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COMMUNITIES COLLABORATE TO CREATE ENVIRONMENTALLY BENEFICIAL ELECTRICITY PROGRAMS

Separate program plans tailored to individual community goals

FRANKLIN COUNTY, MA – Recognizing the need to combat climate change while offering a choice of products, 12 Franklin County communities and the Town of Huntington have joined forces to develop municipal electricity programs that will add to the region’s renewable energy capacity and reduce carbon emissions with the goal of costing less than their utility.

The Franklin County Aggregation group entered into a 41-month contract with municipal energy consultant Colonial Power Group to develop and manage the Community Choice Power Supply Programs and with Dynegy Energy Services to supply electricity. The communities’ individual programs are all scheduled for implementation in August 2020.

“Every community involved in this collaborative effort is deeply concerned about the rise in carbon emissions from generating electricity by burning fossil fuels and is looking for a renewable energy solution that would not increase our already high cost of electricity,” said Bob Armstrong, Conway Selectman. “We are extremely pleased to be able to implement electricity programs that will be another step forward in creating a cleaner environment for future generations.”

Communities participating in the Franklin County Aggregation group include: Buckland, Charlemont, Colrain, Conway, Deerfield, Gill, Huntington, New Salem, Northfield, Shelburne, Sunderland, Warwick, and Whately.

Many of the communities are employing additional Massachusetts Class I Renewable Energy Certificates (RECs) in their program offerings.

The benefits of Massachusetts Class I RECs include:

- Building local renewable energy capacity
- Creating local green energy sector employment opportunities

- Supporting the local economy
- Enhancing environmental sustainability

“By utilizing MA Class I RECs, we are ensuring that our programs will not only help the environment overall but also be of particular benefit to the region,” said Bob Armstrong.

Colonial Power Group showed the towns pricing for a variety of products with different levels of renewable energy, from power supply with no additional green content to 100% renewable energy. Each town chose the standard and optional product offerings that most closely matched the goals of their residents. All 13 communities were particularly focused on the need to bring choice and support renewable energy.

By implementing these environmentally conscious electricity programs, the Franklin County Aggregation group provides much-needed support toward Massachusetts’ goal of 80 percent emission reduction by 2050.

Additionally, the towns’ municipal electricity programs include savings opportunities, price stabilization, and local control. The specific programs that have been developed for each community provide overall cost savings for ratepayers during the 41-month term of the contract.

The programs also have consumer protections built in, including no hidden fees and the ability to decline participation or opt-out at any time with no penalty. Some competitive electricity suppliers do not provide such protections for area residents. Anyone who already has a contract with a competitive supplier will not be automatically switched. Residents can opt to switch from a contract with a competitive supplier but may be subject to penalties or early termination fees charged by that supplier. Ratepayers should verify terms before switching.

Residents within the Franklin County Aggregation area will experience no noticeable changes with the move to their new supplier. Each town’s current utility company (National Grid or Eversource) will continue to serve as the towns’ electric utility, handling delivery, service, and billing just as they do today.

The utility’s Basic Service rates change twice a year or more, depending on rate class. As a result, the aggregation rates may not always be lower than the Basic Service rate. The goal of the aggregations is to deliver savings over the life of the programs against Basic Service. However, such savings and future savings cannot be guaranteed.

Residents and small business owners participating in National Grid’s or Eversource’s Basic Service programs will be automatically enrolled in their community’s standard plan unless they choose to opt-out. All 13 communities are also offering at least one optional product which further promotes choice. To select one of their community’s optional offerings, residents and business owners must request enrollment in that specific product.

Important note: Residents and business owners with a supplier block on their account must contact their utility company to request that the block be removed to participate in their community’s electricity program.

For more information regarding the Franklin County Aggregation group's collaborative effort, residents may visit www.colonialpowergroup.com/our-communities and select their community's name, or call (866) 485-5858 ext. 1.

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ABOUT COLONIAL POWER GROUP: Based in Marlborough, Mass., Colonial Power Group is the leading aggregation-consulting firm in Massachusetts. Colonial Power has been working with local governments since 2002 in the design, implementation and management of municipal aggregation programs.