



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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DEP Showcases City of Reading's Local Climate Action for Earth Day

Harrisburg, PA – Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Secretary Patrick McDonnell joined city officials and volunteers today to showcase Reading's local climate action. The city developed a plan through the DEP Local Climate Action Program and recently launched new street lighting, trash pickup, and other measures to reduce municipal greenhouse gas emissions.

Gathering at Reading City Park, Secretary McDonnell met with Dolores Martinez, special assistant to Mayor Eddie Moran; Reading Sustainability Manager Bethany Ayers-Fisher; Stephanie Anderson, founder of the "Reading for 100" initiative to transition the city to 100-percent clean renewable energy by 2050; and community volunteer Stephany Goico.

"The proactive work that Reading officials and volunteers are doing to cut the city's energy use and transition the city to clean renewable energy will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help lessen the impacts of climate change for their community," said Secretary McDonnell. "As we celebrate Earth Day with a focus on the importance of investing in our environment, I'm delighted to showcase Reading's leadership by example."

"My administration has prioritized sustainability by identifying initiatives that demonstrate environmental, social, and financial benefits that will positively impact our residents' quality of life," said Mayor Moran, in a statement read by Martinez. "The city's staff has also done an outstanding job utilizing the training, technical support, and available resources to shape and improve our future. I thank DEP for supporting the City of Reading in its transition to become more climate-resilient and a regional leader in renewable energy and sustainability."

Reading is a first-year participant in the [DEP Local Climate Action Program](#). DEP launched the program in 2019-20 to provide free technical assistance and personnel help to local governments in Pennsylvania that want to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and mitigate climate change. Fifty-three entities, representing approximately 380 municipalities statewide, have participated in the DEP Local Climate Action Program, now in its third year.

The program pairs municipalities with [ICLEI – Local Governments for Sustainability](#), a national nonprofit that fosters sustainable development, and college students around the state to perform inventories of greenhouse gas emissions from local buildings, transportation, waste management, agriculture, and other sectors. The teams also identify the climate-related vulnerabilities in their communities, such as flooding from extreme rainfall and public health impacts from extreme heat.

After reviewing recommendations in the [Pennsylvania Climate Action Plan](#), teams use a template to draft local climate action plans to lower emissions and may incorporate measures to increase resilience to climate change impacts. Once they complete their draft plans, municipalities are eligible for free services from an energy management consultant to determine the most effective first steps to reduce emissions.

Reading officials, members of the city's Environmental Advisory Council, students from Lebanon Valley College, and volunteers from "Reading for 100" and other community groups teamed up to assess greenhouse gas emissions from municipal facilities and equipment. They drafted a plan to reduce energy use, lower electricity and fuel bills, bring down greenhouse emissions, and improve the city's resiliency to flooding and other impacts from weather extremes created by a warming climate.

Drawing on the energy management consultant's recommendations, the city recently launched several actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. It has replaced 750 old incandescent streetlights with LED streetlights for a cost savings of \$27,000 and has consolidated trash pickup, reducing the number of trash trucks on city streets from 18 to nine trucks. Transportation is one of the biggest generators of greenhouse gas emissions in Pennsylvania.

With support from Mayor Moran, the team is finalizing its plan, aiming to present it to the Reading City Council for final approval this fall.

DEP invites participants for year four of the Local Climate Action Program. Communities have until June 30 to express their interest, and training begins in August. Please contact Christopher Nafe at chnafe@pa.gov or 717-783-9722 to sign up. Learn more at dep.pa.gov/LocalClimateActionProgram.

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