

Boston, other cities, to work to curb renewable energy costs

June 7 2018, by Steve Leblanc



Mayor Jean-Francois Parenteau, left, of Montreal, Quebec, speaks with Mayor Jim Brainard, of Carmel, Ind., following a clean energy panel discussion during the Boston Climate Summit in Boston, Thursday, June 7, 2018. About two dozen mayors and city leaders were attending the event, billed as a chance to explore ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the challenges posed by climate change. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

Boston Mayor Martin Walsh is hoping to work with other cities to drive down the cost of renewable energy by asking developers for price estimates to meet their collective energy demand.

Walsh said the first cities to join the initiative include Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, Orlando, and Portland, Oregon.

Walsh, a Democrat, announced the project Thursday in Boston at the start of an international summit on climate change. Former U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry and former U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Gina McCarthy are scheduled to speak at the event. Both served under President Barack Obama.

About two dozen mayors and city leaders were attending the event, billed as a chance to explore ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the challenges posed by climate change.

In Boston those strategies include creating deployable flood walls to protect waterfront neighborhoods and elevating certain streets and parks to ease flooding concerns, Walsh said.

Another goal is for the city to be carbon neutral by 2050—which will require increased reliance on renewable energy.

Walsh said the proposal to seek lower renewable energy costs is one way to reach that goal. He said he hopes to finalize a list of participating cities later in the summer and then seek estimates from renewable energy companies for ways to meet that combined demand.



Mayor James Palmer, of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, England, raises his hand as he describes the landscape of his city as he is joined by Salt Lake City Mayor Jackie Biskupski during a clean energy panel discussion during the Boston Climate Summit in Boston, Thursday, June 7, 2018. About two dozen mayors and city leaders were attending the event, billed as a chance to explore ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and prepare for the challenges posed by climate change. (AP Photo/Charles Krupa)

Other mayors said they were eager to sign on, saying the agreement could also help create jobs in the renewable energy market.

"Cities wield the power to create demand and transform the energy market, and when we act together we can show the world that environmental stewardship and economic prosperity go hand in hand," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said.

The summit comes about a year after President Donald Trump's administration announced plans to pull out of the Kerry-negotiated Paris

climate accord.

Trump defended the move last June when he announced his decision, saying it was in the country's best interests to pull out of the agreement.

"I cannot in good conscience support a deal that punishes the United States," Trump said at the time. "We're getting out. But we will start to negotiate and see if we can get a better deal. If we can, great. If we can't, that's fine."

Walsh called Trump's decision irresponsible and said it's up to cities to fill what he called a leadership void in part by reducing reliance on fossil fuels and cutting back on greenhouse gas emissions.

"He certainly didn't consult with America's mayors," Walsh said. "He's tried to send us backward. He's tried to pit the environment against the economy. We know this is nonsense."

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