

Hamilton Select Board
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Climate Leader Status for the Town of Hamilton

From the Hamilton Environmental Impact Committee

The Environmental Impact Committee recommends that Hamilton seeks certification as a **Climate Leader Community** and requests the Select Board's support with pursuing the steps necessary to achieve this milestone.

Background

Hamilton has been a **Green Community since 2010**, one of the first 35 municipalities to achieve this status. Over the past 15 years Hamilton, through the Green Community Designation, has received more than **\$1.25 million** in state grant funding for projects such as LED streetlight conversion, school energy upgrades, weatherization, building automation systems, and major heat pump installations. These investments have lowered costs, modernized municipal facilities, and demonstrated Hamilton's commitment to sustainability.

Since Hamilton has received over the **\$1 million** grant cap through the Green Communities program, the amount we are eligible for in future grant rounds is reduced from \$250K to \$125K. Since Hamilton has just received the \$500K decarbonization grant, we are unable to apply for additional grants until 2027.

But we are looking now towards the **Climate Leader Communities Program**. This a higher-level designation and Hamilton will be able to apply for up to \$1.1 million expanded state funding for decarbonization, clean energy, and energy efficiency projects. Nineteen municipalities were approved in May 2025 including Salem and Swampscott.

Criteria for Climate Leader Designation

To qualify, a municipality must meet six requirements:

1. **Be a Green Community in good standing** – Hamilton has held this status since 2010.
2. **Maintain a local clean energy or climate committee** – HEIC formed in Jan 2023 fulfills this role.
3. **Adopt a Municipal Decarbonization Commitment** Hamilton voted at 2022 Town Meeting to become a Net Zero Carbon community by 2040
4. **Develop a Municipal Decarbonization Roadmap** – Draft of this Roadmap is completed.
5. **Adopt a Zero-Emission Vehicle (ZEV) First Policy** – Hamilton has an electric truck and one administrative police car. We recommend the town commits to seeking electric vehicles first.
6. **Adopt the Specialized Stretch Energy Code** – Pending; applies to new construction and ensures high-efficiency, electrification-ready buildings.

Hamilton has completed many of these requirements. The final two remain for Climate Leader Certification. **HEIC requests the Hamilton Select Board to aid us in our work to receive Climate Leader Certification**

Benefits to Hamilton

By completing these final steps, Hamilton will:

- **Unlock access to larger state grants** to support efficiency upgrades, renewable energy installations, and municipal decarbonization.
- **Advance Net Zero by 2040 Climate Resolution**, addressing emissions from both buildings and transportation
- **Stabilize long-term municipal costs** through energy efficiency and electrification.

Request

The HEIC respectfully asks the Select Board to support HEIC in pursuing:

- **Approval of a Zero-Emission Vehicle First Policy**, in coordination with the Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District.
- **Advancing approval of the Specialized Stretch Energy Code** by placing an adoption article on the next Hamilton Town Meeting warrant.

Together, these actions will help Hamilton to achieve **Climate Leader Certification** and capture significant new funding opportunities for the benefit of our community.

Sincerely,

Hamilton Environmental Impact Committee