GWSA Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) Meeting
January 23, 2025, 1:30 PM – 3:00 PM
Virtual Meeting on Zoom
Meeting Minutes – *Draft*

Welcome, approving the 10/31/24 IAC meeting minutes, agenda overview

Undersecretary Antos called the meeting together at 1:35pm with quorum reached.

No discussion of the draft minutes for the last IAC meeting. Meeting minutes were approved by majority.

Climate Report Card

Undersecretary Antos led a presentation on the release of the Climate Report Card. The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) is releasing the second annual Massachusetts Climate Report Card to assess progress in the past 12 months, provide transparency to the public, and identify interventions needed to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions and build resilience to climate impacts. Massachusetts has advanced some of the strongest climate policies nationwide and has made significant progress in the past year, including securing unprecedented federal funds, advancing clean energy infrastructure siting and permitting reforms, significantly increasing the pace of heat pump installations and building weatherization, and expanding state and local investments in climate resilience. Nevertheless, the most challenging period for climate action through 2050 remains 2025-2030, when the sharpest emissions reductions are expected and climate change impacts become more intense. https://www.mass.gov/report/2024-massachusetts-climate-report-card.

Environmental Justice

Major progress has been made in advancing environmental justice, including the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs release of its first ever Environmental Justice Strategy in February 2024. The EEA Office of Environmental Justice and Equity expanded its capacity and supported the hiring of Environmental Justice liaisons and representatives within each EEA agency, which is enabling the implementation of policies in the EJ Strategy.

Challenges

- The Commonwealth must ensure the value of EJ and equity is clearly understood and truly embedded in all agencies, departments, and offices in relation to their targeted missions and goals
- The Commonwealth must balance meeting the urgency of an equitable clean energy transition with conducting meaningful and equitable engagement
- Cumulative impacts of energy infrastructure and pollution have disproportionately burdened EJ communities and have historically not been assessed

How We're Meeting the Moment

- Historic reforms for the siting and permitting of clean energy to ensure it advances environmental justice

- Developing an EEA Office of Environmental Justice (OEJE) and Equity Action Plan
- OEJE worked to develop, adopt and fully fund Language Access Plans
- OEJE developed and implemented an EJ & equity tool for agencies to utilize to evaluate Capital Improvement Plans and incorporate EJ and equity principles
- Coordinate and work to plan and implement an equitable and just clean energy workforce development pipeline

Transportation Decarbonization

After a nationwide slowdown for much of 2024, electric vehicle sales rose to record levels in November and December, making it possible to meet the state's 2025 electric vehicle targets. This sector is poised for significant growth through 2030 and beyond so long as major charging infrastructure programs and procurements, federal electric vehicle incentives extended through 2032, and a ramp up in state mandates to increase zero emission vehicle sales remain in place.

Challenges

- Macroeconomic forces including supply chain costs, interest rates and tariffs can decrease EV availability and uptake.
- Medium- and heavy-duty fleets face specific obstacles to electrification
- EV charger availability, reliability, pricing transparency, and adaptability to different vehicle types are barriers to EV adoption.
- Electric grid capacity constraints continue to be a barrier for installing charging infrastructure

How We're Meeting the Moment

- Improving access to Direct Current Fast Charging (DCFC) stations along major highway corridors.
- Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Coordinating Council (EVICC) invested $50 million for EV and charging infrastructure support
- Department of Energy Resources (DOER)'s MOR-EV rebate updates
- The Healey-Driscoll Administration announced an $8 billion investment over 10 years into transportation and transit infrastructure
- $54 million agreement to bring battery-electric train service to the Fairmount Commuter Rail Line by 2028.
- The Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC) awarded $20 million to electrify nearly 200 school buses

Buildings Decarbonization

The pace of heat pump installations and weatherization projects has increased significantly, putting the Commonwealth on track to meet 2025 targets. Additional interventions will be needed to continue to accelerate this pace and meet 2030 implementation targets.

Challenges

- Residential buildings account for more than half the state's building emissions, and decarbonizing them is complicated, costly, and requires a multi-pronged approach given the age and variety of structures
- Mass adoption of decarbonization technologies requires significant behavioral changes

- Mass Save must deliver building decarbonization outcomes while also maintaining cost-effectiveness
- Incentive-based programs require property owner cooperation, making it more challenging for renters to participate in and benefit from these programs
- Significantly increasing the pace of heat pump adoption will require considerable workforce training and re-training

How We're Meeting the Moment

- DPU Order 20-80 set a new regulatory framework to guide the natural gas distribution industry evolution to clean energy
- The Interagency Rates Working Group issued a study and accompanying recommendations in December on near-term electric rate designs that would lower operating costs associated with electrification
- Massachusetts actively pursued federal funds to advance building decarbonization
- The Massachusetts Community Climate Bank launched the Energy Savers Home Loan in April 2024
- MassCEC launched the Home Modernization Navigator in Springfield and Lowell
- DEP continues to develop a Clean Heat Standard to drive fuel suppliers to replace fossil heat with clean heat.

