



# MASSACHUSETTS Interfaith Power & Light

PRAY | ACT | MOBILIZE

FAITH IN ACTION FOR CLIMATE JUSTICE

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February 2022

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## Inspiration

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Dear friends,

With St. Valentine's Day right in the middle of the month, February is a month to express love. Most of us probably send cards, give candy, or present flowers to our spouse, parents, grandparents, children, and other special people in our lives.

This year MassIPL suggests you add Mother Nature to your Valentine's list! We don't claim this as our own original thought - in fact in 1965 UN Ambassador Adlai Stevenson stated:

*"We travel together, passengers on a little spaceship, dependent on its vulnerable reserves of air and soil...preserved by annihilation only by the care, the work and, I will say, the love we give our fragile craft."*

These words are even more true these nearly 60 years later with the climate emergency demonstrating the fragility of our little spaceship.

But, it turns out, being connected to nature is also good for us emotionally and spiritually. We recommend to you this article from *The Atlantic*: [This Is No Way To Be Human](#). In addition to quoting the scientific studies about how we benefit from being connected to nature, the article quotes Ralph Waldo Emerson:

*"There are days which occur in this climate, at almost any season of the year, wherein the world reaches its perfection, when the air, the heavenly bodies, and the earth make a harmony, as if nature would indulge her offspring."*

Do you hear echoes of the first chapter of Genesis where God asserts that Creation is good?

So go connect with nature. The Trustees of Reservations offers these [suggestions for winter hikes](#) where feeling the cold and seeing snow-covered mountains reminds us of Shakespeare's words in *As You Like It*: "These are counselors that feelingly persuade me what I am."

We are the offspring of nature. Creatures created by God.  
Woven into the harmony of Creation.

Reconnect with nature. Experience it. Love it

The MassIPL Team

# Pray

Connect environmental justice to your faith tradition through prayer, worship, and reflection



## Creation Care: The Why, What, & How Event

Why should Christians care for creation? What is Creation Care? What are the environmental issues we should be aware of today? How might we engage in this work as the people of God? If you're asking those questions, you should join us on

February 22-23 at Eastern Nazarene College for the Why, What, & How Event! Six speakers, including MassIPL's President Jim Nail, will be listening and discussing the issues of caring for creation as the people of God.

Register [here](#) for the event!

## Conference on Faith and Science -- February 11 - 12

In this hybrid physical and virtual event, more than twenty professors from diverse academic fields and universities will discuss how they integrate their vocation in science with a life of faith and virtue. COFAS 2022 will consider the relationship between science and the Christian virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love, as well as other virtues of Wisdom, Humility, and Peace.



Click [here](#) to learn more about the Conference on Faith and Science and to register for the event.

## Pray for wisdom and justice:

In late February the Supreme Court will rule on a bid by some states to limit federal power to use the landmark Clean Air Act to regulate carbon emissions from power plants. This would gut the EPA's ability to control a major climate changing gas. Pray that the Supreme Court justices decide to "promote the general welfare" and uphold this important power of the EPA.



# Act

Lower the carbon emissions of your house of worship and your home



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## New Offering from MassIPL: Zero Carbon Assessment

With last year's passage of the [Next Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy](#),

MassIPL updated our [Environmental Stewardship Assessment](#) report to include recommendations on actions to take to achieve 50% carbon reduction by 2030 and get on the path to net zero carbon by 2050. If your house of worship hasn't ever had an ESA, please consider getting one now!

If your house of worship has had an ESA in the past, we are now offering an update that focuses on the Zero Carbon Assessment. We build on the work of the prior assessment and update the recommendations to align with the Commonwealth's goal to phase out burning fossil fuels and improve building energy efficiency.

Our assessment is a complement to a MassSave assessment: our report looks holistically at how you use your buildings, heating/cooling systems, electricity usage, and the building itself. We will connect you to the right people at MassSave who will then assess which of our recommendations qualify for incentives and rebates from the program and introduce you to contractors for the work.

For more information or to get started on an assessment for your house of worship, email [esa@MassIPL.org](mailto:esa@MassIPL.org)

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## Community Solar Available

Many houses of worship can't install solar power: they may not get enough sun or financing the installation may be challenging



MassIPL has a new partner for our members to buy solar electricity from local solar farms: Hampshire Power, a Massachusetts based community solar group. They currently have capacity to connect hundreds of houses of worship and their congregations served by Eversource and National Grid to local community solar projects that are built and operating in Massachusetts today.

Because of the additional incentives in the state's solar incentive program, SMART, houses of worship in low income communities can save as much as 20% compared to your utility's rates.

