



Script for Policymaker Engagement

Strategy at a Glance

Audiences this script is designed to support Live Well Springfield in engaging:

- Heads of city departments in the City of Springfield, Massachusetts.
 - The mayor trusts the heads of city departments and they can be an effective avenue for advancing local decision-making.
 - The mayor whom they serve is a registered Democrat who is economically conservative.
 - The idea that Springfield could be an early adopter of this model may be galvanizing for the city.
- Springfield City Council members.

Notes on both audiences:

- They are intimately familiar with Live Well Springfield and PHI-WM, so there is no need to introduce the group and who they represent (i.e., community members and leaders across the region).
- Some have already bought into Community Choice Energy and just need information about how to operationalize it; others need more context-setting. This script is for those who need more context. Advocates can skip ahead to content (such as the Q&A) that will be most germane to those who have already bought in.

Purpose:

- Heads of City Departments: Encourage them to become champions for Community Choice Energy within city government and confirm which department would run the program.
- City Council: Establish champions for Community Choice Energy so they may pass a resolution in favor of Community Choice Energy.

How to use:

- Refer back to the CCHE Messaging Framework guide to augment sections with community-specific examples as needed.

Script

Start with relationship-building opening:

Thank you for taking the time to connect. With your help, the City of Springfield has already done so much to make our community more climate resilient—including the new greenspace you championed last year. We remain grateful for your efforts to increase access to safe places to play and spend time with our families, while supporting clean air.

As I think you know, we are here to talk about the next progression in our city's trajectory toward health, prosperity and safety—and how that can set us up to serve as a model for the state and the region more broadly. That opportunity is Community Choice Energy.

We know that you've been engaged in efforts to help our city expand opportunities to improve health, prosperity and safety for all of Springfield's residents and communities. To that end we'd like to discuss how being a leader for Community Choice Energy can help us meet our goals while also serving as a model for the state and region.

Define the problem (climate change and health impacts):

First, we'd like to share some of our thoughts about the problem that we're trying to solve.

Climate change is already affecting our ability to thrive in Springfield. In 2011, Springfield experienced five federally declared disasters related to extreme weather from climate change: an EF-3 tornado, October snowstorm and another blizzard, Hurricane Irene and another flood—causing tens of millions of dollars in damage, destroying businesses and schools, and uprooting trees across our city. This past summer's drought is ongoing evidence of a changing climate and its effects on the people of Springfield as well as the city and its resources.

Each of these events affects us, whether it's through direct health impacts—such as the ongoing issue of mold in the region and respiratory issues including asthma and allergic reactions—that are connected to increased storms and flooding, or through the mental health impacts that come with feeling powerless in the face of the climate crisis.

And, as the [city's climate change risk analysis](#) tells us, our experiences to date are just the beginning. Rising temperatures and heat waves, unusually heavy rainstorms and flooding, and more extreme weather events are expected, including snowstorms and blizzards.

Define the problem (energy prices):

Compounding all of this, Massachusetts already has some of the highest energy prices in the nation.¹

Define the problem (disproportionate impacts):

The fact is, all of this hurts some of us (e.g., uninsured renters and those of lower income) much more than others. Yet we continue to turn to policies and practices that put some of us at greater risk while providing fewer broad-based opportunities to be better prepared, strengthen our protections and more quickly recover. We saw this after the tornado—renters didn't have the insurance needed to help them recover more quickly. Massachusetts is number one for energy efficiency because of the Mass Save program, but the services have been primarily focused on homeowners and are harder for renters to access.

Like you, we don't plan to stand idly by.

Outline the solution:

Together, we also hold the keys to the solution. Community Choice Energy is a powerful action Springfield can take.

Community Choice Energy will enable us to break from the price instability and cost burden of CEO profits and shareholder returns. Instead, Community Choice Energy will promote our:

- Prosperity: By ensuring we have access to stable and competitive energy prices. Pursuing this policy demonstrates that you care about everyone's bottom line. And by moving decision-making here to City Hall and to the residents you serve, we can make the choices that are in the best interest of our collective well-being and prosperity.

