



Public Power



Joint Action News

Winter 2026



MMWEC Participates in American Public Power Association's Legislative Rally; CEO Tom Barry Attends State of the Union

Representatives from the Paxton Municipal Light Department and Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company joined public power leaders from across the country in Washington, D.C., on February 23 and 24 for the American Public Power Association (APPA) Legislative Rally, advocating for federal policies that support affordable, reliable, and sustainable

electricity for communities served by municipal utilities.

During the two-day event, Paxton Municipal Light and MMWEC representatives met with several members of the Massachusetts congressional delegation, including U.S Senator Elizabeth Warren's office, U.S. Senator Ed Markey's office, Congressman Richard Neal, and Congressman Jim McGovern's office to discuss key energy issues affecting public power utilities and their customers. Topics included grid reliability, energy affordability, transmission permitting reform, nuclear energy policy, and the growing impact of large electricity users such as data centers.

In addition to meeting with legislators, the team also met with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission staff from several offices, including staff of Chairman Laura Swett, Commissioner Lindsay See, and Commissioner Judy Chang.

MMWEC officials emphasized that the locally controlled, not-for-profit public power utilities continue to deliver reliable service at significantly lower cost to consumers, while leading the way in electrification and decarbonization.

"Our communities depend on reliable and affordable electricity, and public power utilities are uniquely positioned to deliver both," said Tom Barry, Chief Executive Officer of MMWEC. "The APPA Legislative Rally

provides an important opportunity to engage directly with federal policymakers on the issues that will shape the future of energy in Massachusetts and across New England.”

While in Washington, Barry also attended the State of the Union Address as a guest of Congressman Richard Neal, Ranking Member of the House Ways and Means Committee. Barry joined other invited guests in the House gallery for the President’s address.

“Congressman Neal’s invitation reflects his longstanding support for public power and the communities served by municipal light plants,” Barry said. “It is an honor to represent the many Massachusetts public power ratepayers and stakeholders during a time when energy affordability and reliability are central national issues.”

During meetings with federal lawmakers, the MMWEC team highlighted several policy priorities for public power utilities:

- **Grid reliability and resource adequacy in New England, including the need for timely development of new energy resources as electricity demand grows.**
- **Support for offshore wind and clean energy permitting certainty to help maintain long-term reliability and meet climate goals.**
- **Federal policies supporting nuclear energy, including advanced technologies such as fusion.**
- **Transmission permitting reform and improved federal coordination to reduce delays in critical infrastructure development.**
- **Balanced federal policy on large electric loads and data centers, ensuring that new demand does not increase costs or reliability risks for existing consumers.**
- **Reforms to federal disaster recovery programs, including support for the Fixing Emergency Management for Americans (FEMA) Act to improve transparency and response following major storms.**

MMWEC also noted that, while the New England grid currently is estimated to have adequate capacity through the early 2030s, the region faces long-term challenges as electrification increases demand and older generating resources retire. Ensuring timely development of new generation, transmission infrastructure, and emerging technologies will be critical to maintaining reliability and affordability.

The APPA Legislative Rally is the largest annual advocacy event for the nation’s public power utilities, bringing together utility leaders, board

members, and policy experts to discuss federal energy policy with lawmakers and regulators.



Winter Storm Fern Proves Value of Stony Brook Energy Center

While cold weather gripped the region for more than two weeks this winter, Stony Brook Energy Center (SBEC), a crucial part of the Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric

Company (MMWEC) power supply for municipal utilities, proved its worth. The prolonged cold spell in January and February produced the most challenging winter wholesale market operating conditions since 2017–2018.

At 45 years old, this dual-fueled facility (natural gas and oil), consisting of a 354 megawatt (MW) intermediate unit and a 172 MW peaking unit, located on MMWEC's headquarters site in Ludlow, provides reliability to the grid and the region as a whole. SBEC is unique in that it's the first power plant in New England built by and for the non-profit, consumer-owned municipal utilities. SBEC's fuel flexibility makes the facility uniquely valuable to the ISO New England power grid during times of high loads, such as during extreme cold weather in the winter months. As electric loads increase during colder months, the demand for natural gas for residential heating rises, decreasing the amount of natural gas available to generate electricity. During these times, Stony Brook can run on oil and avoid natural gas price spikes while still providing generation to the New England power grid.

During the 19-day period of extreme cold and heavy snow, SBEC units were online, with Intermediate units running around the clock and Peaking units supporting high morning and peak afternoon load for several days. This occurred in the face of 18-plus inches of snow in Ludlow and nighttime temps in the single digits and below zero.

In total, SBEC generated approximately 91,269 megawatt hours during the cold spell from January 23 through February 10.

While other resources in New England and PJM saw outages or curtailment as a result of declining natural gas supplies and spiking process, SBEC, with its 17,000,000 gallons of fuel storage, was able to weather the storm and remain available, providing a

hedge to participating utilities against extreme energy pricing and reliability to the grid. SBEC's onsite fuel storage permits it to run all units at full load for more than 20 days.

MMWEC owns 90.75% of the SBEC Intermediate unit, or about 321 megawatts of generating capacity. The balance of the unit is owned by Green Mountain Power Corporation (8.8%) and the Village of Lyndonville, VT (0.44%). MMWEC's Stony Brook Intermediate Unit Project Participants include 24 Massachusetts municipal utilities. Other Intermediate Unit Project Participants include Green Mountain Power Corp. and five consumer-owned utilities based in Vermont.

