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Cool New Tool Helps Campuses Find Energy Options to Cut Costs, Emissions

PORTSMOUTH, NH - A new web-based tool released today by Clean Air - Cool Planet will make deciding when, if, and how to use renewable energy on campus easier for campuses that want to take advantage of clean energy options.

The “decision tree” takes users through a step-by-step process to identify which types of renewable energy could make sense on a campus – or in a community.

“We recognize that few people are expert enough on campuses and in communities to know what questions to ask and what to look at in evaluating whether solar, wind, tidal, hydro or other forms of renewable power make sense for them. This tool gives them the basic decision power they need,” said Anne Stephenson, who oversees the Massachusetts Clean Powered Campuses Program for Clean Air-Cool Planet (CA-CP), a science-based non-profit dedicated to finding and promoting solutions to global warming.

Called *The Renewable Technology Evaluation Process*, the tool is a collaboration between the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs’ *Leading by Example* Program, and CA-CP. It is the core of a guide for campuses, *The Renewable Technology Evaluation Guide*, produced by CA-CP.

Stephenson says the tool “does not replace a feasibility study unique to a campus, but highlights the major factors which could lead you down one renewable energy path instead of another. It can be used by campus community members interested in renewable energy installations and curious about the process,” she said, equipping non-specialists with information to participate in installation discussions in an informed manner.

“At the same time, the web-based tool visually takes you through the organic process of evaluating, eliminating, and choosing renewable energy technologies,” said Stephenson. “This way, it can also aid campus facilities professionals in communicating their role to non-specialists.”

Stephenson noted that effective greenhouse gas reductions require communication and partnership across campus divisions and disciplines. Renewable energy installations also demand on-campus synergies and effective communication, she said, to insure the right people and departments are engaged, the right information is gathered, and the right decisions made.

“We hope that this tool will foster and support those partnerships,” Stephenson said.

In addition to the renewable evaluation information, the guide contains case studies renewable energy installations and courses on Massachusetts campuses. Many existing installations are useful in academic credit and non-credit programs, for instance, where courses become learning and research opportunities for students and faculty to then create and perfect renewable energy solutions.

“Innovation is a part of every college and university’s mission, making campuses natural incubators for clean power technologies,” said Adam Markham, CA-CP CEO. “Massachusetts state campuses are helping lead the renewable energy revolution—installing their own green power sources, and training the future leaders in the clean energy workforce while serving as leaders within their communities.

“We hope this tool will enhance that process, and expand it to other states and communities.”

All 29 Massachusetts state college and university presidents have also signed the American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment (ACUPCC), pledging their campuses to a goal of carbon neutrality.

The Renewable Technology Evaluation Guide is available at http://www.cleanair-coolplanet.org/for_campuses/Renewable_Energy_Guide.pdf.

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