

# community empowerment

*A new way for municipalities in Massachusetts to fully realize the benefits of renewable energy by partnering with developers to enable the financing of new renewable energy projects through a democratic, transparent process.*

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Senate Bill: S.1945 (Senator Cyr) House Bill: H.2853 (Representative Fernandes)

**Community Empowerment** is a proposed state law which:

- Empowers cities & towns to use their residents' electricity buying power to support renewable energy projects of the community's choosing;
- Democratizes important decisions about where our energy comes from and what types of energy projects we support, for the sake of our common future;
- Stabilizes electricity prices for community residents, for ten years or more.

## How it works

- A community chooses to make use of **Community Empowerment** through a democratic process such as a vote in by a town meeting, city or town council, community electric aggregator or other democratic forums.
- Renewable energy project proposals seeking a community's support are chosen by the community through a public process involving their selectman, town energy committee, town council, community electric aggregator and/or public hearings.
- Acting on behalf of all electricity customers within the community, the city, town or community electric aggregator enters into a **Community Empowerment** contract with a chosen project(s). This contract enables the project developer to receive the financing necessary to build the project.
- Once the project is operational, electricity customers within the community would have, included in their bill, either a credit or debit related to their participation in **Community Empowerment**:
  - If wholesale electricity prices are lower than the price agreed to in the Community Empowerment contract, then residents are charged just enough to make up the difference between the wholesale price and the Community Empowerment contract price
  - If wholesale electricity prices are higher than the price agreed to in the Community Empowerment contract, then the residents receive a credit (payment) for the difference between the wholesale price and the Community Empowerment contract price.

## Benefits

- Local communities can choose –through a democratic process– what types of renewable energy projects they want to support with their electric bill!
- Residents stabilize a portion of their electric bill for a period of 10 years or more: When wholesale prices go above the price agreed to with a renewable energy project, residents receive a credit on their electricity bill!
- More renewable energy projects can receive the financial support they need to get built, hastening the transition to fossil-free energy and empowering local communities to fight climate change.