

Wellesley Renewable Energy

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is the Municipal Light Plant offering renewable power?

A survey of Wellesley MLP customers in 2008 revealed that residents and business owners wanted at least some of their electricity to come from renewable energy sources, and were willing to pay a small premium for it. In response to this demand, the MLP developed *Wellesley Renewable Energy* to give everyone in our Town an easy way to purchase renewable power.

Where does the Municipal Light Plant's renewable power come from?

Thanks to the commitment of 606 households and 4 commercial customers who purchased 2.1 megawatts of clean renewable power in 2011, the MLP has signed a contract with Spruce Mountain Wind, in Maine, to provide our Town with a reliable source of clean renewable energy. This commitment from our Town, in turn, helped to provide the financial stability needed for Spruce Mountain to begin generating renewable wind power in December 2011.

Why pay more for renewable power?

By choosing to have your electricity come from renewable sources, you are supporting the development of clean renewable energy in New England. Renewable power increases our energy independence by providing an alternative to foreign oil, and reduces our use of fossil fuels and the heat-trapping CO₂ emissions that contribute to climate change. The Wellesley Municipal Light Plant's low rates make choosing renewable energy an easy choice: You can buy 50% renewable power and still pay far less for our electricity than customers in neighboring towns that are served by investor-owned utilities, such as NStar.

How much does *Wellesley Renewable Power* cost?

Renewable energy costs about four cents (4¢) more per kilowatt-hour (kWh) than energy from other sources. The typical* Wellesley household uses about 850 kilowatt-hours per month. When that typical* household signs up for 10 percent renewable energy, the monthly cost of electricity goes up by about \$3.40—which is less than the cost of a gallon of gas. As many Wellesley residents have already learned, you can easily reduce the electricity you use by conserving and improving your efficiency. By reducing your electric use just 10%, you can offset the additional cost of purchasing 25% renewable power.

How is the surcharge for renewable power calculated?

The MLP has set the surcharge at four cents. If the actual rate charged by Spruce Mountain Wind goes down during the year, MLP customers will receive a refund at the end of the year. If the actual rate goes up, no adjustment would be made for the electricity that you have already purchased, but the MLP may need to raise the premium the following year.

Will I be able to see the charge for renewable power on my bill?

Yes, you will see it on your bill in the row labeled “RENEW,” under the NYPA and PPA charges.

Is Wellesley Renewable Energy just for residential customers?

All electricity users can sign up for Wellesley Renewable Energy - including residential, commercial, and municipal customers.

Can I choose the amount of renewable energy that I want to purchase?

Yes, you can sign up to receive 10%; 25%; 50% or 100% of your electricity from renewable sources. At any time, you can change your level of participation, without any delay or penalty, just by calling the MLP’s Customer Service Department. All changes will be made immediately and without any additional charge. The Customer Service Department can also help you calculate the cost of each percentage, or you can use the online calculator at WellesleyRenewableEnergy.com.

What does the premium for renewable power actually pay for?

The premium for renewable power reflects both the greater cost associated with generating electricity from renewable sources and the current demand for renewable power in New England. The premium pays for the rights to the renewable energy credits (RECs), which represent the environmental benefits of producing power without the emissions produced from fossil fuels. As the demand for renewable energy grows and leads to the development of new sources of production and improved technology, your investment now may contribute to decreasing the cost for renewable energy.

How does the renewable energy I’m paying for get to my house?

Electricity is different from the other commodities that we purchase, in that we pay to have the electricity added to the grid (at the point of supply), as the electricity produced from different sources is mingled and indistinguishable once it enters the grid. So you are paying to have Spruce Mountain Wind add the amount of renewable electricity that you purchase to the New England electrical grid that powers your home.

What percent of Town-wide emissions come from generating our power?

Almost 25% of our Town-wide emissions come from the generation of electricity. For a typical* Wellesley household that uses 850 kilowatt-hours per month, signing up for 100% renewable energy reduces CO₂ emissions by an amount equivalent to taking a car off the road for 9 months!

How do I sign-up for renewable power?

Call the Municipal Light Plant at 781-235-7600 to sign up or to get more information. Or go to WellesleyRenewableEnergy.com for a direct link to the Municipal Light Plant’s web page.

**typical is defined as the midpoint of all residential customers.*