Power Decarbonization

While the Commonwealth has made considerable progress in reducing emissions in the power sector, delays in the construction of the critical New England Clean Energy Connect transmission line and offshore wind construction will postpone the deployment of major new clean energy sources. New clean energy procurements, substantive regional collaboration, federal awards, and the enactment of historic legislation streamlining clean energy infrastructure siting and permitting are addressing many of these challenges, but additional interventions are needed to maintain progress toward 2040 and 2050 emissions limits.

Challenges

- Delivery of offshore wind energy is delayed several years due to macroeconomic forces resulting in the termination of previous contracts with projects on the east coast
- Additional procurement authority is needed beyond 2025
- Revenues from existing energy market structures are not certain enough to enable long-term financing of new, clean generation outside state-run procurements
- Utilities have traditionally been incentivized to build new infrastructure vs optimizing existing, managing demand, or encouraging distributed energy resources. Incentives are needed for utilities to optimize use of existing and new electric grid infrastructure

How We're Meeting the Moment

- Governor Healey signed An Act Promoting a Clean Energy Grid, Advancing Equity, and Protecting Ratepayers (St. 2024 c. 239) to reform siting and permitting for clean energy infrastructure
- Massachusetts and Rhode Island jointly selected 2,878 megawatts of offshore wind, the largest procurement of offshore wind in New England history

- Massachusetts and other New England states were awarded $389 million from the DOE's Grid Innovation Program for the Power Up New England project
- DOER released a straw proposal of changes to the Commonwealth's solar incentive program, the Solar Massachusetts Renewable Target (SMART) Program, to better support the growth of solar

Natural & Working Lands

The Natural and Working Lands sector is currently on track to meet the 2025 land conservation target due in large part to an influx of federal funding through the American Rescue Plan Act and Inflation Reduction Act. However, Massachusetts continues to lose forested land each year due to development, and sustained funding for land conservation is needed to meet 2030 conservation targets and increase the capacity for offsetting residual emissions to meet 2050 net zero commitments.

Challenges

- Intensified storms and drought, sea level rise, and other climate disturbances can stress ecosystems and reduce carbon sequestration capacity
- Balancing land use for conservation, housing, and energy and transportation infrastructure is a significant challenge
- Doubling the pace of conservation requires consistent long-term funding for land acquisition, incentives for more privately-owned forests and farms to be protected with conservation restrictions, and full and equitable compensation to hosts of conserved land
- Expanding restoration efforts will require increased capacity and resources

How We're Meeting the Moment

- EEA maintains an annual budget of approximately $25 million and is spending more than $50 million in one-time ARPA funding for land conservation
- EEA has expended nearly $5 million of separate ARPA funding to support healthy soil practices and conserve farmland
- EEA is exploring ways to further limit NWL loss to development through incentives and regulatory actions.
- Building upon the success of the Greening the Gateways Cities Program, EEA launched the Cooling Corridors Grant Program to increase tree planting in urban areas subject to heat island effects

Climate Resilience

The Healey-Driscoll Administration has made significant progress in the past 15 months implementing the 2023 ResilientMass Plan, including doubling funding for municipal climate resilience action and a seven-fold increase in capital funding to state agencies to implement resilience plan actions. As increasing flooding, extreme heat, and wildfires increasingly affect human health, the natural and built environment, government services and the economy, new ways of reducing climate risk and funding resilience actions are needed.

Challenges

- Extreme weather exacerbated by climate change is already causing catastrophic economic, social, and environmental losses

- Downscaling climate projections to an actionable, local scale is difficult and comes with uncertainty
- Environmental Justice (EJ) communities continue to be most affected by climate change and require resources to grow meaningful government-community relationships and build resilience
- Workforce capacity throughout the state for implementing resilience projects remains constrained

How we're Meeting the Moment

- Most funding to date - $52.4 million - awarded through MVP Action Grants to local and regional priority projects, with a focus on building resilience to inland flooding
- Launched ResilientMass Finance and Investment Strategy to identify new and sustainable options for funding and financing state and local climate resilience projects
- Office of Climate Science is providing technical assistance to increase access to and understanding of statewide climate change projections and trends
- City of Boston received $9.8M NOAA grant to create the Greater Boston Coastal Resilience Jobs Alliance in coordination with EEA to train 800 workers
- EEA, in partnership with MEMA, developed resilience metrics to measure and assess statewide progress implementing ResilientMass Plan and inform priorities

Legislative Opportunities to Advance CECP Commitments

Undersecretary Antos led a discussion about statutory areas to address in order to advance CECP commitments.

