



Energize Acton News

July 2026 – The Solar Issue

What is in this issue?

- **Upcoming Events**
- **The Good and Bad News about Solar Power**
- **Massachusetts Solar SMART 3.0 Program**
- **A Climate Thought - What Can We Do?**
- **Quick Action of the Month: Eat More Plant-Based Meals**
- **Book/Website/Recipe of the Month**

Tues., July 7th, 7:00pm, zoom, -- **Smart Thermostats and Connected Solutions**. Sponsored by the Green Energy Consumers Alliance. Find out how you can get paid for reducing energy use at peak times. Info and registration [HERE](#).

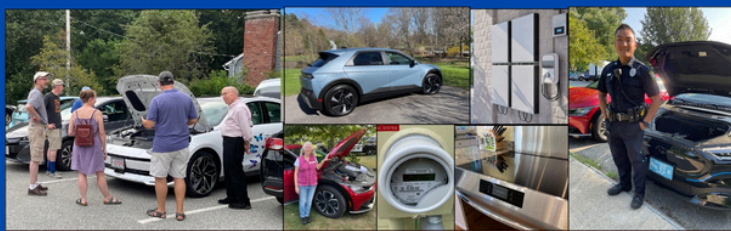
Fri., July 10th, noon, zoom -- **Battery Storage and Connected Solutions**. Sponsored by the Green Energy Consumers Alliance. Find out about battery storage and utility programs where you earn money by drawing on battery power at peak times. Info and registration [HERE](#).

Tues., July 14th, 5-7pm, Acton Memorial Library Parking Lot – **It's Electric! EVs, Your Home, & More**. Sponsored by Energize Acton and the Acton Sustainability Office. EVs are amazing AND important to meeting climate goals! See many different models, plus visit the Eversource *Energy Efficiency Experience Exhibit* for other ideas. Free nibbles! Info/registration [HERE](#).

Mon., July 20, 7pm, Walden Woods, 44 Baker Farm Rd, Lincoln – **Author Talk – Slow Wood: Greener Building from Local Forests, with Brian Donahue**. Sponsored by the Walden Woods Project. Looks at Sustainability vs extraction. Info and registration [HERE](#).

Wed., July 22nd, 6-8pm, NARA Park Pavilion – **Celebration of Plant-Based Meals: A Community Potluck**. Sponsored by Energize Acton. Join us to share the wonderful world of plant-based food at this vegetarian/vegan potluck. Making changes to your eating habits can happen at your own pace & have a positive climate impact. Info/registration [HERE](#).

Wed., July 29th, 7pm, Acton Home – **Biosphere Book Club: Here Come the Sun, by Bill McKibben**. Sponsored by EnergizeActon.org. Should we resign ourselves to the meltdown of our climate and our democracy? Come discuss Bill McKibben's perspective! This will be in person. Address sent upon registration. Sign-up and info [HERE](#).



It's Electric! EVs, Your Home & More

Tues., July 14, 2026

5:00-7:00pm

Acton Memorial Library Parking Lot



Sponsored by the
Acton Sustainability Office &
EnergizeActon.org.

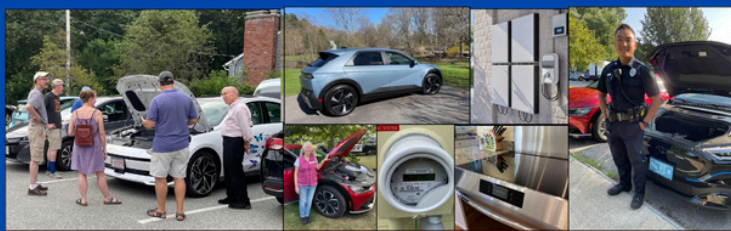


Talk with EV drivers!
Show off your own
EV! Find out @ MA
rebates & home
charging savings.

Maintenance
savings are
also great!

See Town of
Acton EVs.

Visit the Eversource
"Energy Efficiency
Experience" truck &
find out other ways
to go electric & save!

ENJOY THE BOUNTY
OF THE PLANT WORLD!
JOIN US FOR THE
4TH ANNUAL POTLUCK.

A Celebration of Plant-Based Foods

Wed., July 22, 2026
6:00-8:00pm
**NARA Park
Picnic Pavilion**

Good for the climate

DELICIOUS!

Good for our health




Sponsored by the Acton Sustainability Office & EnergizeActon.org.