### What you get:

- Guaranteed savings, up to 20% on your electric bill
- Easy sign up, no fees
- Easy cancellation, no fees
- Solar projects are offsite and remote. There is no need for installation on the property.
- Customer portal to track your savings over time

Typically, the capacity of solar farms sells out quickly, so we encourage you to contact Hampshire Power now. You will be asked to share a copy of your electric bill and then will receive a proposal for connecting you to a local community solar project.

To learn more, go to: <https://hampshirepower.com/community-solar/> or contact Stephen Condon at [stephen@hampshirepower.com](mailto:stephen@hampshirepower.com)

Be sure and mention that you heard about Hampshire Power from MassIPL!

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## SMART program adds 1600 MW of capacity

SMART, the Commonwealth's incentive program for solar power, launched in November 2018 and has been successful -- almost too successful! In less than 3 years, incentives for the initial 1600 megawatts (MW) of solar power had been fully committed in much of the state, stalling deployment of more solar.

On December 30, 2021, the Department of Public Utilities opened up a second 1600 MW of capacity, enabling backlogged projects to move ahead and new projects to qualify. As with the original SMART program the incentives decline as "blocks" fill up, so act now to maximize the amount of SMART incentive you can earn.

If your house of worship is interested in installing solar on your building, MassIPL can help -- as we've helped over 50 of our members. For an initial assessment, education for the congregation and the leadership, and connections to high quality, experienced solar companies, email us at [solar@MassIPL.org](mailto:solar@MassIPL.org).

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# Mobilize

## Good news from Beacon Hill on biomass—and your help needed!

On January 12, the **letter** signed by MassIPL and over a hundred other organizations **urging an end to ratepayer subsidies for biomass burning** was delivered to the Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy (TUE) Committee. That very night, the committee voted favorably on the legislation. Your outreach to your legislators and the committee chairs made a huge difference!



This success is just the beginning of a long legislative journey to enactment. Next stop: the Senate Ways and Means Committee.

While it's common sense that burning trees for energy isn't clean, we still need to convince key lawmakers to move this bill forward. The biomass industry is working hard behind the scenes to kill it. While they have deep pockets, they don't have what we have—people power!

What you can do:

- 1) Contact your state representative and urge them to co-sponsor the **Biomass Burning bill** (H.3333). (If you don't know your legislator or how to reach them, click [here](#).)
- 2) Contact Senator Mike Barrett ([Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov](mailto:Mike.Barrett@masenate.gov)) and Representative Jeffrey Roy ([Jeffrey.Roy@mahouse.gov](mailto:Jeffrey.Roy@mahouse.gov)) the chairs of the TUE Committee, and thank them warmly for voting the Senate biomass bill (S.2197) out of their committee.

Thank you for taking action on this important environmental justice legislation!



## The legislative committee deadline is TODAY: Contact your legislators now.

Mass IPL is a proud member of **Mass Power Forward**, a coalition of organizations fighting for climate justice. Mass Power Forward (MPF) is championing **six key bills**. Three of them are in front of the legislative Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities, and Energy (TUE) and must be voted out by **TOMORROW**, February 2nd, to be voted on by the full legislature.

**The 100% Clean Act:** concrete steps transitioning Massachusetts to clean energy and clean heat.

**Building Justice with Jobs Act:** creates thousands of good jobs retrofitting homes for energy efficiency.

**Siting Reform Bill:** changes rules on energy facilities permitting to ensure that corporations cannot continue to overburden frontline communities.

Email your legislators [here](#) to tell them to report these bills out of committee now.

## Build Back Better Act (BBBA): Make Climate a Priority

As people of faith, caring for our environment and neighbors from communities all across the country needs to be priority. President Biden has said that BBBA remains at the top of his agenda and that he is hoping to make progress before the State of the Union on March 1st. Senator Manchin has indicated that the climate provisions in BBBA are the closest provisions in BBBA that he can



support. **Recent polling** shows that Americans overwhelmingly support Congress taking climate action and the provisions in BBBA.

National IPL urges you to contact your Representative and Senators Warren and Markey asking them to preserve the climate, clean energy, jobs, and justice provisions in the Build Back Better Act and pass them as quickly as possible. Consider copying your friends in other states requesting that they do the same. We can't wait.

- **Action alert to email your Senators to pass Build Back Better**
- **Updated BBBA IPL factsheet**
- **Updated BBBA IPL talking points**

What's Next in Climate Progress in 2022: Recording of a webinar from National IPL  
<https://www.facebook.com/InterfaithPowerandLight/videos/270599471767115>

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## Inspiration



“Not the sun or summer alone,  
but every hour and season  
yields its tribute of delight.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson  
Nature and Other Essays

Photo by [Monica Malave](#) on [Unsplash](#)

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