

Dear Friends,

As recently as July, it looked like no major climate bills would be introduced in the Biden Administration's first term, but last-minute negotiation between Chuck Schumer and Joe Manchin produced *Inflation Reduction Act of 2022*, which is the most significant investment to fight climate change in history.

In Massachusetts, a climate Bill (*The Act driving clean energy and offshore wind*) took two years to pass, but contains powerful provisions to reduce emissions. So, this summer's Creation Care newsletter focuses on these two major pieces of Climate Legislation. We'll also highlight seven informative and enjoyable sustainability events held around Boston in Sept and Oct.

These climate bills are sorely needed. As we highlight in "Other News" extreme heat is increasing (more than 107 million Americans are expected to suffer through extreme temperatures over the next 30 years) meanwhile, fossil fuel company disinformation been effective at persuading many to incorrectly question the climate crisis. And the conservative-led Supreme Court has limited the EPAs ability to broadly regulate emissions. Yet this is done at a time where we see that the Western US is experiencing the worst drought in 1000 years.

If you know of others who should receive this newsletter, please forward it to them, and let me know who to add to the email list. More up-to-date info can be found on the Sustainable Winchester Facebook page at [www.facebook.com/SustainableWinchester](https://www.facebook.com/SustainableWinchester). Please like that page and share with others who should know.

In Faith,

Josh

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## EPIPHANY SUSTAINABILITY AND CREATION CARE GROUP MEETINGS

Sustainability and Creation Care Group meetings are held the last Monday of each month. In 2022 we have transitioned to in-person meetings.

The next meeting will be **Monday, August 29 at 7:30 pm in the Upstairs Parish Hall, Parish of the Epiphany, 70 Church St. Winchester.** (Note this will be an in-person meeting.)

## THE US AND MASSACHUSETTS CLIMATE BILLS

**The US '*Inflation Reduction Act of 2022*'**



The US Congress (Photo courtesy AP)

When signed into law last week the *Inflation Reduction Act* became the largest climate bill in US history. It would invest nearly \$375 billion over the decade in climate change-fighting strategies including investments in renewable energy production and tax rebates for consumers to buy new or used electric vehicles.

The climate portion of the funding includes \$60 billion for a clean energy manufacturing tax credit and \$30 billion for a production tax credit for wind and solar, seen as ways to boost and support the industries that can help curb the country's dependence on fossil fuels.

The bill also gives tax credits for nuclear power and carbon capture technology. And it would impose a new fee on excess methane emissions from oil and gas drilling while giving fossil fuel companies access to more leases on federal lands and waters.

For consumers, there are tax breaks as incentives to go green. One is a 10-year consumer tax credit for renewable energy investments in wind and solar. There are tax breaks for buying electric vehicles, including a \$4,000 tax credit for purchase of used electric vehicles and \$7,500 for new ones.

Also included are key Environmental justice initiatives, amounting to more than \$60 billion to address the unequal effects of pollution on low-income communities and communities of color.

The bill represents the single biggest climate investment in U.S. history. And supporters believe the strategy could put the country on a path to cut greenhouse gas emissions 40% by 2030.

Read more about the bill here: <https://bit.ly/US-IRAct>

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## The Massachusetts ‘Act driving clean energy and offshore wind’



Photo by Aubrey Odom-Mabey

In 2021, the Massachusetts legislature passed the *Next Generation Roadmap Act*, which is one of the strongest climate laws in the nation. But many of the elements of the Roadmap were left to be fully defined later. The ‘*Act driving clean energy and offshore wind*’ fleshes out in many of these details.

One of the act’s primary goals is to electrify the transportation sector, which is currently the largest source of emissions in the Commonwealth. It requires that all passenger vehicles bought after 2035 be zero-emission vehicles. And to facilitate achieving this goal, it aims to make electric vehicles more affordable by increasing the state’s rebate for buying a zero-emission vehicle, making that rebate available at point of sale, and adding a rebate for low-income buyers. In addition, the act requires that the MBTA (which operates public transit in the Boston area) buys or leases only zero-emission buses after 2030.

In the electricity sector, the act aims to change the way the state generates power by updating regulations to encourage the deployment of offshore wind and solar power. These updates range from changing what prices offshore wind developers are allowed to charge customers to allowing agrivoltaics (the practice of using the same piece of land for both solar panels and agriculture). Other provisions in the act are designed to increase electrical transmission and storage capacities which are important to ensure that renewables can consistently power an increasingly electrified economy.

