

Local clean technology lauded

By [Dan McDonald/Daily News staff](#)

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FRAMINGHAM — As Amy Perlmutter zigzags the state speaking with business and political leaders trying to mold recommendations regarding the development of a clean technology boom, a steady theme has emerged.

"Manufacturing is important and we shouldn't write it off," she said. "That keeps popping up."

Perlmutter, an independent consultant in the clean tech industry, moderated a brainstorming session with local political and business leaders inside Bose's Reservoir Building yesterday morning.

The wide-ranging discussion will be used to mold the Lowell Center for Sustainable Production's final clean tech report expected in the coming months.

A 495/MetroWest Corridor Partnership Inc. stat sheet distributed at the forum backed up Perlmutter's assertion about the often overlooked role of the manufacturing industry.

The region's manufacturers created \$3.7 billion in payroll in 2006, according to the organization. Locally, that sector is already tinged with hi-tech innovators.

Specifically, the partnership cites Creganna's medical device manufacturing; Genzyme and Sepracor's life science and pharmaceutical manufacturing; EMC's information storage and retrieval technology systems manufacturing; Evergreen Solar's microchip manufacturing; and solar panel manufacturing as examples of tech muscle in the area.

Some manufacturers do not shy away from clean technology, according to the partnership's executive director Paul Matthews.

Genzyme's newest \$125 million Science Center on New York Avenue is Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certified, he said.

Staples officials have dabbled with solar technology and its Framingham headquarters is interested in wind turbine possibilities, which would benefit the state and the region's long-term competitiveness to master clean technology and alternative energy practices, Matthews said.

While clean tech is starting to make ecological and economic sense for the area's manufacturing sector, there's always room for improvement, Perlmutter said.

"We could produce the physical windmills or be making less chemicals," she said. "Environment and economic developments are not mutually exclusive, and Massachusetts is really poised to be a leader."

However, cleaner initiatives that call for more stringent regulations regarding manufacturers that deal with toxic substances will likely draw opposition.

Natick resident Stephen Roche, president for Victory Group, a government affairs and lobbying firm, said, "They will be a very vigorous debate on safer alternatives legislation."

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