

Carpenter Hill Power

Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) Charlton, Massachusetts

Community Engagement Plan (July 2026 Update)

1. Project Description

Carpenter Hill Power proposes to build and operate a large-scale Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) in Charlton, Massachusetts. The facility would have a capacity of 150 megawatts (MW AC) and 600 megawatt-hours (MWh) of energy storage.

This is a facility that stores electricity in large batteries. The batteries charge when energy is cheaper (e.g. at night) and discharges that stored energy back to the electrical grid when demand is high. The facility does not burn fuel and produces no emissions during operation.

The project site is at 131 Carpenter Hill Road, near the existing Carpenter Hill substation. The current design uses 136 battery packs, reduced from 156 earlier this year, with a fenced equipment area under six acres inside a roughly 15-acre project area on the 47-acre parcel. The facility falls under the jurisdiction of the Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) as a Large Clean Energy Storage Facility under the 2024 Climate Act. The pre-filing engagement requirements of 980 CMR 16.00, finalized February 27, 2026, must be completed before applying to the EFSB.

2. Reason for the Project

- **Grid reliability:** battery storage balances supply and demand and reduces the risk of outages during peak periods.
- **Clean energy integration:** storage holds surplus wind and solar energy and releases it when people need it.
- **Emissions reduction:** storage displaces gas peaker plants that run during high-demand periods.
- **State policy alignment:** the project supports the 2024 Climate Act goals.

3. Project Location and Environmental Justice Screening

The site is in Charlton's A-1 (Agricultural) zoning district, next to existing transmission infrastructure. An EJ screening using the Massachusetts Environmental Public Health Tracking (EPHT) Environmental Justice (EJ) mapping tools found: zero EJ neighborhoods in Charlton, 0.0% of the population in EJ neighborhoods, median household income of \$101,111 (above the statewide median), a community of color population of 9.5%, and an English language isolation rate of 0.2%. Charlton does not meet EJ classification criteria. Carpenter Hill Power remains committed to engagement that meets or exceeds the OEJE's standards for inclusive outreach.

4. Anticipated Project Impacts and Benefits

Potential impacts and how the project addresses them

- **Fire safety:** thermal management, pack spacing, and a vented enclosure design that prevents gas buildup. An Emergency Action Plan is being co-developed with the Charlton Fire Department, and a third-party fire safety specialist is presenting a public webinar on August 19, 2026. A plume analysis modeling different weather conditions is part of the state application and will be shared publicly.
- **Water and wells:** site grading directs water away from homes and captures it on site; the project cannot increase the amount of water leaving the site. Stormwater review continues through the state process.
- **Noise:** the main sound source is cooling fans. A preliminary sound study is underway, and the results will be public.
- **Trees, visual character, and wildlife:** expected clearing is limited to about 10 acres at the upper end, equipment sits about 500 feet from the nearest home (the landowner), and replanting and conservation partnerships are under discussion.
- **Construction:** on-site construction period typically ranges from 6 to 9 months, with truck routes and timing coordinated with the town and erosion controls in place.
- **Decommissioning:** the owner must post a decommissioning bond up front; at end of life the equipment is removed, batteries are reused or recycled, and the land is restored. These conditions carry to any future owner.
- **Property values:** addressed with relevant research and data and raised directly with residents.

Anticipated benefits

Benefit commitments are being co-created with Charlton residents. The draft Community Benefit Plan options center the priorities residents have named through engagement to date: Senior Center support, fire department equipment and training, PILOT terms, conservation and tree mitigation, local hiring, vocational education partnerships with BayPath and the Dudley-Charlton schools. Specific commitments will use the SMARTIE framework and will be published in the draft CBP.

5. Key Stakeholders

Sixteen stakeholder categories are identified for outreach, covering residents and organizations within one mile of the site. The map below has been updated from categories to named, counted stakeholders.

Group	Who
Abutters	10 abutting parcels (9 owners): 6 residential (5 owner-occupied, 1 absentee-owned), 2 commercial or institutional (Karl Storz Endovision; Overlook Communities campus), 2 undeveloped (one family trust). 8 additional neighborhood parcels on Carpenter Hill Road and Snake Hill Road receive abutter-level outreach.
Landowner	Dave and Patricia Ebbeling, 131 Carpenter Hill Road.
Municipal officials	Select Board; Planning Board; Town Administrator Andrew Golas; Building Commissioner Curtis Meskus; Fire Chief Rob Barton; Conservation/Stormwater Director Rose Conway; Town Planner Dillon Maxfield.
State agencies	OEJE and DPP; EFSB; MEPA Office; MassDEP; MassWildlife/NHESP; Massachusetts Historical Commission.
Regional planning	Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission.
Civic and environmental organizations	Keep Charlton Beautiful (outreach planned); Opacum Land Trust; Charlton Heritage Preservation Trust; Mass Audubon; The Trustees.
Schools and education	BayPath Regional Vocational Technical High School; Dudley-Charlton Regional School District; Charlton Public Library.
Community organizations	Senior Center Feasibility Committee; Economic Development Commission; youth sports and recreation groups.
Community members	Citizen Advisory Committee members; public meeting attendees; residents contacting the project through the website and phone.

