

**Citizens' Petition for Town of Williamstown Net Zero Resolution**

We, the undersigned, petition the Select Board of the Town of Williamstown to place the following article on the Warrant for the Williamstown Annual Town Meeting on June 8, 2021.

Article: Town of Williamstown Net Zero Resolution

WHEREAS, Massachusetts has adopted a net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions goal, as outlined in the 2008 Global Warming Solutions Act and updated in subsequent plans and legislation; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Williamstown is one of over 270 cities and towns across the Commonwealth that have committed to reducing municipal energy use as part of the Green Communities Program; and

WHEREAS, A net zero community gets as much energy from clean energy sources as it uses, usually from a combination of energy efficiency, local clean energy production, and purchasing renewable energy; and

WHEREAS, More than 30 communities in Massachusetts have or are in the process of adopting greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals and comprehensive, cost-effective plans to achieve these goals; and

WHEREAS, The Williamstown Select Board adopted community-wide greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals in 2001, Town Meeting passed a resolution to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in 2008, and the 2002 Master Plan incorporated renewable energy and net zero waste goals; and

WHEREAS, The Town of Williamstown and its residents and businesses have been taking actions to promote clean energy, reduce carbon emissions, and increase resilience including: installing municipal solar arrays; supporting private and public renewable energy installations; procuring electric vehicles and installing electric vehicle charging stations; opting for increased renewable energy in the municipal electricity aggregation; promoting residential and commercial energy efficiency programs; requiring reusable and non-polystyrene shopping bags and take-out food containers; and initiating steps to convert to LED streetlights, among other efforts; and

WHEREAS, Williamstown and many Massachusetts communities are already experiencing the impacts of a changing climate, including rising temperatures, increased frequency and severity of storms and flooding, increased health risks from vector-borne diseases and excessive heat events, and many of these impacts disproportionately impact lower income households and communities of color; and

WHEREAS, The state's centralized energy system and transit infrastructure is becoming more vulnerable to climate-related risks like storms and extreme temperatures; and

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WHEREAS, Williamstown has participated in a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program and incorporated impacts of Climate Change into the development of a Williamstown Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan; and

WHEREAS, Net Zero communities adopt multi-pronged strategies including energy efficiency, renewable energy, zero waste, and nature-based solutions to CO<sub>2</sub> removal, such as the protection and restoration of forests, wetlands and other ecosystems; and

WHEREAS the pathway to Net Zero Energy Community advances a transition to clean energy in six sectors including electric power; transportation; heating and cooling of buildings; industrial processes; and natural gas distribution and service; and

WHEREAS, The transition to a Net Zero community brings many potential benefits, including improved health, cleaner air and water, short and long-term cost savings, the creation of clean energy and energy efficiency jobs, and the ability to retain more of our energy dollars in the local economy; and

WHEREAS, As residents of the Town of Williamstown, we recognize our responsibility, individually and collectively, to participate in the global effort to reduce the impact of climate change by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions locally.

WHEREAS the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has committed to achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 and developing a road map.

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved that the Town of Williamstown pursue a **Net Zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions goal** committing to achieving net-zero GHG emissions by 2050 and **develop and begin implementing a comprehensive climate action plan** by 2023 in collaboration with the community whereby we:

- (a) Take action to support clean, efficient, affordable, renewable technologies and approaches to heating, cooling and powering our homes and businesses; fueling our vehicles; minimizing and disposing of waste; and other activities to achieve a Net Zero GHG emissions goal;
- (b) Include consideration of our Net Zero GHG emissions goal and climate change impacts in all municipal decisions and planning and procurement activities;
- (c) Take action to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate;
- (d) Ensure that our climate actions recognize the needs of vulnerable members of our community and are inclusive and equitable.