MMWEC is the sole owner of the Peaking unit at SBEC. Peaking Project participants include 22 Massachusetts municipal utilities.

Two New Directors Elected to MMWEC Board



The MMWEC Board of Directors has two new members. South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHEL) General Manager Sean Fitzgerald and Ipswich Electric Light Department (IELD)

Manager Dylan Lewellyn

were elected as Directors at an MMWEC Membership meeting on February 17.

Fitzgerald has served as general manager at SHEL since 2017. Prior to this role, he worked at Westfield Gas & Electric as its energy specialist and customer service manager, as MMWEC's manager of municipal relations, and as a market support specialist for ISO New England.

"I look forward to serving on the MMWEC Board and have witnessed the benefits of public power and MMWEC's unique joint action agency status, which allow municipalities like us to achieve lower cost, reliable, and sustainable electric rates," Fitzgerald says. "I am excited to be joining the board at a time where the municipal light plant (MLP) model is exploding in Massachusetts with the creation of municipal fiber optic MLPs."

Lewellyn began his public power career at IELD in 2017 as the department's implementation specialist. He was then promoted to business manager and has served as manager of the light department since 2023.

"I'm honored to join the MMWEC board, and I look forward to working with the MMWEC leadership team to advance the mission of public power and ensure reliable, cost-effective, and sustainable energy for our communities," Lewellyn says.

The other MMWEC directors are Tom Barry, MMWEC CEO; Peter Dion, MMWEC president/general manager of Wakefield Municipal Gas and Light Department; John Driscoll, general manager of Templeton Municipal Light & Water Plant; Michael Flynn, gubernatorial appointee/Wilbraham representative; James Gennette, Ludlow representative, James Lavelle, general manager of the Holyoke Gas & Electric Department; Tara Rondeau, general manager of the Paxton Municipal Light Department; Christopher Roy, general manager of Shrewsbury Electric & Cable Operations; Joseph Sollecito, general manager of Mansfield Municipal Electric Department; Charmaine White, gubernatorial appointee.

Fitzgerald and Lewellyn replaced Peabody Municipal Light Plant Manager Joseph Anastasi and Joseph Kowalik, former general manager of Marblehead Municipal Light Department.



Marblehead Chosen for MassCEC EV Charger Feasibility Study

Residents of Marblehead may soon have access to several new public electric vehicle (EV) chargers thanks to Marblehead Sustainability

Coordinator Logan Casey and Marblehead Municipal Light Department (MMLD).

The town of Marblehead was chosen to participate in a state-funded EV charger initiative through the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC). MassCEC awarded the town a grant to study on-street parking with the goal of increasing electric vehicle charging access to residents who don't have garages or driveways. The grant includes technical assistance, site analysis, community engagement surveys, and planning support.

The sites being analyzed are located at 9 Gerry St., 274 Washington St., 26 Shepard St., 48 Birch St., and 21 Brook Road. Marblehead hopes to utilize curbside utility pole-mounted EV

chargers, a relatively new technology. The sites will be evaluated on several different categories including residential density, environmental concerns, and proximity to environmental justice communities. The analysis is performed by an energy consulting firm, but the ultimate decision on whether or not to select the sites lies with the town.

Marblehead currently has five off-street public EV charging stations which offer a \$.20 per kilowatt-hour charging fee and an overstay fee of \$5 after six hours of charging. MMLD and the town are in the process of reviewing this policy for potential fee adjustments.

MMLD Energy Programs Manager Michael Hall is currently developing a town-wide plan for a public EV charging network which will include both on and off-street chargers. While the MassCEC study is currently studying six on-street sites, if all goes well, Hall says the plan is to have up to 12 on-street EV charging stations.

"We are very grateful to Logan Casey for coordinating this effort on behalf of the Town," said Hall. "His foresight into expanding EV charging has been invaluable, and we are looking forward to reviewing the results of the study."

Once the analysis is complete and the six sites are formally selected, MMLD will lead the effort to purchase and install the EV chargers.

MMWEC's Stony Brook Energy Center Honored for Safety Practices

MMWEC's Stony Brook Energy Center (SBEC) is being recognized for its safety operations. SBEC is a recipient



of the 2025 American Public Power Association's (APPA) Safety Award of Excellence.

SBEC consists of a 354-megawatt Intermediate Unit and a 172-megawatt Peaking Unit. The power plant is unique among the units in MMWEC's power supply because it is the first power plant in New England built by and for consumer-owned utilities. MMWEC owns 90.75% of the Intermediate Unit and is the sole owner and operator of the Peaking Unit.

The APPA Safety Award of Excellence recognizes public power utilities, joint action agencies, and state/regional association members that prioritize safety in their day-to-day operations. Recipients can earn Diamond-, Platinum-, or Gold-level designations based on their incident rates and responses.

More than 240 joint action agencies and utilities entered the annual Safety Awards for 2025. The entrants are placed in accordance with their number of worker-hours and ranked based on the most incident-free records and overall state of their safety programs and culture during 2025.

In 2025, SBEC's 35 electrical workers completed more than 61,000 hours of exposure and had zero recordable workplace safety incidents, earning the Diamond-level designation, APPA's highest honor.

SBEC is no stranger to this award. Employees and visitors of the power plant are greeted in the lobby by a plaque designating the honor from 2009.

"The Stony Brook team is honored to receive this award," says SBEC Site Manager Chris Bourque. "I'm proud to work with people who make safety a priority, and this recognition reflects the commitment of everyone at Stony Brook in making safety a core value in everything we do."



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