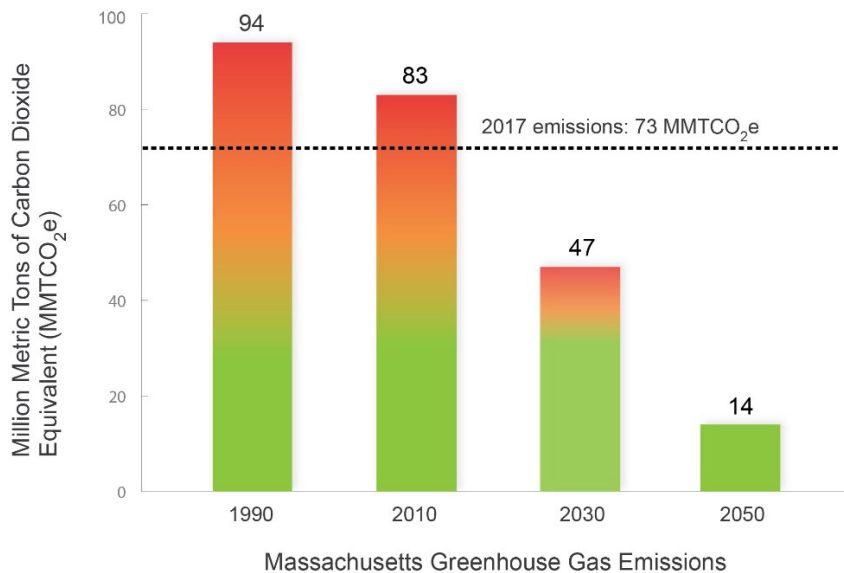


The New Master Plan for Energy in Massachusetts and Why It Matters

The Massachusetts state government passed historic legislation in March of 2021 that introduces a master plan for reducing greenhouse gas (carbon) emissions and combating climate change. “An Act Creating a Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy” sets long-term and intermediate goals while establishing wide-ranging initial steps that will promote rapid, positive change. The legislation includes both *mandatory* requirements and requirements that may *optionally* be adopted by individual Massachusetts communities.

New Legislation’s Targets and Impacts on the Commercial Building Sector



The legislation covers broad territory. To achieve the overall targets illustrated above, Massachusetts will individually set greenhouse gas limits for six sectors, including commercial and industrial building heating and cooling. A significant measure in the act is a requirement for the Commonwealth to replace the outdated “Stretch Energy Code” by 2022. Requirements will be established based on building typology. An official definition of a net-zero building will be confirmed, enabling municipalities to require that new construction be built to either a net-zero standard (high-performance building using only on-site renewable energy) or a net-zero-ready standard (high-performance building with all-electric heating and cooling designed for future on-site and utility grid renewables).

Existing buildings were previously addressed by recent legislation establishing a commercial sustainable energy program to oversee Property Assessed Clean Energy financing (PACE), in subscribing communities, to provide financing of energy efficiency upgrades to existing buildings for paybacks up to 20 years and to disincentivize demolition. Reusing existing building structures preserves their embodied carbon (greenhouse gas emissions released when the materials were mined, processed, transported, and assembled), avoiding the extra carbon emissions associated with new construction.

Ellenzweig's Climate Commitment

We at Ellenzweig have long strived to reduce the carbon footprint of our designs. As designers, we see beyond existing constraints to envision the future, and the new Massachusetts climate roadmap aligns with our own vision. Our expertise in high-performance design can position clients to attain a leadership role in demonstrating environmentally thoughtful decision-making and enjoy greatly reduced energy costs while navigating the requirements of the new legislation.

A Brighter Future

From heightened building design standards and mandates for a greener utility grid, to advancements in environmental equity, the Massachusetts Climate Act provides clear and wide-ranging measures that will help us reduce our collective carbon footprint.