The bill has strong Environmental Justice provisions - creating conditions for an inclusive offshore wind industry by supporting minority-owned businesses and ensuring economic benefits are shared with environmental justice communities. It also includes protections for ratepayers, ensuring that our transition off fossil fuels will be done in a way that protects residents from energy price volatility.

Some of the act’s most important provisions are regulatory changes that could shift how buildings are heated. Currently, most households in the state are heated by natural gas from utilities. However, the need to reduce emissions, rising natural gas prices, and the age of natural gas infrastructure across the state all make the case for systemic change. Massachusetts’ Gas System Enhancement Plan (GSEP), the state’s program to repair leaks and keep the natural gas infrastructure functioning, is projected to cost over \$40 billion in the coming decades.

The bill allows utilities to provide heat through thermal heating systems, like networked geothermal, a major step forward for the buildings sector. It also permits GSEP funds to be spent replacing leaking natural gas pipes with non-fossil fuel heating systems. This is a major policy shift toward science-based

building decarbonization strategies and away from more expensive and polluting utility heating options, such as renewable natural gas and hydrogen.

Learn about the details of the climate bill: <https://www.wbur.org/news/2022/07/22/massachusetts-climate-bill-baker-desk>

## OTHER NEWS

### It's getting hot in here



*Photo Illustration: Dianna "Mick" McDougall, Sources: Getty Images*

If you've been feeling like a lobster whose bath is going from pleasantly tepid to just a wee bit scorching, you might want to get used to it. More than 107 million Americans are expected to suffer through extreme temperatures more often and for longer over the next 30 years, according to new data released yesterday by the nonprofit First Street Foundation.

How extreme? Well, over 1,000 US counties are projected to experience at least one day above 125°F by 2053, mostly located in an emerging "Extreme Heat Belt" stretching from northern Texas and Louisiana to as far north as Illinois, Indiana, and even Wisconsin.

That's likely to impact where people decide to live.

To help you with that decision, an organization called the First Street Foundation created a tool where you can type in your address—or the one of that place you're thinking about buying—and find out the property's risks from extreme heat. If you're feeling especially apocalyptic, it will show you the risks of flood and fire, too. Try it at <https://firststreet.org/>

What's next: These extremes could mean the US is about to start experiencing a whole lot more climate migration and a very different real estate market. "If people move then you have an impact to the tax base and changes to demand for properties and values overall," says First Street Foundation CEO Matthew Eby.

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## Fossil fuel disinformation has manipulated perceptions of climate



25 years ago, the New York Times released a memo from the American Petroleum Institute that outlined how fossil fuel companies could manipulate journalists and the broader public by muddying the evidence, by playing up “both sides” of the debate and by portraying those seeking to reduce emissions as “out of touch with reality.”

Nearly 25 years later, the reality of a changing climate is now clear to most Americans, as heatwaves and wildfires, rising sea levels and extreme storms become more common. And yet, many conversations about the climate crisis are still stuck in a different reality where urgency is minimized and the science is called into question. This is in part because of climate disinformation.

The legacy of all that climate disinformation remains. It has contributed to a broader skepticism of scientists, scientific institutions and the media that report on them, a distrust reflected by doubts about vaccines or pandemic-era public health measures like masks and quarantines. Research shows that climate disinformation is a primary contributor to public polarization over the climate crisis, and that it shapes public attitudes toward climate science. Individuals who are exposed to this kind of disinformation are less likely to support mitigation policies, hindering the ability of policymakers to take meaningful climate action.

### Definition

Climate disinformation and misinformation refers to deceptive or misleading content that:

- > Undermines the existence or impacts of climate change, the unequivocal human influence on climate change, and the need for corresponding urgent action according to the IPCC scientific consensus and in line with the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement
- > Misrepresents scientific data, including by omission or cherry-picking, in order to erode trust in climate science, climate-focused institutions, experts, and solutions; or
- > Falsely publicises efforts as supportive of climate goals that in fact contribute to climate warming or contravene the scientific consensus on mitigation or adaptation.

*This definition was developed by Climate Action Against Disinformation at COP26*

Starting in the 1980s and 1990s, as public awareness of climate change grew, fossil fuel companies poured millions of dollars into public relations campaigns denouncing the accumulating evidence supporting the idea of climate change. They funded supposedly independent think tanks that cherry-picked the science and promoted fringe views designed to make it look like there were two legitimate sides to the dispute.

