

# CLIMATE ADAPTATION FORUM

*Environmental Business Council of New England, Inc.  
Sustainable Solutions Lab at the University of Massachusetts Boston*

## **Unprecedented Funding for Unprecedented Times: Demystifying Federal Funds for Climate Resilience**

Friday, March 4, 2022



Save the Date!  
**Friday, June 3, 2022**

Forum Focus: Extreme Heat and Drought

## AGENDA

**10:00 a.m.**

### **Welcome**

- Kelly Knee, Forum Organizer  
Executive Director of Ocean Sciences, RPS North America

### **In Remembrance of:**



### **Lauren Sampson (1991 – 2022)**

Steering Committee Member, Climate Adaptation Forum  
Staff Attorney, Lawyers for Civil Rights

### **Forum Co-Chairs & Moderators**

- Nasser Brahim, Senior Climate Resiliency Specialist, Woods Hole Group
- Carolyn Meklenberg, Regional Coordinator for Greater Boston  
Municipal Vulnerability Program  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- Alex Papali, Political Director, Center for Economic Democracy

### **Forum Introduction**

- Nasser Brahim, Woods Hole Group

**10:10 a.m.**

### **Access to Federal Funding for Community Resilience**

- Kasia Hart, Government Affairs Policy Analyst  
Metropolitan Area Planning Council
- Brendan Sweeney, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs  
Executive Office of Administration and Finance  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
- Mayor Gary Christenson, City of Malden, MA

**Moderator:** Carolyn Meklenburg, Massachusetts EEA

**11:00 a.m.**

### **Break**

**11:10 a.m.**

### **Federal Investment, Community Resilience, and Equity Justice 40**

- Samantha Medlock, CFM, Senior Counsel  
Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, U.S. House of Representatives
- Krystal Laymon, Deputy Director for Climate Resilience  
Council on Environmental Quality, Executive Office of the President
- Justin Schott, Project Manager, Energy Equity Project, Urban Energy Justice Lab  
University of Michigan School for Environment & Sustainability
- Elizabeth Yeampierre, Executive Director, UPROSE

**Moderator:** Alex Papali, Center for Economic Democracy

**12:25 p.m.**

### **Adjourn & Closing Remarks**

- Nasser Brahim, Woods Hole Group

## FORUM CO-CHAIRS

**Nasser Brahim**, Senior Climate Resiliency Specialist  
Woods Hole Group  
107 Waterhouse Road, Bourne, MA 02532  
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Mr. Brahim is a Senior Climate Resiliency Specialist at Woods Hole Group, an integrated coastal engineering, science, and technology firm. He helps coastal communities build climate resilience through vulnerability assessments, resiliency plans, and design and operational improvements. Mr. Brahim has advised local, State, and non-profit partners on how to integrate climate resiliency considerations in policies and regulations, including Boston, Hingham, Hull, Gloucester, Oak Bluffs, Swampscott, Westport, Massport, and the Conservation Law Foundation. He has also led climate resiliency projects with municipalities, wastewater utilities, non-profit land conservancies, higher education institutions, and real estate property managers. His projects have earned numerous engineering, planning, and design awards and been covered by NPR, The Boston Globe, New York Times, The Washington Post, and PBS NewsHour. Mr. Brahim is the Board Vice-President of the Mystic River Watershed Association and a certified consultant under the Massachusetts Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program. He holds a Master of Environmental Management from Yale University and Bachelor of Arts from Florida International University.

**Carolyn Meklenburg**, Greater Boston Regional Coordinator  
Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program  
Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114  
617-894-7128 | carolyn.meklenburg@mass.gov

Carolyn Meklenburg is the Greater Boston Regional Coordinator for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Program. She works with municipalities on local climate change adaptation planning and implementation projects that are funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition to assisting communities with grant management, she connects MVP grantees with resources and local partners to support an equitable and holistic approach to building climate resilience.

Prior to her current role, Carolyn most recently worked with the City of Medford's Office of Energy & Environment on their climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning process, while earning her M.A. in Urban & Environmental Planning & Policy from Tufts University. Her thesis work focused on the opportunities and challenges of collaborating at a watershed scale on climate adaptation planning. Before graduate school, Carolyn worked for an urban conservation organization in Lowell, MA (Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust) and, prior to that, served with AmeriCorps Cape Cod. She graduated from Stonehill College with a B.A. in English, and currently resides in Boston.

