

By The League of Women Voters of Brookline /

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Engaged Citizen Corner

## Building a sustainable future

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### League of Women Voters of Brookline

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What to do?... the recently released United Nations Report states that extinction is looming over 1 million species of plants and animals ... many experts assert there are only a few years until we reach the tipping point of no return with climate change ... natural disasters and their impacts are escalating. Reactions range from despair; to radical changes at the national, state and local levels; to “what can I, just one person, do?”

To remain positive, there are a number of initiatives to make us hopeful.

At the national level, H.R.9, the Climate Action Now Act, would keep the United States in the Paris Agreement and reinforce our resolve to meet America’s climate action commitments. The much-discussed Green New Deal would boost renewable energy and the efficiency of natural resources while decreasing/eliminating our dependence on fossil fuels, and, in the process, create many new jobs. Stay tuned...

In Massachusetts, a number of bills are being considered to address climate change and energy — e.g., an act transitioning Massachusetts to 100 percent renewable energy, an Act to promote green infrastructure and reduce carbon emission, and an Act to advance modern and sustainable solutions for transportation. On Feb. 22, 2019, Massachusetts Speaker of the House Robert DeLeo unveiled a plan, dubbed GreenWorks, to invest \$1 billion over 10 years in cities and towns in Massachusetts for climate change-related programs.

Brookline has a multifaceted approach to climate action. The town has just hired Zoe Lynn as sustainability program administrator. Following the Select Board’s biannual Sustainability and Climate Action Summit on June 5, Lynn will work with multiple partners in Brookline to implement the 2018 Climate Action Committee’s updated Climate Action Plan.

The plan is a working document, a roadmap composed of six strategies to reduce climate-changing greenhouse emissions (mitigation) and to prepare for climate-change impacts (adaptation). The mitigation component includes five strategies to reduce greenhouse gas

emissions: greater energy efficiency, increased renewable energy, improved transportation options, reduced waste, and enhanced tree canopies/open space. The adaptation component focuses on protecting residents, property, etc. from extreme weather events due to climate change. The goal of the plan is to achieve zero emissions by 2050 (no reliance on fossil fuels) community-wide. <http://brooklinema.gov/658/Climate-Action>.

In Brookline, the organizations listed below address climate change and the environment:

Climate Action Brookline's mission is to create a greener and healthier future by connecting Brookline citizens to ways they can reduce their carbon footprint.

Mothers Out Front is a volunteer-led organization whose members engage with decision makers to get action by transitioning from fossil fuels to renewable energy. In Brookline, they organized the Green House Fest (May 5), showing homes with non-fossil fuel features; and they have tagged hundreds of trees killed by gas leaks. They support State Sen. Cynthia Creem's FUTURE bill to create a path for the gas utilities to become district heat utilities and to set requirements for emissions reductions every year.

The Brookline Greenspace Alliance is a nonprofit whose mission is to preserve, protect and enhance the open spaces of Brookline.

The League of Women Voters of Massachusetts backs local, state and regional efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution and accelerating transition to clean, renewable energy.

*Prepared and submitted by a member of the League of Women Voters of Brookline. The League is a nonpartisan organization that encourages informed and active participation in government and that works to influence public policy through education and advocacy. All articles can be found at <https://brookline.wickedlocal.com/search?text=Citizen%20Engagement%20Corner&start=1>.*