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Massachusetts Clean Energy Center commits to \$30 million in funding for clean heating and cooling rebates

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According to Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) CEO Alicia Barton, they have made a \$30 million, five-year commitment to increase the use of clean, cost-effective heating and cooling systems in households and businesses across the Commonwealth.

"This funding will offer many Massachusetts residents access to efficient, clean options for heating and cooling which will in turn help the environment and provide consumers with the opportunity to save on energy costs," said Energy and Environmental Affairs secretary Matthew Beaton. "The Clean Heating and Cooling program also supports our growing clean energy industry and will help the state reach its ambitious greenhouse gas reduction goals."

The Clean Heating and Cooling program, run by MassCEC in partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), provides rebates between \$750 and \$12,500 to home and business owners who install high-efficiency clean heating and cooling systems. These systems include air and ground-source heat pumps, which use air or ground temperatures to heat and cool buildings, and central biomass boilers, which burn renewable organic material rather than traditional fossil fuels.

"Over the life of the systems, clean energy technologies like heat pumps can result in significant energy cost savings for consumers, making them an attractive investment. MassCEC is putting this funding commitment in place to allow more consumers access these technologies to reduce their carbon footprint at lower up-front costs," said Barton.

In addition to helping consumers save on energy costs, this five-year commitment will help the Commonwealth reach its goals set out in the Global Warming Solutions Act, which calls for a 25% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2020.

"MassCEC's five-year commitment to renewable heating and cooling technology will broaden the choices available for homes and businesses," said DOER commissioner Judith Judson. "Soon DOER will also expand incentives for renewable thermal by adding these technologies to its regulation that provides market-valued certificates, as is currently provided for combined heat and power systems and renewable electricity."

While traditional oil and gas systems burn fuel to create heat, a heat pump works instead by moving heat into or out of a building. In the winter, air-source heat pumps take naturally-occurring heat from the outside air and distribute it throughout a building. In the summer, air-source heat pumps remove heat from warm indoor air and distribute the cool air throughout a building. Ground-source heat pumps use the nearly constant underground temperature of the earth to heat and cool a home. Central biomass heating systems produce heat by burning renewable organic matter like wood pellets or chips.

Depending on technology type and system size, homeowners are eligible for rebates ranging from

\$750 for a single-room air-source heat pump to \$12,500 for ground-source heat pumps that heat an entire building.

MassCEC plans to expand the program by making rebates available for commercial property owners later this year. MassCEC will also offer increased incentives for low- to moderate-income customers who meet certain income thresholds beginning in October.

These rebates are funded primarily through MassCEC's Renewable Energy Trust, with an additional \$1 million coming from DOER. The Renewable Energy Trust 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 Mass. electric customers of investor-owned utilities, 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.

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 Commonwealth 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.

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