**Alex Papali**, Political Director  
Center for Economic Democracy  
434 Massachusetts Avenue, Suite #201, Boston, MA 02118  
alex@economicdemocracy.us

Alex has lived in the Boston area 30 years, organizing locally since high school. His areas of focus have ranged from prison issues to immigrant rights to tenant organizing—with the common goal of addressing structural causes of injustice and obstacles to sustainability.

In prior roles, Alex has worked towards 'energy democracy' and fair access to the benefits of energy efficiency programs, clean local energy infrastructure through "community microgrids," and a robust green economy that empowers communities at the frontlines of climate disruption and systemic inequities. At CED, he supports municipal innovations like participatory budgeting, statewide worker-ownership infrastructure and federal-level interventions to ensure community control of new investments and democratic governance.

A perpetual student at the University of Life, Alex is actively plotting his next adventure off the grid.

## **SPEAKERS**

### **Mayor Gary Christenson**, Town of Malden

Commonwealth of Massachusetts

215 Pleasant Street, 4th Floor, Malden, MA 02148

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Mayor Gary Christenson has dedicated himself toward serving the public since high school when he was elected Class President in his junior and senior years. After graduating from Malden High School, he went on to Suffolk University where he achieved a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science and Master's Degree in Public Administration, and later earned a Juris Doctorate at Suffolk University's Law School.

During that time, Gary worked at the State House where he served as a Budget Analyst and later as the Budget Director for the Middlesex Sheriff's Office. He also devoted a combined 13 years of elected service to the Malden School Committee and City Council.

Since becoming Mayor in January 2012, Gary has worked in unison with residents and businesses to tackle the many challenges facing the City. He does this by leading by example and an illustration of that can be found when he picks up litter on his walk to work. He embodies the belief that we are in this together to make our community the best it can be.

Gary also believes that communication is critical to a better Malden. He can regularly be found on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and SnapChat sharing pictures and videos on the great things happening throughout the city. Finally, he has been committed to fostering an inclusive environment for Malden's vibrant and diverse community by encouraging citizen engagement and enhancing the delivery of services for all residents.

### **Kasia Hart**, Government Affairs Policy Analyst

Metropolitan Area Planning Council

60 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111

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Kasia joined MAPC in 2015 and is a Policy Analyst with the Government Affairs department. In this role, she works with internal stakeholders to identify and develop priority legislation and funding initiatives to pursue with legislators and partner organizations. Kasia focuses on transportation initiatives and legislation in collaboration with several state and regional coalitions and committees, and also plays an active role in federal funding advocacy. Additionally, Kasia coordinated the development of the policy and programmatic recommendations of MetroCommon x 2050, the next regional plan for Metro Boston.

In her previous role on the Transportation department as a transportation policy and planning specialist, she focused on a wide range of transportation policy and planning projects, including Complete Streets, MBTA finance and transit-oriented development policy research, Hubway coordination, and municipal parking issues.

**Krystal Laymon**, Deputy Director for Climate Resilience  
White House Council on Environmental Quality  
Executive Office of the President  
202-881-9771 | Krystal.R.Laymon@ceq.eop.gov

Krystal Laymon specializes in climate, resilience, and energy policy. She currently serves as the Deputy Director for Climate Resilience at the White House Council on Environmental Quality. Previously, she managed a team at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) that supports disaster recovery and mitigation efforts. In addition, Krystal had served as a U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) policy advisor supporting community resilience and equity strategies, and leading interagency coordination.

**Samantha Medlock**, CFM, Senior Counsel  
Select Committee on the Climate Crisis  
U.S. House of Representatives  
H2-359 Ford House Office Building, Washington D.C. 20515  
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Samantha Medlock is senior counsel with the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, leading work to advance climate science, adaptation, and resilience, including the wider implementation of codes and standards to decarbonize the built environment and reduce climate risk. Sam led development of the Climate Crisis Action Plan for Congress on climate science, resilience, public health, national security, and financial risk. She joined the Committee from a private sector role in climate risk management, insurance, and finance. Previously, Sam was senior advisor in the Obama White House, coordinating climate and disaster policy across the Executive Office of the President and the administration, modernizing federal flood policy, and managing the White House Climate Insurance Partnership. She has more than 25 years of experience in environmental, land use, and disaster law and policy serving states, regional partnerships, and local governments. Sam has held multiple posts in academia, including with the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado-Boulder, the University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, and the Santa Barbara & Ventura Colleges of Law, where she launched new curricula on emerging national security threats. Sam is a Juris Doctor graduate with honors of Vermont Law School and earned a Bachelor of Science summa cum laude from Texas Woman's University.

