



Climate Change Statutes

STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS

This project was undertaken in partnership with the USDA Office of the Chief Economist, The Office of Energy Policy and New Uses. For information on the full project, visit [Climate Change Statutes](#).

Current through the 2009 Legislative Session of the Massachusetts General Assembly.

§ 22. Definitions

(a) As used in this section, the following words shall have the following meanings, unless the context clearly requires otherwise:

"Allowance", an authorization to emit a fixed amount of carbon dioxide.

"Cap and trade program", a policy approach for controlling emissions from a group of emitting sources, such as electric generating stations, at a total cost that is expected to be lower than if sources were regulated individually by setting an overall cap or maximum amount of emissions from all regulated sources per compliance period that will achieve the desired environmental effects; provided, however, that a certain number of authorizations to emit in the form of emissions allowances shall be created, issued and made available to persons, companies, organizations or other entities through a sale by auction or direct allocation; and provided further that the total number of allowances made available in a compliance period shall not exceed the cap.

"Department", department of environmental protection.

"RGGI" or "Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative", the Memorandum of Understanding dated December 20, 2005, and any amendments thereto and the corresponding Model Rule and any amendments thereto that establishes a cap and trade program within the northeast region of the United States and other regions to the extent that the Memorandum of Understanding is amended.

(b) The department, in consultation with the department of energy resources, shall adopt rules and regulations establishing a carbon dioxide cap and trade program to limit and reduce the total carbon dioxide emissions released by electric generating stations that generate electric power. The rules and regulations shall comply with RGGI and permit the holders of carbon dioxide allowances to trade them in a regional market to be established through the RGGI.

(c)(1) The department shall provide, by regulation that all allowances issued under the program shall be offered for sale by auction. The proceeds recovered from the allowance auctions shall be deposited in the RGGI Auction Trust Fund established in section 35II of chapter 10. The proceeds shall be used without further appropriation for the following purposes only and shall be in a proportion to be determined by the department of energy resources with the approval of the secretary:

<[Clause (i) of paragraph (1) of subsection (c) effective until December 31, 2011 and applicable by 2008, 169, Secs. 113 and 114.]>

(i) to reimburse a municipality in which the property tax receipts from a coal-fired

electric generating station including, for the purposes of this clause, payments in lieu of taxes and other compensation specified in an agreement between a municipality and an affected property owner, are reduced; provided, however that the amount of the payment shall be the difference between the amount of the property tax receipts, as described above, in fiscal year 2008 and the amount of the property tax receipts, as described above, in subsequent tax years; provided further, that no reimbursement shall be made if, in a tax year, the aggregate amount paid to a municipality by the owner of an electric generating station including, but not limited to, payments in lieu of taxes and property taxes, exceeds the aggregate amount paid to that municipality by that owner in fiscal year 2008; and provided further, that payments from the fund shall be prioritized so that the first payments from the fund shall be made to municipalities under this clause.

(ii) to fund the green communities program established in section 10 of chapter 25A;

(iii) to provide zero interest loans to municipalities, which are not green communities under section 10 of chapter 25A for energy efficiency projects;

(iv) to promote energy efficiency, conservation and demand response; and

(v) to reimburse the commonwealth for costs associated with the administration of the cap and trade program.

(2) Notwithstanding this section, the department may set aside up to 1 per cent of the commonwealth's annual allocation of allowances to support the voluntary green power market which enables electricity consumers to support the development of renewable resources.

(d) The department of energy resources shall adopt regulations governing the auction of allowances. The department of energy resources may hire an independent contractor determined by the office to be qualified to conduct the auction in a manner that ensures the efficiency of the auction, or may provide for participation in a regional auction.

(e) The responsibilities created by establishing a carbon dioxide cap and trade program shall be in addition to any other responsibilities imposed by any other general or special law or rule or regulation and shall not diminish or reduce any power or authority of the department, including the authority to adopt standards and regulations necessary for the commonwealth to join and fully participate in a multistate program at any stage in the development and implementation of such a program intended to control emissions of carbon dioxide or other substances that are determined by the department to be damaging or altering the climate.

(f) Notwithstanding any general or special law or rule or regulation to the contrary, the state comptroller shall grant a permanent waiver or exemption from any applicable charges or assessments made against the proceeds from the auction of allowances under this section by the office of the comptroller under its authority under sections 5D of chapter 29.

(g) Notwithstanding any general or special law or regulation to the contrary, any information required by the department of energy resources or the department of any party participating in the cap and trade program, with the exception of any emission, offset and allowance tracking information required for compliance with the cap and trade program, shall be maintained for the sole and confidential use of the commonwealth, the department, the department of energy resources and their agents. This information shall not be deemed to be a public record as defined in clause Twenty-sixth of section 7 of chapter 4 and shall not be subject to demand for production under section 10 of chapter 66. Aggregates of such information may be prepared and such aggregates shall be public records. All

information collected under this section may be shared with other states which afford such information similar protection from public disclosure.