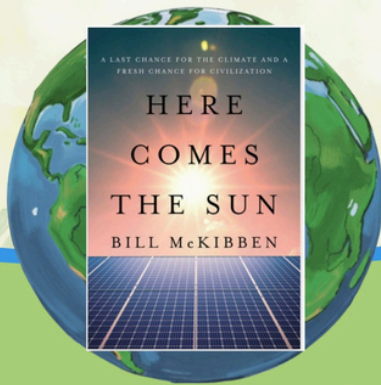
BIOSPHERE BOOK CLUB

for reflections on climate & environment

Wed., July 29, 2026

6:00-8:00pm, Acton Home

**July Title: *Here Comes the Sun*
by Bill McKibben**



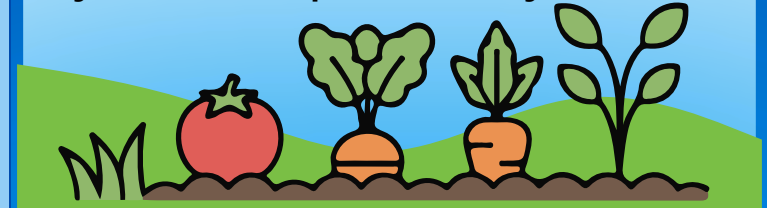
Info/sign-up at [EnergizeActon.org](https://energizeacton.org).
All welcome, whether you have read the book or not.



Quick Climate Action of the Month: *Eat More Plant- Based Meals!*



You do not need to give up entirely on meat, but consider eating 1-3 meals per week without meat protein (esp. beef). Intensive beef ranching has led to serious deforestation in many parts of the world, with real consequences for our climate. On the other hand, many world cuisines have healthy, satisfying, downright delicious vegetarian and vegan recipes. Try some at our picnic on July 22nd!



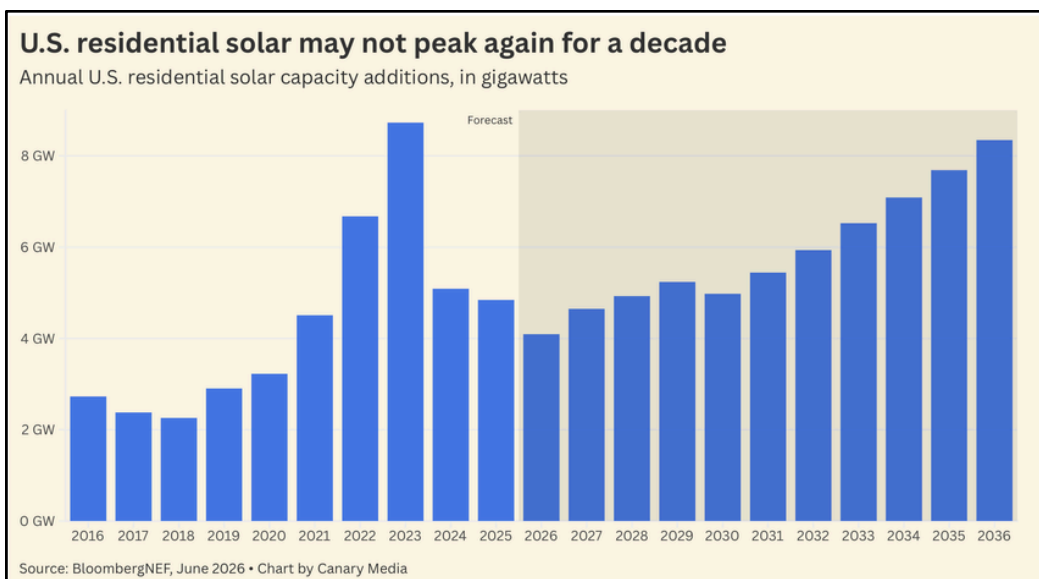
Solar Power – Where are we?

The Good News

As the rest of the world embraces solar power and the many savings it represents, from energy accessibility, energy efficiency, and health, there is positive news here in Massachusetts. First, the **Mass SMART 3.0 program** continues to pay homeowners who adopt rooftop solar. Earlier versions had filled all their cohorts, but last year the MA Department of Energy Resources (DOER) renewed the program. The payments are not massive (in the hundreds yearly), but in tandem with the **Massachusetts net metering** program, the credits and payments mean truly significant, concrete savings on electricity bills. Also, a national program—**Switch Together**—is trying to mimic earlier “solarize” programs where towns helped multiple households obtain reputable solar installation contracts, and the bulk efforts saved homeowners on equipment purchases. Switch Together is not yet in Massachusetts: however, they are establishing a track record in Virginia, Maryland, and Colorado. Plus, they are sharing their experience and data with local municipalities here in MA, so perhaps more savings are on the horizon.

