

GREENFIELD RECORDER

Ashfield chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby seeks to 'enact bold policy' to curb climate change



Members of the Citizens' Climate Lobby participate in a regional conference at the University of Massachusetts in March 2018. Contributed photos.

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ASHFIELD — Several members of the Ashfield chapter of the grassroots nonprofit Citizens' Climate Lobby participated in a virtual climate change conference over the weekend, with plans to schedule meetings with local officials, organizations and businesses to urge them to act on climate in the upcoming year.

Called "[Grit & Gratitude](#)," the three-day virtual conference was intended to empower attendees to get bold climate policy over the finish line. Programming included breakout training workshops to equip attendees with the skills they need to continue advocating for meaningful climate legislation in 2022.

"Our chapter has worked hard to show Rep. Richie Neal and Sens. Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey that our community wants climate action without delay," Harry Dodson of the Ashfield Citizens' Climate Lobby chapter said in a press release. "We met with Rep. Neal's office three times this year, generated six community endorsements for climate action and coordinated with our state Rep. Natalie Blais on climate change efforts at the state level. Four years ago, we sponsored a successful resolution to fight climate change at the Ashfield Town Meeting."

According to Dodson, the Ashfield chapter of Citizens' Climate Lobby has been working for eight years to build political support for carbon pricing. Under a carbon tax model, the government sets a price that emitters must pay for each ton of greenhouse gas emissions they emit.

Dodson said a carbon tax becomes affordable for ordinary Americans when the money collected from corporate polluters is given as a dividend, or "carbon cash back" payment, to every American. The Ashfield chapter's group leader Richard Prée likened the concept to President Joe Biden's COVID-19 relief program. At its core, the idea is intended to protect low- and middle-income Americans who otherwise might not be able to afford the transition.

"It would make the polluters pay for the damage to the Earth's atmosphere," Prée explained. "Pretty soon, fossil fuels would no longer have an official advantage over renewables."

Dodson noted that Ashfield has seen unusually heavy amounts of rain, flooding and even skies turned hazy due to the wildfires out West.

"Moving into 2022, we'll keep up our urgent work to enact bold policy to slow the worst impacts of climate change," he said.

With the conference having concluded, the Ashfield chapter plans to schedule meetings with local and regional officials, organizations and businesses to urge them to act on climate in the upcoming year. In addition to these local efforts, Citizens' Climate Lobby volunteers nationwide have made more than 150,800 calls to congressional offices since the budget reconciliation process began. Prée said the key to getting people to sympathize with the nonprofit's mission ideologically is simple: let them know what's at stake.

“I think the main way to get them on board is by educating them on climate change,” he said.
“It’s worth a lot.”

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