



Energy

U.S. EPA | ENERGY OUTREACH AT EPA NEW ENGLAND



THE ENERGY & CLIMATE CHANGE

efforts at EPA New England include working with businesses, federal, state, and local organizations and New England citizens to reduce energy use by providing tools, guidance and technical assistance for energy efficiency, cleaner fuels and renewable sources of energy. The goal of these efforts is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and impacts of climate change.

INTRO:

The production and use of electricity is the single largest source of air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in New England. This region gets its electricity from a range of sources including coal, natural gas, nuclear, oil, hydro power and various renewable resources, such as wind power. New England is now more dependent on natural gas than the rest of the country for its electricity supply. This change has provided significant environmental benefits to the region since natural gas is a much cleaner fuel than coal or oil.

ENERGY IN NEW ENGLAND

Over the last 10 years, New England has switched to natural gas as the predominant fuel used to generate electricity. It now accounts for more than 40 percent of electricity generation in the region. Natural gas has many environmental benefits, and its increased use has contributed significantly to reduced air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in the region over the last 10 years.

Today, the New England states are moving towards a greater reliance on wind, solar, biomass and other renewable sources. These sources are beginning to contribute significantly to New England's power generation mix and greenhouse gas reduction goals. Each of the six New England states now requires increasing amounts of renewable energy to be produced as a part of its energy portfolio. The state programs goals range from very aggressive like those in Connecticut and Massachusetts to voluntary in Vermont. If these goals are met, about 20 percent of the electricity generated in New England will come from renewable sources such as wind, solar, biomass and hydropower by 2020. This would represent a doubling of the amount of electricity generated from renewable resources in the region from 2010 levels.

In addition to investing in cleaner ways of producing electricity, the New England states are also investing heavily in ways to cut down on energy use. New environmental

policies are making energy efficiency more cost-effective, and all of these efforts will reduce the need for additional power plants.

However, New Englanders continue to demand more electricity at a rate of about 1 percent per year. If the states and the region are to meet their greenhouse gas reduction goals and maintain air quality improvements achieved over the last 10 years, this increase in demand will need to be reduced through more efficient use of electricity, and with even more electricity generation through wind, solar, and hydro power, which do not emit greenhouse gases.

As of 2010, almost a third of the power produced in New England came from electric plants that were more than 50 years old. So, while much of the power plant fleet has been modernized and pollution controls installed, a substantial number of plants are nearing the end of their lives. When these plants are gone, plant owners and regulators will be focused on changing to much-needed cleaner energy sources and technologies. Instead of increasing the region's dependence on natural gas, the region will be looking at making electricity with newer clean technologies that will enable New England to meet its future energy needs by decreasing the region's dependence on natural gas and achieving its greenhouse gas emission reduction targets.

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