

ARTICLE 36 – Resolution to Establish Greenhouse Gas Emissions Pricing to Curb Climate Change

The Montague Energy Committee is asking Town Meeting to add Montague's voice to the growing number of communities and individuals that are pressing the state to enact a greenhouse gas fee and rebate system by passing this resolution.

There are two bills moving through the Massachusetts state legislature that would add a pollution fee to the price of fossil fuels – such as gasoline, diesel, propane and natural gas – and return the fees collected to Massachusetts's households, businesses and institutions. This added cost to the price of fossil fuels will motivate energy suppliers and users to lower their consumption of fossil fuels through increased energy efficiency or by choosing a non-fossil fuel energy replacement.

By refunding the fees back to Massachusetts's households and businesses, the bills would not increase annual energy expenses for most people. In fact, if you use less than the average amount of fossil fuels, you will get more money back than you spend on pollution fees. And it is within your control to reduce the amount of pollution fees you pay by switching to products that use less energy such as a higher MPG vehicle, a more efficient heating system or a home with added insulation and air-sealing.

Both bills would provide higher rebate payments to individuals in areas where people drive more than average, such as western Massachusetts. They would increase rebates to businesses and institutions based on the number of people they employ. And they provide higher rebates to energy intensive industries and to businesses that face stiff out-of-state competition.

Both of these bills already have around 60 co-sponsors (including Representative Kulik) but need ongoing pressure from the wider community to be passed into law.

It used to be that decades would go by between storms in the Northeast strong enough to cause extensive flooding and long-term power outages. Nowadays these events occur every couple of years. If we fail to slow down global warming, by the last quarter of this century climate models predict that Massachusetts will regularly experience summers with 30 to 60 days a year over 90 °F, and it won't be unusual to break 100 °F as often as we now exceed 90 °F. Other predicted impacts of global warming are longer and more severe droughts and loss of forest species such as ash and hemlock as tree-killing insects are no longer killed off by cold winters.