

Michael Flaherty On Energy And Environmental Policies

A Committed Leader for a Sustainable Boston

As a parent of young children, Michael Flaherty has always been concerned about the legacy that is left behind for the next generation and sees it as our shared responsibility to take aggressive action today to ensure that we have a healthy, sustainable city for tomorrow. Our city has received good marks for its bold energy and environment goals, but now it's time to put programs and strategies into practice that will make achieving - and surpassing - those goals a firm reality. Equally as important, the pace of our city's progress in this arena will have a direct impact on our ability to secure a new kind of lasting economic growth by capturing the economic benefits and stability that will come from the green revolution.

In order to maximize the funding assistance offered by the federal recovery bill, Michael has repeatedly encouraged the city to integrate energy efficiency funding with workforce development funding so that energy dollars translate into both greater efficiencies and more jobs for Boston residents. Most recently, Michael put forth an Earth Day platform that puts strong emphasis on strategies that will ensure that the city's commitment to sustainability translates into sensible, affordable green practices being employed by both the city, as well as its residents and businesses.

As City Councilor, Michael has promoted environmental and energy efficiency policies that are meaningful, viable and implementable. Residents can trust that he will continue to make greening our city a top priority so that we can improve our environment and keep more money in the wallets of residents and businesses.

Ushering in Green Innovation to City Hall

Greening City Hall. Retrofitting existing buildings in Boston is a commonsense approach to both going green and saving green. The potential benefits of greening our city headquarters are significant. We could save millions in taxpayer money in reduced energy costs, improve the health of city workers, and lessen our impact on the environment. At the same time, the installation and maintenance of the green upgrades would also create important green collar job opportunities for Boston residents. Michael has repeatedly called upon the Administration to green the current City Hall and convened a crowded City Council hearing last November where support for his proposal was provided by numerous architects, community activists and residents.

While it's not easy being green, it isn't as hard as the Mayor makes it out to be. Being green doesn't mean you have to bulldoze existing buildings to create new ones. In fact, that's a misleading and dangerous fallacy that could lead to greater harm on the environment and greater costs to our wallets. Michael has passionately argued that the city of Boston needs to lead by example and show residents of our great city - and show cities across the world - the leadership role that Boston has assumed by greening its current City Hall. With some vision and bold

leadership, we could transform the so-called ugliest building in the world into a world icon for innovation, ingenuity and responsible, sustainable living.

During Earth Day 2009, Michael proposed a series of specific actions that would make City Hall more efficient and eco-friendly, including a real green roof, immediate installation of sensor technology, and the greening of City Hall Plaza.

Greening City Hall's Roof. City Hall needs a *real* Green Roof, such as the one Mayor Daley implemented on Chicago's City Hall in 2000. Whereas the Green Roof plan unveiled by Mayor Menino in 2005 consisted of a scattering of potted plants, Chicago's 20,300 square foot City Hall rooftop garden has 20,000 plants of more than 150 varieties, and has led to the greening of many other Chicago rooftops. In fact, Chicago has more green roofs than any other U.S. city. A green roof is a smart investment with countless benefits, including effective storm water management and reduced heating and cooling bills. The greening of City Hall's roof would also serve as a quality opportunity to partner with organizations such as YouthBuild to provide Boston youth with green job training. Under the YouthBuild program, youth design, construct and maintain the green roof. The yearly upkeep would provide a steady source of teen jobs.

Sensor Technologies. Michael's record on sensor technology can be traced back to April 2008 when he called for a hearing to discuss installing sensor technology in City Hall, as well as other city-owned and city-operated buildings. He was pleased to hear the Administration agree with his recommendation when, seven months later, they announced that such sensor technologies would be installed at City Hall by March 2009. Concerned that the project has remained incomplete, Michael called upon the city again to immediately complete this energy efficiency project.

Greening City Hall Plaza. While much attention and debate has been centered around the actual City Hall building, Michael wants to expand the greening efforts to City Hall Plaza. Hard surfaces, like our City Hall plaza, cause large amounts of storm water runoff during those summertime thunderstorms. Through the integration of plants, trees and porous surfaces we can green the plaza and effectively manage storm water runoff, reduce the costs of storm water processing by having it partially cleaned by the soil and reduce the total amount that reaches the sewers and recharges our groundwater supply. Other significant benefits of replacing hard surfaces with strategically placed plants and soil is regulating urban heat and reducing the energy use of surrounding buildings, air pollution and green house gas emissions. A green City Hall plaza would also provide a more livable, welcoming environment for residents and visitors. Lastly, a green City Hall plaza would also serve as a site for green jobs training and would provide our youth with summer job opportunities for years to come.

Fostering Sustainable Living

Increasing Boston's recycling rates. Michael's record for increasing the city's recycling capabilities dates back several years and includes his 2007 call for the city to adopt RecycleBank's incentive-based recycling as well as his support for increasing the number of recycling options throughout the city, including its parks and open spaces. As part of his Earth

Day 2009 platform, Michael called upon the city to immediately make its single stream pilot program citywide as its benefits have been clearly demonstrated by the nine neighborhoods currently participating. A citywide program would mean an additional ten neighborhoods would be included in this very efficient program.