The Bad News

So far this year, rooftop solar sales have slumped seriously (see the graph below). The current administration did away with the very successful Biden solar incentives, plus California also cut back on residential solar inducements. While the California market is showing some resiliency and, according to Canary Media, Florida solar installations have grown 62% so far this year, there is concern that the national market may take a decade to recoup the fantastic growth sparked by Democratic Inflation Reduction Act incentives. Also, bigger developers of solar are facing harsh roadblocks. Canary Media has an informative report on how the industry has largely managed to jump through one hoop to meet a July 2026 deadline; however, the federal budget passed last summer specifies that all these solar (and wind) projects now have a 4-year completion deadline or all incentives will be withdrawn. The fear is that federal hostility to renewables and the inevitable slow pace of state project approvals could doom large clean energy efforts. Another point of anxiety . . . Will rate-payers be left holding the bill?





Summer Reads for the Family

A bit of a renewable theme here--the wonderful picture book, **The Boy Who Harnessed the Wind** (also a Netflix film), the beautiful poetry book, **Footprint**, geared for teens and telling the story of Victorian scientist Eunice Newton Foote, and our July book club author, the great Bill McKibben and **Here Comes the Sun**.

A Climate Thought – Meeting the Solar Moment?

In terms of solar power, the United States finds itself in a unique moment politically, financially, and technically. National leadership, in its determination to support fossil fuels, is creating many roadblocks to solar. Meanwhile, solar in the U.S. is expensive and households are already burdened with growing utility bills, causing state leaders to rethink climate goals. Technically, we have what we need to meet renewable goals, but funding and achieving those goals remain tricky. How much can we do at the local level? Can we find a way to sustain our commitment to renewables and perhaps even make solar affordable? Is there a way that solar savings could help those struggling to pay utility bills through some kind of “community solar” process? N.J. unions, led by the Service Employees International Union, have started a campaign called **“Climate Jobs New Jersey.”** The goals? “To secure energy independence through solar construction” and to provide consumer relief from climbing electrical bills as ratepayers are forced to foot the cost for data centers. These are the kinds of creative solutions that we need!

Heat Waves and Resilience

Please
Be Safe

Acton Cooling Centers

No AC at home? During heat waves the Town offers three cool places to stay safe.

- **Acton Public Safety Facility**, 371 Main (24/7)
- **Acton Memorial Library**, 486 Main St (daily hours)
- **Senior Center/ Human Resources**, 30 Sudbury Rd Rear (daily hours M-F)

Stay hydrated, wear loose clothing, take cool showers, limit outdoor time. Beware of night heat. Consider staying w/ friend/relative who has AC.

Danger Signs

Heat Exhaustion

- Faint/dizzy/sweating
- Pale, clammy skin
- Nausea, vomiting
- Muscle cramps

Get to a cool space, drink water if conscious, take a cool shower/compresses.

Heat Stroke

- Throbbing headache
- No sweating
- Dry, hot, and red skin
- Nausea, passing out

Do NOT give water.
Call 9-1-1 & cool person!
Red Cross Heat Checklist

At Home

For People & Pets

- Stay hydrated
- Wear loose, light clothes
- Take cool showers
- Limit outdoor time
- Run cold H2O on wrist

For Your House/Building

- Windows/blinds closed
- Get an air source heat pump for cooling*
- **Shave the Peak****
- Make a summer **“Power Outage Kit”**

*Acton **Clean Energy Coaches** can advise you; **Hottest hours/use fewer appliances.

THE PLANT-FORWARD RECIPE OF THE MONTH: TOFU & CUCUMBER SALAD W/ SESAME-GINGER DRESSING



*This is another yummy recipe from the defunct **Vegetarian Times** magazine. What makes this dish so good is the dressing. In our house, the tofu and veggies float in the dressing! The soft tofu is best, but we have used firm tofu, too.*

Dressing

1/3 cup vegan mayonnaise (or regular)
1/4 cup unseasoned rice vinegar
3 Tbs. minced fresh ginger
2 Tbs. toasted sesame seeds
4 tsp. tamari or low-sodium soy sauce
2 tsp. mirin
1 1/2 tsp. sugar

Salad

1 16oz package soft tofu, drained
3 Japanese cucumbers or 1 English cuke
1 avocado, halved and sliced
2 oz daikon sprouts, trimmed (optional)
6 green onions, thinly sliced
4 tsp. veg furikake seasoning, such as Eden Shake (optional)

1. To make the dressing, mix all the ingredients in a blender for one minute then chill.
2. To make the salad, cut the tofu into 12 rectangular slices and lay three slices on each of four plates. Arrange the cucumber slices around the tofu and fan out the avocado slices. Scatter the green onions and sprouts over the veggies then drizzle the dressing. Sprinkle with furikake seasoning.

Website/Podcast of the Month



Since we are thinking about solar policy, it makes sense to mention **“Volts,”** a very well-respected podcast that makes energy policy accessible AND interesting! Volts is

available via [substack](#), where the basic podcast is free.

Sustainability Director Andrea Becerra speaks at last month's **Heat Pump Pizza Party**. Below: Kit Wu presents on pricing.