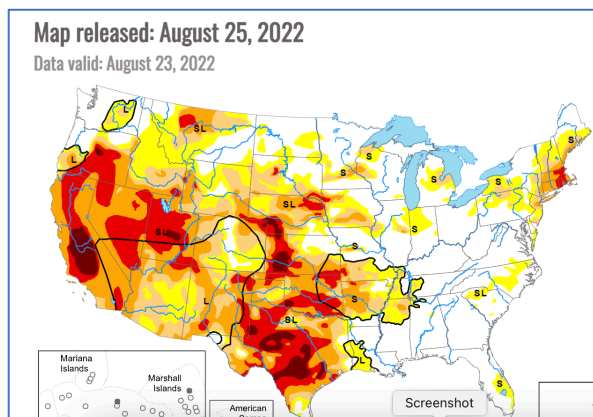
“It was the opening of a Pandora’s Box of disinformation that has proven hard to control,” said Dave Anderson of the Energy and Policy Institute, an organization that has criticized oil and coal companies for withholding what they knew about the risks of climate change

The 1998 memo is one of several documents cited by climate activists and some Democratic lawmakers who say they could be used to hold them legally responsible for misleading ratepayers, investors or the general public. “It’s time for these companies to answer for the harm they have caused,” said Rep. Ro Khanna, D-California.

Read more in the AP article: [https://bit.ly/climate\\_disinformation](https://bit.ly/climate_disinformation)  
Or read <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/blog/what-climate-disinformation/>

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## Extreme Weather: Drought across US yet massive flooding in West Virginia and Texas



US Drought Monitor map for Aug 25, produced by the USDA and NOAA

Climate extremes are expanding. In addition to wildfires, the US is experiencing the worst megadrought in 1,000 years. As much as 80% of the 17 western states have experienced severe or worse drought conditions. 47% of Continental US is in drought this week, affecting 139 million people and 229 million acres of crops. China and Europe are also experiencing unprecedented droughts.

At the same time, Texas and West Virginia are experiencing unprecedented flooding. Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed a disaster declaration for 23 counties and said the situation was Dallas’ second worst rainstorm and flooding event on record. And Charleston WV, set a record for rainfall.

Read about Megadrought: [https://bit.ly/US\\_megadrought](https://bit.ly/US_megadrought)

Read about the flooding in Texas and West Virginia:

<https://cnb.cx/3Q57j6N>

[https://bit.ly/WV\\_flooding](https://bit.ly/WV_flooding)

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## The Supreme Court Limits EPA's authority



In the face of the frequency of extreme climate, the US Supreme Court is limiting the EPA's ability to broadly regulate emissions. In a 6–3 ruling in *West Virginia v. EPA*, the Supreme Court struck down the ability of the federal government to take any substantial action on climate change. This decision will make it exceedingly difficult for the United States to reduce its greenhouse gas pollution in time to avoid the worst effects of the climate crisis.

This case involved an Obama-era electricity policy, the Clean Power Plan in which the EPA attempted to reduce greenhouse gas pollution by shifting the amount of electricity the country gets from coal and natural gas, to renewables like wind and solar. The case was brought before the Supreme Court to answer a simple question: was the EPA's plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the authority granted to the agency under the Clean Air Act of 1970? The Court ruled that decisions of major economic or political consequence must be made through specific legislation granting an agency to act.

In effect, this ruling means that States will be key to future emissions reductions. By limiting the federal government's ability to take action on the climate crisis, *West Virginia v. EPA* makes state-level action even more imperative.

Learn more about this decision in this ClimateXchange article: [https://bit.ly/EPA\\_SC](https://bit.ly/EPA_SC)

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### A Mom's Conversation about Climate Change

On Demand Virtual webinar – watch anytime



Mothers Out Front is sponsoring an on-demand webinar with Climate Scientists Katharine Hayhoe, author of *'Saving Us: A Climate Scientist's Case for Hope and Healing in a Divided World'*.

View the conversation at: <https://www.mothersoutfront.org/climate-conversation/>

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## Forest Explorations in the Fells

Saturday, Sept. 10, 9:30 am-12:00 pm Greenwood Park Parking Lot Stoneham (across from Stone Zoo)



Join Earthwise Aware, Claire O'Neill & Kathy McGlathery for a lovely Biodiversity walk in the Fells exploring how seasons pass and shape our plants and wildlife in our beautiful urban forest. You'll enjoy, observe and record the flora and fauna in various locations of the woods, starting from the Greenwood Park parking lot.