6. Agency Consultations

The April plan listed local bodies only. This update adds the state agencies from which the project needs permits or reviews, per OEJE's April 9 guidance.

Agency / entity	Scope of consultation	Status
OEJE / DPP	Pre-filing engagement review; CBP standards	Engaged; kickoff April 9, 2026; follow-up being scheduled
Energy Facilities Siting Board	Consolidated permit under the 2024 Climate Act; 980 CMR 16.00	Pre-filing outreach period underway
MEPA Office	Environmental review	Planned fall 2026
MassDEP	Stormwater, wetlands, materials handling	Planned fall 2026
MassWildlife / NHESP	Rare species and habitat	Planned fall 2026
Massachusetts Historical Commission	Historic and archaeological resources	Planned fall 2026
Charlton Select Board	Municipal governance; community priorities	Met April 14, 2026
Charlton Planning Board	Land use and site context	Met June 3, 2026
Charlton Town Administrator and department heads	Municipal coordination	Met June 4 and July 8, 2026
Charlton Fire Department	BESS fire safety; Emergency Action Plan	Engaged; ongoing
Charlton Conservation Commission	Wetlands and stormwater	Planned fall 2026
Charlton Board of Health / DPW	Health questions; roads and access	Planned fall 2026

7. Meetings Held and Planned

Held

Date	Stakeholder	Type
April 9, 2026	OEJE / DPP	Agency meeting (virtual) — pre-filing kickoff
April 14, 2026	Charlton Select Board	Municipal meeting — project introduction
April 14–15, 2026	Abutting neighbors	Door-knocking; followed by mailers
May 18, 2026	Annual Town Meeting attendees	Pop-up outreach table
June 3, 2026	Citizen Advisory Committee	CAC Meeting 1, Charlton Public Library
June 3, 2026	Charlton Planning Board	Municipal meeting — land use and site context
June 4, 2026	Town Administrator	Stakeholder meeting
July 8, 2026	Charlton department heads	Staff briefing convened by the Town Administrator
July 8, 2026	General public	Public Meeting 1, Charlton Public Library; written answers to every question posted July 17

Planned

Date	Stakeholder	Type
July 20, 2026	OEJE / DPP	Follow-up consultation
August 4, 2026	Citizen Advisory Committee	CAC Meeting 2 (virtual, 7:00–8:30 PM)
August 19, 2026	General public	Fire Safety Webinar, two sessions (12:00 PM and 7:00 PM), recorded and posted

Date	Stakeholder	Type
August 2026	CMRPC; Keep Charlton Beautiful; BayPath; Dudley-Charlton schools	Stakeholder meetings
September 5, 2026	Abutters	In-person “Kitchen Table Talks”
September 6, 2026	General public	Old Home Day booth, Town Common
September 9, 2026	Citizen Advisory Committee	CAC Meeting 3 (virtual, 7:00–8:30 PM)
September 23, 2026	General public	Community Public Forum at Dexter Hall, three sessions
September–October 2026	General public	Open comment period on the draft Community Benefit Plan
October–November 2026	General public	Publish Community Benefit Plan; conclude pre-filing activities

8. Regulatory Milestones Under the Final Rules

- **Quarterly updates:** project updates go to the email distribution list at least quarterly, per 980 CMR 16.04(1)(c). The website signup is in the main navigation, footer, and Participate section.
- **Status Checklist:** the Pre-filing Engagement Status Checklist and supporting documentation go to DPP at the midpoint of pre-filing, targeted for August/September 2026.
- **Completion Checklist and Pre-filing Notice:** filed at the close of pre-filing activities, targeted for November 2026. The Notice must precede the application by 60 to 90 days.
- **Application:** EFSB filing anticipated in 2027. ISO-NE interconnection application targeted for October 2026.
- **Intervenor support:** the website carries a prominent notice and link for the state's Intervenor Support Grant Program (220 CMR 34.00), which can fund eligible groups' participation in the proceeding.
- **CIA and site suitability:** the Cumulative Impact Analysis (980 CMR 15.00) and Site Suitability Assessment will be completed, posted, and presented to the community.

9. Engagement Approach Summary

The engagement philosophy is unchanged: transparency, honesty, accountability, and respect. The process uses overlapping channels, so no one depends on a single door: public meetings and forums, the CAC, the project website with a translation tool and a comment form, the email distribution list, mailers and door-knocking for abutters, pop-ups at town events, and a phone line. Meetings are held at accessible community locations at varied times, with food provided, and virtual options where possible. Translation, interpretation, and other accommodations are arranged on request, and that offer now appears on every upcoming event listing. Engagement does not stop at filing; it continues through the EFSB proceedings, construction, and operations.

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