**Justin Schott**, Project Manager, Energy Equity Project  
Urban Energy Justice Lab  
University of Michigan School for Environment & Sustainability  
914-261-1907 | jbschott@umich.edu

Justin Schott serves as Project Manager of the Energy Equity Project. He is honored to work in a field full of creative, savvy justice-minded colleagues and allies and is fascinated by conversations about how to drive and measure equity in clean energy investments.

Prior to coming to EEP, Schott was Executive Director of EcoWorks, a Detroit non-profit, from 2015-2020. He is an avid social entrepreneur and a recognized sustainability leader in Detroit. Prior to becoming Executive Director, Schott designed and managed the launch and operations of numerous community programs, including the Youth Energy Squad (founder), which grew from a summer pilot employing four students in 2009 to a city-wide partnership with Detroit Public Schools Community District. Schott has also worked closely on the creation of utility programs, including the Home Energy Consultation Program, which provided in-home energy efficient installations and education to 10,500 households in its first 7 months. Schott has

chaired the Coalition to Keep Michigan Warm and is a member of steering committees of the Detroit Environmental Agenda; Housing, Health and Heatwaves project; and Southeast Michigan Stewardship Coalition and continues to serve as project manager of the Detroit Climate Strategy.

Justin Schott is Project Manager of the Energy Equity Project at University of Michigan. Previously, Schott was Executive Director of EcoWorks, a Detroit non-profit, from 2015-2020. Prior to becoming Executive Director, Schott designed and managed the launch and operations of numerous community programs, including the Youth Energy Squad (founder), which grew to a city-wide social and environmental justice initiative and summer workforce development program. Schott plays leadership roles in community-based participatory research, regulatory and governmental sustainability initiatives. He holds a M.S. from U of M and continues to serve as project manager for the Detroit Climate Strategy.

**Brendan Sweeney**, Director of Intergovernmental Affairs  
Executive Office of Administration and Finance  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
State House, Room 373, Boston, MA 02133  
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Brendan has been with the Commonwealth's Executive Office for Administration and Finance (A&F) since 2018 and currently serves in the Federal Funds Office (FFO) as the Director of Intergovernmental Affairs. Since joining FFO in 2020, Brendan has served as the lead on all matters impacting municipalities, including managing the Commonwealth's \$500+ million Coronavirus Relief Fund – Municipal Program (CvRF-MP) and spearheading municipal technical assistance efforts for use of the Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (CLFRF) from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

Previously, Brendan worked as a Fiscal Policy Analyst with A&F, focusing on housing, economic development, and education policy. Before his time in state government, he worked in local government for the Town Manager in Reading, MA.

Brendan holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from Suffolk University and a Bachelor's degree from Gordon College. He currently serves as a City Councilor in his hometown of Beverly, MA.

**Elizabeth Yeampierre**, Executive Director  
UPROSE  
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Elizabeth Yeampierre is an internationally recognized Puerto Rican environmental/climate justice leader of African and Indigenous ancestry, born and raised in New York City. Elizabeth is co-chair of the Climate Justice Alliance, a national frontline led organization and Executive Director of UPROSE, Brooklyn's oldest Latino community-based organization. Elizabeth was the 1st Latina Chair of the USEPA National Environmental Justice Advisory Council and opening speaker for the first White House Council on Environmental Quality Forum on Environmental Justice under Obama. Elizabeth has been featured in the NY Times as a visionary paving the path to Climate Justice. She was named by Apolitical as Climate 100: The World's Most Influential People in Climate Policy, also featured in Vogue as one of 13 Climate Warriors in the world and a recipient of the Frederick Douglass Abolitionist Award FD200. Recently, she has spoken at Oxford University, the Ethos Conference in Brazil and the Hague.