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Massachusetts Clean Energy Center awards $1.1 million for clean energy projects

August 06, 2015 - Owners Developers & Managers

Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) CEO Alicia Barton today announced $1.1 million in funding for three projects across Massachusetts that will convert organic materials into energy.

"Supporting the adoption of clean energy projects across the state means we're helping organizations and businesses cut energy costs and protect our environment by generating local sources of energy," said energy and environmental affairs secretary Matthew Beaton. "We hope these projects inspire other organizations to make the switch to clean energy."

Each award will support the development of anaerobic digestion facilities in the communities of Bourne, Freetown and Hadley.

Anaerobic digestion is a process that converts a variety of organic material - that would otherwise be considered waste - into electricity and heat. These projects are intended to use these materials as a fuel to generate energy and heat. MassCEC is funding these projects to help three organizations operate systems that reduce waste, cut energy use and generate local sources of energy.

"By transforming waste into energy, these projects will cut energy use while creating home-grown sources of renewable energy," said Barton. "We're proud to collaborate with these private partners to secure a clean energy future for Massachusetts."

The funding comes from the Renewable Energy Trust, which was created by the Massachusetts Legislature in 1998 as part of the deregulation of the electric utility market. The trust is funded by a systems benefit charge paid by electric customers of investor-owned utilities in Massachusetts, such as Eversource or National Grid, as well as municipal electric departments that have opted to participate in the program. The average monthly charge is 32 cents for an average residential ratepayer.

There are 13 anaerobic digestion systems installed across Massachusetts that generate the equivalent to the annual energy consumption and heat generation equivalent of approximately 4,500 and 9,500 households, respectively.

MassCEC awarded three grants to the developers of the following projects:

* Harvest Power (Bourne) - $400,000: Developers will design and build an anaerobic digester to process wastewater treatment sludge, food waste, fats, oils and grease. The system will combine biogas from the digester with gas from Bourne's adjacent landfill to provide electricity to the grid.

* Stop & Shop (Freetown) - $400,000: S&S Freetown, LLC will construct a digester located at Stop & Shop's distribution center. The facility will process unsold food from Stop & Shop's regional stores to generate electricity and heat, supplying about 32% of the distribution center's electricity needs.

* BGreen Energy, Barstow's Longview Farm (Hadley) - $309,716: BGreen Energy will upgrade its current 300-kilowatt anaerobic digestion system at Barstow's Longview Farm, adding a second 500-kilowatt generator, in-ground receiving tank and other equipment. These upgrades will increase

electricity production at the farm by about 108%, as well as increase heat production. The existing digester produces liquid fertilizer, animal bedding and hot water for use on the farm.

"Harvest Power is excited about the potential to bring a new clean energy project to the town of Bourne," said Kathleen Ligocki, CEO of Harvest Power. "In the spirit of true public/private partnerships, the grant from MassCEC helps attract private capital to commercialize innovative clean technologies and bring them to Massachusetts communities."

"We are thrilled that Massachusetts Clean Energy Center is partnering with us on our journey to reach 'zero' waste by 2020," said Mark McGowan, president of Stop & Shop New England Division. "Our Freetown anaerobic digester is one example of the many ways we operate our business in a socially and environmentally responsible way, giving us energy to run our Freetown Distribution Center that services all of our Stop & Shop New England stores."

"The continued support of MassCEC has allowed us to continue to show the nation how to maximize the effectiveness of renewable energy on our dairy farms using materials from waste, which become electricity and fertilizer," said Bill Jorgeson, managing partner of BGreen Energy. "We sustain our farms, create jobs and have 24/7 available power capacity for the Commonwealth."

Anaerobic digestion is a biological process by which microorganisms break down organic materials, like food or animal waste, to form a methane-rich gas. This gas is then used to run an electric generator or generate heat. The remaining "digested" material is rich in nutrients and can be used as a fertilizer or soil additive.

Created by the Green Jobs Act of 2008, the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) is dedicated to accelerating the success of clean energy technologies, companies and projects in the Commonwealthâ€”while creating high-quality jobs and long-term economic growth for the people of Massachusetts. Since its inception in 2009, MassCEC has helped clean energy jobs grow by 47%, supported municipal clean energy projects and invested in residential and commercial renewable energy installations creating a robust marketplace for innovative clean technology companies and service providers.