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Northampton Selected as the Only Western Massachusetts Community in the Commonwealth's Fossil Fuel Free Building Pilot Program

NORTHAMPTON – The City of Northampton has been selected as the 10th and final community in the Commonwealth's Municipal Fossil Fuel Free Building Demonstration Program, making it the only city in western Massachusetts to participate in this innovative state pilot program. This designation underscores Northampton's leadership in climate action and sustainable urban planning and recognizes the city's commitment to a future free of fossil fuels in new buildings and major renovations.

Mayor Gina-Louise Sciarra shared, "Northampton is honored to join the state's Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration Program, marking a milestone for western Massachusetts in the transition to sustainable building practices. This program builds on our community and the state's commitments to climate action. We are ready to share our experiences and learn alongside other pioneering cities as we all work toward a greener, renewable Commonwealth. I want to thank Governor Healey and her Western Massachusetts Director Kristen Elechko, Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Commissioner Mahony, Senator Jo Comerford, Representative Lindsay Sabadosa, the Northampton City Council, and the many Northampton public officials and city advocates who helped bring us to this moment."

Reflecting on the city's inclusion, Dr. Ben Weil, Director of Climate Action and Project Administration, noted, "This is a tremendous opportunity to build on the groundbreaking work that Northampton builders have led for nearly two decades. Our community attracts some of the most innovative architects, engineers, and builders in the country, who choose to build fossil fuel-free here because they know Northampton supports high-performance, low-carbon construction. With Northampton's inclusion in the Fossil Fuel Free Pilot program, DOER acknowledges that commitment. With the gas moratorium and enhanced stretch code already making Northampton nearly fossil fuel-free for new construction, we now have the state's support to formalize and strengthen these efforts."

“Regional equity is a top priority for the Healey-Driscoll Administration. We’re pleased to welcome Northampton to the fossil fuel-free pilot program, alongside nine other communities. We look forward to learning from this program as we work to decarbonize our buildings,” said DOER Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony.

Senator Jo Comerford (D-Northampton) remarked, “Northampton's inclusion in the state's Fossil Fuel Free Demonstration Program is a testament to the painstaking work of city officials, community leaders, and advocates. Congratulations to Mayor Sciarra, Director Weil, and their teams for their grit and grace. Northampton becomes the first community west of I-495 to participate in the pilot, thanks to the city’s accomplishments and the commitment of the Healey-Driscoll Administration to provide resources for a small community’s green transition. I look forward to the work ahead.”

Representative Lindsay Sabadosa (D-Northampton) added, "With today's announcement, Northampton has proven yet again that it is a community focused on addressing climate change head-on, and it is a true testament to the Mayor, City Council, and dedicated residents who worked tirelessly to build a case for Northampton to be part of this 10-city pilot program, created by the legislature in 2022. As the only participating city in western Massachusetts, our inclusion makes us an example for the Commonwealth that a fossil fuel-free future is possible and that it can be done right here in the 413. Inclusion in this program will allow Northampton to focus on green building and green infrastructure so that we can create a sustainable community for future generations."

Northampton’s selection as a substitute community allows it to join nine other pioneering cities and towns, gaining access to essential resources and expertise for advancing fossil fuel-free building practices. This milestone was made possible with the advocacy and dedication of local officials, community organizations, and residents, and positions Northampton as a model for climate action and sustainability across the region.

For more information, contact the Mayor’s Office at 413-587-1249 or mayor@northamptonma.gov.