



NEWS RELEASE

MASSACHUSETTS MUNICIPAL WHOLESALE ELECTRIC COMPANY

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MMWEC, Western Mass Municipal Light Plants Host Event Highlighting Economic Benefits of Public Power

LUDLOW, Mass. – October 20, 2025 – At a time when energy affordability is front of mind for many, Western Massachusetts public power utilities and their joint action agency are highlighting the lower rates and economic development benefits of municipal light plants (MLPs) in the Commonwealth.

The Commonwealth's designated joint action agency for municipal utilities, Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC), in partnership with the six Western Massachusetts public power utilities, including Holyoke Gas & Electric (HG&E), Chicopee Electric Light (CEL), South Hadley Electric Light Department (SHELD), Westfield Gas & Electric (WG&E), Russell Municipal Light Department (RMLD) and Chester Municipal Electric Light Department (CMELD), brought together legislators, local elected officials, local businesses and organizations for a Western Mass Public Utility Briefing in Holyoke on Friday, October 17.

The day included remarks by staff from the utilities, MMWEC, the Western Mass Economic Development Council, Food Bank of Western Massachusetts in Chicopee, Jarvis Surgical in Westfield, and Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center. Attendees toured a HG&E hydro facility, a carbon-free renewable resource that helps the utility keep rates steady, and visited Valley Malt, a nearby business that is thriving and growing in Holyoke.

Speakers emphasized the importance of local control and local decision-making in keeping rates low, and urged legislators to keep an eye out for proposals that would impact MLPs.

"After recent proposals from various legislators and the state administration that would erode the public power model of local control, we appreciated the opportunity to meet with local legislators and public officials to promote the public power model and demonstrate how that model is allowing us to meet the Commonwealth's climate objectives while providing reliable energy, at affordable and stable rates, to best meet the needs of our customers," said Jim Lavelle, General Manager of HG&E.

"Local governance means decisions are made by people who live and work here, for the benefit of the people who live and work here," said Dan Faille, General Manager of CEL. "Every dollar collected is reinvested back into the infrastructure, reliability, and quality-of-life improvements that directly benefit our residents and businesses. Events like this highlight how municipal utilities provide essential services and deliver lasting value through accountability, responsiveness, and a shared commitment to the communities we call home."

"Through MMWEC and the political strength of municipal light boards, South Hadley Electric has been able to build a power supply which is the cleanest, most reliable, and affordable in the Commonwealth," said Sean Fitzgerald, General Manager of SHELD. "This event showcased how public power exceeds utility standards of excellence through local governance, local ownership and non-profit joint action power supply ownership. MMWEC's tax exempt legislative statutes allows MLPs like SHELD to own power generation assets which provide long term electric rate stability - a key message from today's event."

"Having rates for large commercial and industrial customers through to residential customers that are 25-50% below investor-owned utilities opens the door for public power communities like South Hadley, Chicopee, Holyoke and Westfield, for locating businesses here," said WG&E General Manager Tom Flaherty. "Businesses then learn about the local customer service, system

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reliability and additional services like natural gas and high-speed fiber internet, making the decision to come here to the Pioneer Valley an easy one.”

“MMWEC was pleased to bring together the utilities, elected officials and business representatives to reiterate the strength of public power in Massachusetts,” said MMWEC CEO Tom Barry. “The local municipal light plants are the epitome of safe, reliable, superior service. They are an asset to economic development in the region, as evidenced by the remarks from those in our local communities.”

MMWEC is a not-for-profit, public corporation and political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts created by an Act of the General Court in 1975 and authorized to issue tax-exempt debt to finance a wide range of energy facilities. MMWEC provides a variety of power supply, financial, risk management and other services to the state’s consumer-owned, municipal utilities. It is the largest provider of asset-owned generation for municipal light departments in New England.

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