



**MARKET MONITOR REPORT ON THE ELECTRICITY  
GENERATOR EMISSIONS LIMITS PROGRAM (310 CMR 7.74):  
AUCTION 2021-4**

**Prepared for:**

**Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection on behalf of the  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts**

**Prepared by:**

**POTOMAC  
ECONOMICS**

September 16, 2021

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Potomac Economics is the Market Monitor for the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (“MassDEP”) program to limit CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from electricity generating facilities located in Massachusetts.<sup>1</sup> Potomac Economics monitors the conduct of market participants in the auctions and in the secondary market to identify indications of anti-competitive conduct. This report discusses our assessment of Auction 2021-4, which was held on September 15, 2021.

Seven bidders participated in the offering of 1,001,333 CO<sub>2</sub> allowances for the 2021 compliance year. Bids were submitted to purchase 1.23 times the available supply of allowances, resulting in a clearing price of \$10.00 per metric ton. Auction 2021-4 was the last of four auctions that will be conducted to sell allowances for the 2021 compliance year.

Based on our review of auction outcomes and bidding of individual Regulated Entities, we find:

- Most of the allowances were awarded to Regulated Entities who will need them to satisfy their forecasted compliance obligations for 2021, while some were awarded to firms that will likely use them for compliance in subsequent years and/or sell them in the secondary market.
- The clearing price of \$10.00 per metric ton was higher than secondary market transaction prices reported for 2021 compliance year allowances and the \$7.75 per metric ton clearing price in Auction 2021-3 which was held in June. Prices remain high relative to levels that would be expected given the projected supply and demand for allowances and levels anticipated based on analysis that was performed to support the implementation of the program.<sup>2</sup>
- Bid prices were widely dispersed, reflecting considerable variation among Regulated Entities in their remaining needs for 2021 compliance and in their expectations regarding the value of allowances. The wide dispersion of bid prices reflects that relatively little market information has been available regarding the value of allowances.

In summary, most allowances were awarded to the firms that will likely need them for 2021 compliance, while some acquired more than they will likely need for 2021 compliance. We did not observe behavior that would raise significant concerns regarding the competitiveness of the auction results.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mass.gov/guides/electricity-generator-emissions-limits-310-cmr-774>

<sup>2</sup> For additional discussion of secondary market activity, see *QUARTERLY REPORT ON THE ELECTRICITY GENERATOR EMISSIONS LIMITS PROGRAM (310 CMR 7.74): FOURTH QUARTER 2020*, by Potomac Economics, April 2021.