



GREENPOWER PERSPECTIVES



A New Voice in New England's Clean Energy Future

HOLYOKE: A CITY LEADING WITH HEART AND INNOVATION



Team NREC with Mayor Joshua Garcia

Some visits leave an impression. Others change the way you see the work you do. Our recent trip to Holyoke was one of those rare, transformative days that reminded us why this work matters so deeply.

From the moment we stepped into City Hall, it became clear that Holyoke is not just another community working hard to improve. It is a city where leaders and residents alike are deeply committed to one another's success. What we found was more than dedicated officials and impressive projects; we found a shared belief that hard work, empathy, and vision can transform a community from the inside out.

Mayor Joshua A. Garcia embodies this spirit. Listening to him speak about Holyoke was like hearing a parent talk about their children with pride, care, and an intimate knowledge of each story. His leadership is grounded in the lived experiences of his residents, and that authenticity radiates through every initiative he leads. Mayor Garcia is also a finalist for Massachusetts Clean Energy Week's Mayor of the Year Award, recognizing his outstanding commitment to clean energy, sustainability, and community progress. This honor reflects not only his visionary leadership but also the results he has delivered for Holyoke's residents and businesses.

NEW ENGLAND CLEAN ENERGY WEEKS

MASSACHUSETTS
SEPT 29-OCT 4, 2025

RHODE ISLAND
APRIL 20-24, 2026

CONNECTICUT
JUNE 22-26, 2026

Aaron Vega, Holyoke’s Director of Planning and Economic Development, sees potential where others see obstacles. His work goes far beyond zoning codes and development permits; it is about building a city where families can thrive, children can grow up safely, and economic opportunities can flourish. Aaron’s vision is transforming Holyoke one block at a time, turning challenges into opportunities and fostering a renewed sense of pride and possibility.

At the wastewater treatment plant, Mary Monahan showed us that infrastructure is about more than pipes and machinery. It is about health, dignity, and quality of life for every resident. Her passion for improving water treatment technology is deeply personal. Mary understands that better water treatment means better lives for families with real names and real stories. Her dedication to this work is an expression of love and respect for her neighbors, a commitment that strengthens the entire community.

Over at Holyoke Gas and Electric, Kate Sullivan and her team are rewriting the narrative about utility companies. Holyoke Gas and Electric offers the lowest rates in the state, but it does so much more than keep the lights on. Through innovative programs and community partnerships, they have become a powerful force for good, expanding access to clean energy solutions and helping local businesses grow. These efforts are foundational to Mayor Garcia’s goal of attracting new businesses and revitalizing the local economy. Kate and her team’s work is a testament to what public utilities can achieve when guided by a genuine commitment to community wellbeing.

The Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center, led by John Garber, is another jewel in Holyoke’s crown. This center is not just a building filled with advanced computers; it is a hub of innovation and collaboration that strengthens communities and industries across the state. The groundbreaking research and technology developed here solve real-world problems, demonstrating that investing in clean, smart infrastructure can benefit all residents. When Mayor Garcia says “Leave them be, they are changing the world,” it perfectly captures the transformative impact of this center.

At Clean Crop Technologies, Dan White is leading innovation in clean technology and sustainable agriculture. Choosing Holyoke as the headquarters was no accident. It was a deliberate decision based on the city’s resilience, spirit, and readiness to embrace the future. Dan and his team are showing that even communities that have faced significant challenges can become leaders in new industries and green innovation. Their presence in Holyoke is a powerful symbol of hope and opportunity for the entire region.



Behind the Scenes: Hydroelectric Plant at Holyoke Gas and Electric

We must also give special thanks to Stephen Fay, whose meticulous coordination and genuine pride in Holyoke made our visit not only seamless but truly memorable. His personal attention and thoughtful planning reflected the same deep care for community that we experienced throughout our time in the city.

In a world that often feels divided, cynical, and disconnected, Holyoke is choosing a different path: one of hope, dedication, and collective action. It is a path that blends innovation with humanity, efficiency with empathy, and progress with purpose. This is why, on Monday afternoon, September 30, during Massachusetts Clean Energy Week, Holyoke will be celebrated as our Spotlight City.

This recognition is not about offering help or charity. It is about showcasing a model that the rest of Massachusetts and the nation should aspire to. Holyoke is proving that you can combine the lowest utility rates in the state with the highest level of community care. That cutting-edge technology can go hand in hand with deep human connection. That planning for the future can be done while honoring the past.

Holyoke is open for business, but more importantly, it is open to possibility. It is a city where clean energy, economic development, and community pride come together to create lasting change. And that is a story the entire Commonwealth needs to know.



Holyoke recognized for transition from Paper City to leader in hydro and renewable energy

The Northeast Renewable Energy Coalition honored Holyoke Mayor Joshua Garcia as a finalist for Mayor of the Year while highlighting Holyoke's leadership in renewable energy. Tours of the Holyoke Dam and Green High Performance Computing Center showcased the city's clean energy progress and innovation.

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NEWS CORNER



DOER Releases SMART 3.0 Program Emergency Regulations

On June 20, 2025, the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources filed emergency regulations for SMART 3.0, the latest iteration of its Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target incentive program. This action was taken amid uncertainty around future federal tax credit availability and aims to support solar deployment through revised subsidy structures.

foleyhoag.com



Massachusetts Faces Job Loss Risks from Federal Incentive Cuts

A report published mid-July highlights that federal cuts to clean energy tax credits, driven by the 2025 congressional budget rollbacks, could result in approximately 30,000 Massachusetts jobs lost and \$3 billion in lost wages over the next decade.

usasolarcell.com



Interior Secretary Burgum must personally approve all wind and solar projects, a new order says

Rhode Island continues to lead the nation in percentage growth of wind energy production, achieving a 17x increase since 2015 and now generating about 20% of its retail electricity from wind and solar. Meanwhile, the Trump administration has canceled new offshore wind lease areas and imposed a requirement for personal sign-off by the Interior Secretary on all wind and solar projects, raising concerns about delayed development.

apnews.com



Why Connecticut residents could soon see lower electric bills

On July 30, 2025, Connecticut's bond commission approved the first \$155 million in borrowing to help offset electricity costs, funding public benefit programs such as energy efficiency and EV charging incentives. Although aimed at reducing bills by \$5-15/month for average households, critics warn this shifts costs to taxpayers.

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“WE ARE THE FIRST GENERATION TO FEEL THE EFFECT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AND THE LAST GENERATION WHO CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.”
— BARACK OBAMA