



# Talking Points

There are 605,788 environmental voters in Massachusetts and that number is only growing. Connecting to this segment of voters can be the difference between a victory and a loss. Below are talking points you can use to discuss environmental priorities throughout your campaign.

## The Environmental Budget

In 2001 environmental agencies received 1% of the state-operating budget; they now are receiving only 0.5%. This means less than half of every penny of the state budget goes to protecting our natural resources and public health, supporting significant contributors to our economy such as fisheries and agriculture, ensuring that our environmental laws are enforced, and monitoring the quality of our water.

Staffing at the Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) is down about 30%. The DEP's current staff level of 660 is one of the lowest levels in the past dozen years. This means closed visitor centers, unstaffed campgrounds, facilities in disrepair, unmaintained trails, fewer programs for children, and the inability to curb illegal uses such as dumping of trash and off-road vehicle use.

## Clean Energy and the Economy

Existing clean energy policies have resulted in more than 105,000 jobs in Massachusetts. This is nearly double the number of coal miners in the entire country. Current laws will result in an offshore wind industry in MA that will power about 900,000 homes, create 3,000 jobs and generate \$600-800M in direct economic output. With over 2100MW of solar power in MA we can provide energy to about 1 million homes. The legislature must continue moving forward with increasing MA's wind and solar power if our state is going to remain in the lead and reap the economic benefits of clean energy innovation. With dozens of older power plants scheduled to close soon, MA needs more solar and wind power to fill this void.

In addition to reducing demand for energy and reducing pollution, every dollar invested in energy efficiency results in benefits of \$3.21 for homeowners and \$4.27 for businesses, creating a total of \$17.4 billion total benefits in Massachusetts over the last 7 years.

## Land Conservation

To date, roughly 25% of the Commonwealth's land area is protected as parks and state forests, wildlife management areas, private conservation lands, and working farms and forests.

Conservation, especially when complemented by smart growth, is critical to the Massachusetts economy and to job creation. Over 120,000 Massachusetts jobs are directly tied to the outdoor recreation economy, and outdoor recreation generates \$10 billion in annual consumer spending.

Although 49% of the Commonwealth's cities and towns have adopted CPA and 60% of the state's residents live in those communities, the state match is at 17% and falling.

## Water

Climate change is profoundly altering the water environment: hotter temperatures, less snow pack to replenish aquifers, flooding from more intense storms, and more frequent summer droughts all combine to increase water demand, pollution, and reduced water levels in groundwater and surface waters.

Severe budget cuts over the past decade have particularly hampered DEP and DCR's ability to protect water resources just as challenges are mounting.

## Solid Waste

For every 10,000 tons of materials incinerated, one job is created. For every 10,000 tons of materials processed for recycling and composting, five to ten jobs are created. Research by the Institute for Local Self-Reliance indicates that on a per-ton basis, composting sustains twice the number of jobs as landfills and four times the number of jobs as incinerators.

The easiest way to save Massachusetts municipalities, residents, businesses, and institutions money is to enforce these waste bans. If fully enforced, DEP estimates that we could divert 40% of the waste that is currently going to landfills and incinerators. In addition, rigorously enforcing the waste bans in Massachusetts could create 800 to 2,000 new jobs.

Due to cuts at DEP, there are no good numbers for how much the state is recycling. Each year about one third of municipalities don't report the tonnages that their programs handle. And business and multi-family waste and recycling is unreported for almost all of the state.

## Transportation

The transportation system collectively produces 40% of the state's climate pollution, making it the leading source of emissions.

Smart growth and reforms to zoning will ensure that well-located housing and development patterns reduce vehicle miles traveled over the long term.

**For more information visit [www.environmentalleague.org](http://www.environmentalleague.org) or call 617-742-2553.**