Michael also proposed that the city mandate that construction and demolition (C&D) debris be recycled. Under a 2006 state regulation, the disposal of unprocessed C&D materials is prohibited from entering municipal solid waste streams, but it does allow for such debris to be sent out of state or to be processed in accordance with solid waste regulations, meaning it still ends up in a landfill. While the state regulation is intended to encourage recycling, it does not require it, making a municipal mandate essential. San Francisco's high recycling and diversion rates can be partly attributed to its 2006 ordinance that mandated the recycling of C&D debris. This ordinance affects all construction projects such as new construction, remodels and partial demolitions, and requires the building permit holder or the property owner to make sure that all C&D materials removed from the project are properly recycled. Construction debris is a huge burden on the waste stream and by eliminating it, recycling percentages will jump significantly, as evidenced by San Francisco's high recycling rate. Portland Oregon also requires that 75% of construction and demolition debris from government construction be recycled and for any commercial construction over 50,000 square feet. Oakland, California has also positioned itself to be a leader in this recycling arena, adopting an ordinance in 2003 which subscribes to a 75% waste reduction by 2010, a goal that relies significantly on its recycling and reuse of C&D debris. One of the ways that Oakland has reused its recycled C&D debris is for roads improvement projects.

In addition, Michael has proposed that the city follow the lead of San Francisco and require the recycling of materials from special events. With Boston the home to many special events like street fairs, sporting events, concerts and festivals, this requirement could make a significant impact on our recycling capabilities and at the same time, carve out a new opportunity for the city to reap a tangible benefit from these public events.

Michael's efforts to increase recycling rates in Boston include his idea for the city to facilitate public-private partnerships where local restaurants provide their compost-able material, kitchen trimming and plate scrapings to neighborhood gardens and city parks in exchange for reduced hauling fees.

Educating and empowering residents and businesses. As an early supporter of the nonprofit program, *Energy Smackdown*, Michael understands the importance - and power - of effective education and outreach. Reducing Boston's carbon footprint requires an understanding and commitment from residents to transform their lifestyles and homes to be more eco-friendly. In addition to advocating for a partnership between the city and *Energy Smackdown*, he also proposed that the city launch its own "green" city website as a way to genuinely ensure that the city increases its use of clean energy and becomes an ideal location for green businesses. With a user-friendly one-stop city website that serves as a clearinghouse of "green information," the city can make it easy for its residents and businesses to adopt greener lifestyles and help the city to reduce its overall impact on the environment. At the same time, the city's promotion of local

green businesses via the website will increase green business activity in our city and make Boston a more attractive place for green companies to start-up or expand.

Website components would include: Information about green products and descriptions of local green businesses and their services; guides for how to conduct energy-saving audits/weatherizations/retrofits on a home or apartment; explanations about how to capitalize on tax credits and rebates and city-assisted loans to finance such projects; suggestive steps to green residents' lifestyles that will reduce their carbon footprint and their energy bills; a page devoted to advertising Boston residences put up for sale which have been made energy efficient (i.e. solar panels, weatherization, etc); a social-networking piece could be added where residents could comment or blog about their experiences and share new ideas and tips for going green.

Keeping Boston Accountable to its Promises for a Cleaner and Healthier Boston

Combating global warming. Concerned by the city's slow progress to reduce the city's green house gas (GHG) emissions by 7% of the 1990 levels by 2012 and its questionable ability to track yearly progress, Michael has called on the city to recommit itself to adhering to yearly inventories of the emission levels for all municipal buildings. Taking two years to form a leadership committee that is tasked to develop the city's GHG emission reduction plan is not good enough, as we are only three years away from our deadline.

Even if there are complexities surrounding these yearly audits, the City needs to track its environmental progress in order to know whether we are employing effective and cost efficient strategies to combat global warming. To that end, we need to determine how to make such inventories feasible, which may require working closely with the State or as part of a multi-city initiative, as articulated by the state's law signed last year. Through partnerships we could minimize the costs and labor required by GHG emissions inventories and could establish a network to share ideas and innovations that further lower GHG emissions. Furthermore, the public inventory will help us to determine what we can do together to help the city advance sustainable lifestyles for all residents and businesses.

Strengthening the city's commitment and oversight. Technically, the city's Article 80 process includes a provision that requires projects over 50,000 square feet to be LEED certifiable, but Article 80 process remains a flawed process that frequently delays responsible development and cannot be exclusively relied upon to guarantee that the city is taking all steps to ensure that every project is developed with the most sustainable design. That's why, during Earth Day 2009, Michael proposed that the city bring greater accountability and oversight to its sustainable planning and development policies by creating a Director of Sustainability within the Boston Redevelopment Authority. This new role will be empowered and held accountable to ensuring that all sustainable measures are taken for projects of all sizes throughout all stages of development so that each project achieves its lowest possible carbon footprint. This person would also be required to integrate the city's sustainability goals into all facets of city government by facilitating cross-departmental participation in the creation of environmentally sustainable initiatives.

Securing a Stronger Future for Boston

As Mayor, Michael will aggressively commit to making renewable energy, energy efficiency improvements and eco-friendly lifestyles a cornerstone of his administration and will begin this endeavor by replicating best practices successfully implemented across the country. His efforts to increase responsible lifestyles will expand into our public schools where our future leaders will receive hands-on learning at the earliest of ages so they can acquire an understanding of the importance of conservation and investing in clean, renewable energy.

Recognizing the importance of having strong policies and innovative technologies that expand our capabilities for renewable energy, Michael will work tirelessly to make Boston a destination where leading companies specializing in solar and wind want to invest. That is also why he will continue to push for more expansive and inclusive green job training programs so that prospective businesses we try to recruit are confident that Boston has a workforce that is prepared to meet the new labor needs demanded by the growing green sector.

Michael's mayoral administration will also revolutionize our municipal solar program by expanding partnerships with the private sector and capitalizing on the benefits of being a designated U.S. solar city.

Achieving responsible energy and environmental goals is not easy, but a Flaherty Mayoral Administration will take steps to ensure that the city - as well as residents of all ages and incomes - is armed with the support, information and resources necessary to achieve our goals.