

## November Sustainability Update

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### Gratitude

In this season of thanks and giving, amidst news of the hottest seasons on record and billions spent to recover from climate disasters around the nation and the world, I want to take a moment to thank all of you for everything you have done this year to protect and enhance the health of our town, whether you made a plan to make your [home more energy efficient with Mass Save](#) or assessed the viability of a [heat pump](#) for heating and cooling, [purchased an EV](#), [adopted a new waste reduction habit](#), started to understand [your landscape as habitat](#), or [installed solar](#). In the municipal sector, I have been working on all of those things as well. With the assistance of our dedicated staff and volunteers from both the Clean Energy and Sustainability Committee, the Westford Recycling Commission and Westford Climate Action, we have worked hard to supply you with opportunities to purchase clean energy, increase the energy efficiency of our buildings, electrify our facilities and fleets, secure grants and rebates to defray the costs of these efforts, reduce solid waste, become more resilient and preserve our natural resources.

### November Top Ten To-Do list:

- 1. Opt in and Opt Up – If you are a Pop Silver or Pop Gold Customer in Westford Pop, you MUST re-enroll here by NOVEMBER 20<sup>th</sup> or revert back to NATIONAL GRID Basic rates.** Rates are increasing for the new contract period but unlike other programs, are locked for two years and you can leave the program at any time without penalty. ANY CUSTOMER interested and able to purchase more local renewable energy through the program can opt up to Pop Gold at any time.
- 2. Work your energy conservation and electrification plan** – based on your home energy audit. Consider a [% interest heat loan](#), which is now a misnomer, as it can be used to cover all of your hvac needs, including an electrical panel upgrade should you need one. Documentation of your home assessment is required to become eligible for MA rebates.
- 3. [Research your next car purchase](#)** – In January car dealers should start to provide the tax credit directly to you in the form of a discount, obviating the need to fund \$7500 of your purchase up front. MA rebates are available shortly after purchase.
- 4. Rethink the gift giving and wrapping season** – Purchase durable, clean energy goods, like an [induction oven](#), new cookware, or [fridge](#), make memories with shared experiences, cultivate a creative mind with hobbies and classes, curate a wardrobe filled with natural fibers and classic style including vintage thrifted pieces, learn to buy new things used and wrap in reusable or recyclable

items (wrapping paper is trash), like linens and reusable decorative bags and boxes. Plan a treasure hunt in lieu of wrapping. Don't wrap items in stockings. Avoid plastic where possible. Shop local to avoid trucking emissions and to support our local economy. Stuff stockings with reusable gifts like reusable packable bags, metal straws, glass nail files, insulated mugs, travel cutlery and take out sets, and plastic free/petroleum free toiletries. Go back to the future with drying racks (no dryer and less humidification!), and manual (no plug or battery) devices, games and other entertainment.

- 5. Feast and then forage in the fridge** – Use perishables, like greens and leftovers first, freeze remaining fresh veggies raw or roasted, and herbs in oil in an ice cube tray, or dry and store in glass, make and freeze soups and casseroles, for rushed work days and consider stir fries as a destination for other left overs. Avoid accidental science experiments!
- 6. Compost!** At home with your earth machine (the best choice, if you can), or try curb side with [Bootstrap Compost](#) for the cold months. Westford has arranged for a discounted group rate for customers interested in purchasing this service.
- 7. Don't forget the lights and the stars (in the east... west, north or south) -** Enjoy the ambiance of warm lighting directed only where you need it, indoors and out. The holidays and the efficiency of LED lighting are not a reason to make your property obvious to the international space station. Choose your lighting to suit the likely, local audience. [Join Westford Climate Action for Stargazing, Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 PM](#)
- 8. Leave the leaves!** And the stems in your garden. Skip the fall clean up this year. Save your back, your hearing, your lungs and heart, your time and your money. At least for portions of your yard where you would enjoy habitat. You will discover that a spring clean up is easier as mother nature will have done much of the work for you. A bare lawn is a dead and sterile one. Insects rely on leaves and stems for winter habitat, and loss of this habitat, along with the use of poisons, is putting holes in the food chain that supports not just our food, but entire ecosystems. Soil health is dependent on the natural compost provided by leaves, as are the trees who shed them. Mulch your leaves and grass where you do want lawn, but do it early and let the rest go so the insects have time to put themselves to bed and the birds and small mammals can find this natural food.
- 9. [Take the RecycleSmart quizzes to test your skills.](#)**
- 10. [Mark your calendar to visit me and Westford Climate Action at the Westford Academy Holiday Bazaar on December 2<sup>nd</sup>](#)** to see an induction cooktop in action, register to win your own and enjoy a festive hot beverage. Watching a pot boil has never been so exciting and delicious! We can talk energy or trash or make a resolution.

**Best wishes for a bountiful and sustainable season of gratitude.**