2025 Work Group Priority Topics and Proposed Schedule

Undersecretary Antos thanked the work group chairs for their partnership in developing the Work Group Priority Topics for 2025 and asked them to share thoughts on the topics they selected.

Proposed 2025 NWL Work Group Topics (Steve Long and Michele Mannion)

- Review and discuss strategies to operationalize EEA's climate mitigation and adaptation goals for natural and working lands, such as:
- Doubling pace of protection: funding, partnerships, capacity
- Holistic Land Use Strategy, permitting and policies to protect carbon storage and sequestration
- Discuss study findings and next steps: Forest Carbon, No Net Loss of Wetland Carbon, Blue Carbon
- Strategies to foster sustainable wood products
- Consider legislative provisions for binding/quantifiable metrics and goals
- Residual Emissions & Carbon Dioxide Removal Strategy

Proposed 2025 Buildings Work Group Topics (Jeremy Koo)

- Building Decarbonization Clearinghouse
- Building Energy Reporting and Performance Standards
- Buildings Analytics

Proposed 2025 Transportation Work Group Topics (Kate Dineen and Sarah Simon)

- M/HD Vehicle Electrification
- VMT Reduction Strategy
- 2nd EVICC Assessment

Proposed 2025 Electricity Work Group Topics (Caitlin Peale Sloan)

- Interconnection
- Energy Affordability/Rates Task Force
- Siting & Permitting Engagement

Proposed 2025 Climate Justice Work Group Topics (Katherine)

- New Chair Selection
- Environmental Justice Metrics & Analytics
- Work across sectors to incorporate climate justice through initiatives

Proposed 2025 GWSA IAC Work Plan (Katherine)

January

- Climate Report Card
- Legislative Opportunities to advance CECP Commitments
- Work Group Priority Topics

April

- Forest Carbon Study & its implications for NWL Goals and achieving Net Zero in 2050
- M/HD Vehicle Electrification

September

- Legislative Updates
- Energy Siting and Permitting

November

- Holistic Land Use Study
- Buildings Analytics Model

Undersecretary Antos asked for a motion to adjourn. Meeting adjourned at 3:01PM.

Documents or exhibits used at the meeting (posted online afterwards)

1. Meeting Agenda
2. Meeting Minutes of October 31, 2024
3. Meeting Slides

Attendance 1/23/2025

IAC Member/Delegates in attendance:

Organization	Name
A Better City (ABC)	Kate Dineen
Boston University	*absent*
City of Boston	Elizabeth Jameson
Conservation Law Foundation (CLF)	Caitlin Peale Sloan
Dismas House of Massachusetts	Dave McMahon
Environmental Entrepreneurs (E2)	Sarah Simon
Environmental League of Massachusetts (ELM)	Amy Boyd-Rabin
Eversource	Tracy Gionfriddo
Fraunhofer USA	Kurt Roth
Mass Audubon	Michelle Manion
Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT)	Noelle Eckley Selin
Massachusetts Municipal Wholesale Electric Company (MMWEC)	Jason Viadero
Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC)	Jeremy Koo
National Grid	Kevin O'Shea
The Alliance for Climate Transition	Tim Snyder
The Nature Conservancy (TNC)	Steve Long
Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS)	Paula García

Others in Attendance

Aimee Powelka, MA EEA
Alicia Race, she/her, UCS
Bob Wilber - Comm. of MA DCS
Carrie Katan
Daniel Engelberg, EEA Decarbonization
Daniel.Koerner
David Lyons
Dunbar Carpenter, MA EEA
Elizabeth Jameson, City of Boston
Eric Friedman (MA DOER)
Hanh Chu, MA EEA
Ian Finlayson
Ivy Powers (EEA)
Jennifer Applebaum, (MassCEC) she/her
Jenny.Goldberg - DOER
Jessica Morris (City of Boston)

Josh Ryor (MA EEA)
Katie Gronendyke
Kevin Shen, UCS (he/him)
Kurt Gaertner, Energy & Env. Affairs
Marc Richards (Eversource)
Mark R. Scribner
Martha Grover, EEA
Oleander Stone (They/Them) (EEA)
Seth Gadbois (Conservation Law Foundation) (they/he)
Sharon Weber
Shevie Brown
Sophia Gosselin-Smoske, PowerOptions
Sophia Vitello, MA DOER (she/her)
Stephanie Cooper
Steve Long,
Will Space
Zachary Tsetsos