



City of Boston, Massachusetts

Office of the Mayor

**Michelle Wu**

March 29, 2024

The Honorable Michael S. Regan  
EPA Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Regan:

I write to offer my support for the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Implementation Grant application submitted by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) in partnership with the Boston, Chelsea, and Lowell Housing Authorities. The Greater Boston Affordable Housing Decarbonization Accelerator (AHDA) proposed by this coalition application supports key pathways for accelerating building decarbonization and serving environmental justice communities to meet the Commonwealth's 2050 climate goals.

Decarbonizing existing buildings is critical to achieving our community's and Massachusetts's greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets. While using net zero and Passive House standards is more common in new affordable multifamily construction projects, most residential buildings that will exist in 2050 are already constructed. This includes hundreds of thousands of units of affordable housing, which are among the most inefficient and carbon-emitting buildings in the Commonwealth and house populations least able to afford or make retrofits. Numerous studies conducted by the Commonwealth's agencies have identified needs for funding, resources, and technical assistance to help owners of affordable housing, particularly Public Housing Authorities, address these challenges and ensure that low-income and disadvantaged populations are not left behind in the clean energy transformation.

In 2021, the Commonwealth passed historic climate legislation. An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy requires that the state set emissions limits with the goal of achieving net zero statewide greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. The bill will help Massachusetts hit many of its climate goals, by setting ambitious emissions goals, increasing the amounts of renewable energy that utilities must purchase, funding climatetech workforce development, and allowing municipalities to opt in to the more energy efficient Stretch code for all new residential and commercial buildings. However, in order to achieve these goals, further funding will be needed to support the decarbonization of existing buildings—particularly federally funded affordable units, which lack the resources to make these crucial upgrades.

The City of Boston is already a leader when it comes to the decarbonization of existing buildings. In partnership with the Boston Housing Authority, we have set an ambitious goal of achieving fossil fuel-free public housing by 2030. Providing more funding, technical assistance, and a central hub for best practices via the AHDA will vastly improve our ability to achieve this goal. It will also help improve the quality of life for many of the more than 17,000 residents in BHA's almost 10,000 units. BHA's geothermal project and City's BERDO ordinance and program demonstrate that our City agencies are at the highest level of readiness to keep delivering decarbonization. This grant would have high impact in that regard, and it will also capitalize on our progress to provide resources outside the cities and Housing Authorities

As a Regional Planning Agency (RPA), MAPC is uniquely situated to lead many aspects of this proposal including overseeing the technical assistance program, development of collective and streamlined procurement pathways, and facilitation of the regional community of practice. The agency has partnered with these municipalities and their housing authorities in the past to accomplish programs such as installing affordable and reliable high-speed internet for residents in existing housing authority complexes. MAPC administers technical assistance and grant awards through its Technical Assistance Program and Accelerating Climate Resilience grant program and regularly facilitates regional dialogues around key climate issues. Further, the agency's collective procurement work has streamlined the competitive procurement process cities and towns need to undertake to purchase clean and energy efficient products and services.

The regionalized approach of the AHDA will support stakeholders in affordable housing across the Greater Boston region in developing and implementing plans for reducing GHG emissions and other harmful air pollutants in the buildings and populations where investment is most critically needed. In closing, I wish to express my support for the MAPC coalition's CPRG grant application and ask that the review committee give their application full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle Wu", is positioned above the printed name.

Michelle Wu  
Mayor of Boston