Learn more and register at: [https://bit.ly/explore\\_fells](https://bit.ly/explore_fells)

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## CREW Virtual Event: Rising Sea Levels: Preparing for Boston's Future

Tues, Sept. 27, 5:00 pm



Barbara Moran, Courtney Humphries and Baylor Fox-Kemper



Join *Communities Responding to Extreme Weather* (CREW) for a virtual panel discussion on how rising sea levels will affect Boston and how the city can be more prepared for a future of rising seas. The panel will be moderated by Barbara Moran (correspondent on WBUR's environmental team) and will include Courtney Humphries – a writer and Environmental Studies professor at Boston College and Baylor Fox-Kemper – a Brown University Fellow in the Climate and Environment Group.

Learn more and register at: <https://bit.ly/Rising-sea-levels>

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## National Drive Electric Week - EV Chat

Fri, Sept. 30, 12:00 pm (Virtual event)

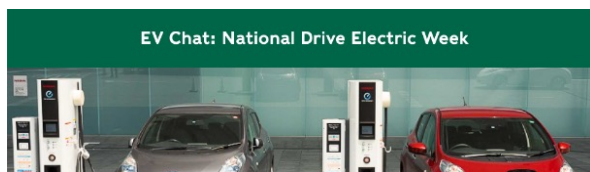


Photo: Green Energy Consumer Alliance

The last week in September is National Drive Electric Week and the Green Energy Consumer Alliance wants to celebrate it with you!

NDEW is a nationwide celebration to raise awareness of the many benefits of all-electric and plug-in hybrid cars, trucks, motorcycles, and more. Join this webinar to learn firsthand what it's like owning and driving an EV from real EV owners.

Learn more and register at: [https://bit.ly/GECA\\_drive-electric](https://bit.ly/GECA_drive-electric)

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## Dear Tomorrow: Envisioning a Sustainable Future

Thu, Oct. 6, 5:30 pm Boston Public Library - 700 Boylston St.



DearTomorrow is a climate storytelling project that makes climate change more personally relevant by connecting to the values that we all share: love, family, and legacy. It opens up conversations about

envisioning a sustainable approach to energy needs of the future. Participants in this free event will join conversation groups and discuss questions of climate

Learn more and register at: [https://bit.ly/Dear\\_tomorrow-Bos](https://bit.ly/Dear_tomorrow-Bos)

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## Cambridge Science Festival: Protecting Biodiversity - Urban Forests

Thu, Oct. 6, 1:00 pm Flynn Rink Parking Lot. Medford, MA



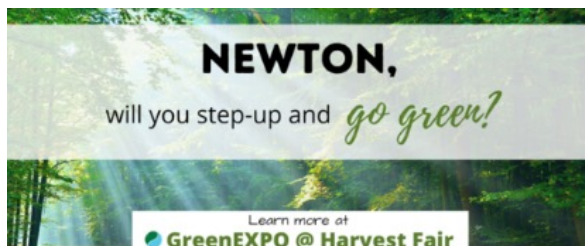
A walk (conducted by Earthwise Aware) that helps convey the impact of land use and climate change on urban forest habitats. You'll learn how to help biodiversity and climate sciences through ecological-systems-focused participatory science. You'll also get a chance to document various species interactions and associations, collecting data that will become part of EwA's open datasets.

Learn more and register at: [https://bit.ly/Urban\\_forests-EwA](https://bit.ly/Urban_forests-EwA)

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## GreenEXPO 2022 @Harvest Fair Newton

Sunday, Oct. 16, 11:00 am – 4:00 pm Newton Centre Green (1221 Centre Street, Newton)



A sustainability showcase of EVs, e-bikes, solar, heat pumps, composting and sustainable goods.

Tickets at: [https://bit.ly/Green-expo\\_2022](https://bit.ly/Green-expo_2022)

**OTHER RECOMMENDED ORGANIZATIONS & GROUPS**

Here are some additional organizations committed to climate change. This is only a small sample of the many environmental groups. If you have other groups that should be included on this list, please email [joshua.reynolds85@gmail.com](mailto:joshua.reynolds85@gmail.com)

350 Mass (Part of the Better Future Project group) [www.betterfutureproject.org](http://www.betterfutureproject.org)

Green Car Reports <https://www.greencarreports.com/>

Green Energy Consumers Alliance <https://www.greenenergyconsumers.org/>

Mass Clean Energy Center <https://www.masscec.com/>

MassSave <https://www.masssave.com/en>

Mothers Out Front.org <https://www.mothersoutfront.org/>

Sustainable Winchester [www.facebook.com/SustainableWinchester](http://www.facebook.com/SustainableWinchester)

WinPower Community Choice Electricity [www.winpowerma.org](http://www.winpowerma.org)

Wright Locke Farm <https://www.wlfarm.org>