, Vineyard Wind, scheduled to begin construction soon.²

New Bedford has also led the way in reducing fossil fuel use for transportation, the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in Massachusetts.³ One strategy to reduce transportation emissions is to replace gas-powered vehicles with electric vehicles. As the electric grid is increasingly powered with renewable resources, emissions from electric vehicles will decline even further.

Electric vehicles are becoming increasingly common in Massachusetts. Improvements in battery life and efficiency technologies have made EVs more cost-competitive with their fossil-fuel driven counterparts, contributing to a 37% increase in EV ownership in Massachusetts in 2017 alone.⁴ By introducing electric vehicles into the municipal fleet, cities and towns can reduce emissions, cut operating costs, and set a positive example for residents and businesses in the community to follow.

With the help of the Massachusetts Electric Vehicle Incentive Program, city officials in New Bedford have signed long-term lease agreements for 23 electric vehicles, replacing older fossil fuel vehicles.⁵

New Bedford has now converted more than 25% of its municipal passenger vehicles to EVs. The city is believed to have a higher percentage of electric vehicles in its municipal passenger fleet than any other community in Massachusetts.⁶

City leaders have also made it easier for residents to charge their electric vehicles, introducing 10 public electric vehicle charging stations.⁷ Some may even be used free of charge by drivers of particular models of electric cars.⁸

1. "New Bedford hailed as a leader in renewable energy in the commonwealth," Steve Urban, SouthCoast Today, 26 July 2016, <<https://www.southcoasttoday.com/news/20160726/new-bedford-hailed-as-leader-in-renewable-energy-in-commonwealth>>.

2. "Vineyard Wind 1," Vineyard Wind, <<https://www.vineyardwind.com/vineyard-wind-1>>.

3. "MA GHG Emission Trends," Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, <<https://www.mass.gov/service-details/ma-ghg-emission-trends>>.

4. "New auto report: The future is electric," Bryce Fricklas, SouthCoast Today, 26 February 2018, <<https://www.southcoasttoday.com/news/20180226/new-auto-report-future-is-electric>>.

5. "New Bedford runs largest fleet of electric vehicles in Massachusetts," Michael Silvia, New Bedford Guide, 2 August 2016, <<https://www.newbedfordguide.com/new-bedford-runs-largest-fleet-of-electric-vehicles-in-massachusetts/2016/08/02>>.

6. "New Bedford is state leader in move to electric cars," Jack Spillane, 3 December 2017, <<https://www.southcoasttoday.com/news/20171203/new-bedford-is-state-leader-in-move-to-electric-cars>>.

7. Ibid.

8. "City of New Bedford Converts More Than 25% of Fleet to EVs," Lauren Tyler, NGT News, 4 August 2016, <<https://ngtnews.com/city-of-new-bedford-converts-more-than-25-of-fleet-to-evs>>.