¹ Source: <https://compareelectricity.com/locations/MA/Springfield>.

- Health: By supporting actions that will afford our city cleaner air and water. Additionally, by helping to protect residents from fluctuating energy costs, we can all more reliably purchase other necessities like healthy food, access to health care and more.
- Equity: Everyone in Springfield should have access to renewable energy including renters as well as homeowners. By taking this step toward climate resilience, our community will know that our city leaders are looking out for us all.

Through Community Choice Energy, we do all of this while decreasing our own carbon footprint and the contributions to the climate crisis that it drives.

This is a win-win.

We know you have given this opportunity thought as well. We would love to explore what gets you excited about Community Choice Energy, how we can work with you, as well as any questions you may have.

Q&A preparation:

Note for Kresge CCHE initiative members: This section is for example purposes only, since the specifics of Community Choice Energy in a Springfield context would be less relevant elsewhere.

- If the official asks: “You say this is a win-win. Is there anyone who loses with Community Choice Energy?”
 - Only the fossil fuel industry, which will lose customers. In short, we are prioritizing our ability to thrive as Springfield residents—and increasing access to clean energy sources and stable energy prices are important ingredients for doing just this.
- If the official asks: “Is it true that there are startup costs?”
 - That is true. Our research in Massachusetts of the 100+ cities doing CCE suggests that one-fifth to one-sixth time of a municipal employee for approximately six months is needed to get the program handed-off to an

aggregator; and then 5-10 hours per month for oversight. Recent ARPA investments in Springfield could offset the startup costs because the City could engage a consultant instead of an employee.

- Etc.

Iterate the solution statement with emphasis on points of agreement with the official, e.g.:

We are grateful to know that, like us, you see the importance of working together to ensure that all of us—no matter who we are or where we live—have the opportunity to reduce our household energy costs, be healthier and thrive.

By doing so, we can *[note, this list contains examples that an advocate can choose from depending on their audience and what they think will help to seal the deal]:*

- Avoid waiting until 2050 to get to 100% renewable, when we can do it now. Let’s be the city that takes charge of our municipal funds and utilities to build stability for our community.
- Strengthen our energy security and the economic prosperity it underpins.
- Make our community more attractive—both as a place to stay and raise the next generation, and as a way to help lure new businesses, industries and talent to our community.
- Leave our children and grandchildren with a community that is more resilient in the face of the climate crisis.

Closing: Calls to action:

<i>Advancing the conversation if successful:</i>	<i>Pivot if the individual has questions that need to be resolved before they can explore this further:</i>	<i>Pivot if the individual indicates that they are opposed and are not open to additional conversation:</i>
Would you be willing to take the idea we’ve outlined together today to the mayor? If so, what	Today’s conversation was meant to level-set, so that we could get a sense of your interest and curiosity	Today’s conversation was meant to level-set, so that we could get a sense of your interest and curiosity

<p>support do you need from us to help set that conversation up for success?</p>	<p>related to this issue. So we appreciate your candor.</p> <p>You've raised important question(s) about <i>[repeat the Qs, and ask for clarification if you're not certain that you heard them right]</i>. We will gladly look into these and get back to you so that we can provide more comprehensive answers than we can at this moment.</p> <p>Shall we set a time to reconnect in two weeks to further discuss our answers to your questions and where to go next?</p> <p><i>And/or</i></p> <p>Are there other champions we should connect with? We are already in touch with <i>x and y</i>. Is there anyone else you would suggest we engage?</p>	<p>related to this issue. So we appreciate your candor.</p> <p>Please know that our office remains open to you should you have any questions as others in the city explore this opportunity. I will leave my card in case you ever wish to discuss this opportunity for our community further. I am always happy to be a sounding board and a resource to you.</p>
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