

CLEAN ENERGY TRANSMISSION WORKING GROUP (CETWG)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, December 21, 2023

Virtual Zoom Meeting

Members Present:	Jason Marshall, Jamie Van Nostrand, Jeffrey N. Roy, Johannes Pfeifenberger, Doug Howgate, Hilary Pearson, Liz Delaney, Sheila Keane, Barry Ahern, Dave Burnham, Ashley Gagnon, Joseph LaRusso, Michael J. Barrett, Ron De Curzio
Members Absent:	Brooke Thomson
Member Designees:	Magdalena Garncarz for Brooke Thomson
DOER Staff Present:	Paul Holloway, Sarah McDaniel
EEA Staff Present:	Mary Nuara
DPU Staff Present:	Shirley Barosy, Gregg Wade, John Slocum
Public Speakers:	None

1. Welcome, Agenda, Roll Call

Holloway called the meeting to order at 08:00 AM. He reviewed the meeting agenda. Holloway conducted roll call and confirmed a meeting quorum. Ms. Thomson's designee was not present.

2. Review and vote on Meeting Minutes

Holloway introduced the draft Meeting Minutes for the December 15, 2023 meeting, shared the draft minutes on the screen, and mentioned that LaRusso shared some minor, non-substantive edits. Burnham motioned to approve the edited Meeting Minutes. Pfeifenberger seconded the motion. By roll call vote the members present voted to approve the edited Meeting Minutes. De Curzio abstained; all others (14) approved. Magda Garncarz joined at 8:05 AM.

3. Public comment

Holloway noted no one requested public comment in advance of the meeting. Marshall requested anyone interested in providing public comment to raise their hands. No one raised their hands. Marshall closed public comment.

4. Review final draft report

Holloway shared the final draft report. Van Nostrand shared some opening comments and thanked those who contributed to the report. Barrett noted that the table of contents needs reordering, re-pagination, and to check titling. Barrett also thanked the group for changing the Grid Enhancing Technologies to Advanced Transmission Technologies, which is more inclusive. Van Nostrand discussed that the review and discussion would start with the recommendations, as some objections

and abstentions were noted in that section. Van Nostrand mentioned that the goal of the discussion was to note concerns or abstentions in the document, but then hopefully still allow the working group to vote and approve the report as a whole with those positions identified. Ahern and Burnham noted that they would abstain on 9(v) prior to this meeting. Howgate asked if it was possible to discuss the abstentions and Van Nostrand and Marshall discussed that the goal was to note abstentions and objections, if any, and come back and discuss as time allows. Burnham and Ahern indicated that they would oppose the paragraph of section 9.1 beginning “Amend Section 70 of Chapter 179” and abstain from the section of 9.2 beginning “work with regional partners” for ISO-NE going beyond 2023 compliance.

Gagnon lodged an abstention regarding the language under 9.1 beginning with “Consistent with any direction from the DPU...”

Keane noted that she would be voting to abstain from the report generally, but that shouldn’t be taken as a reflection on any one section.

Burnham asked how lack of support would be characterized. Van Nostrand cited by-laws allowing for support, lack of support, and abstention.

Howgate asked if a position could be changed after the meeting, and McDaniel said that, per the Open Meeting Law, no changes to votes can be made after the meeting.

Van Nostrand moved to a review of asset condition project language in the body of the report, Section 3.1.1 beginning “Projected transmission owner spend on asset condition projects.” Marshall confirmed that the process for review of the body of the report would be to drop a footnote if any member of the working group does not support any identified language and to come back to that footnote for discussion as time allows.

Burnham and Ahern asked to note their lack of support for the sentence in 3.1.1 that reads: “Additional transparency and accountability measures will be needed to ensure cost containment for these projects.”

Van Nostrand noted that both Gagnon and Delaney have objections to language on page 11. Gagnon indicated that the AGO no longer objected due to language changes. Slocum added that he had integrated the changes that Delaney and Gagnon suggested. Delaney stated that she and Gagnon should both be fine with the language, that the disagreement was largely relating to wording not substance. Marshall suggested that the working group be given a few minutes to review the newly added, proposed language. Howgate asked if the language could be sent to working group members. Delaney responded that the language changes were not extensive. Pfeifenberger asked for the motivation for the changes and Delaney responded that it was a structural change to move references to the ASO report, address what we mean by interregional transmission, and remove details of the ASO studies.

Barrett asked for clarification on the term land-based renewables, and a change was made from large, land-based renewable to “land-based utility-scale renewables.” Marshall noted that since there is new language being introduced for the first time, members may wish to register an abstention. Howgate said he wanted to register an abstention on any item where another working group member has an objection or abstention so he could come back to it if there’s time.

Gagnon noted an abstention on the Section entitled Grid Investments and Impacts on Consumer Costs on page 34.

Delaney explained new language on page 48 (introducing the term ASO and including the language moved from page 11 regarding ASO studies). Barrett asked for a comma instead of a semicolon. Gagnon made an edit for consistency with other parts of the report.

Gagnon said she believed a comment on higher ratepayer impacts on page 51 had been addressed. She also indicated that the AGO no longer has concerns regarding “challenges for solar development” as it had also been addressed. Delaney added that the two relevant paragraphs were struck and replaced with a single paragraph referencing siting and permitting challenges. LaRusso added that the paragraph needed a period at the end.

Marshall opened it up to members to see if there are any other items for abstentions or objections as to the body of the report. None voiced further abstentions or objections to the body of the report.

Van Nostrand asked to go back to the recommendations to discuss the previously noted abstentions or lack of support:

Ahern and Burnham noted their abstention on 9(v) “loading order” approach.

Ahern said that it was a very technical recommendation, really a question for ISO-NE to answer, and could be less actionable than other recommendations, and he didn’t want to change the weight of all other recommendations with the complications of this.

Burnham said it was a technically complex issue, and he would rather not take a position on it at this time. He said that if ISO-NE goes down this road, he would want to consider options.

Barrett voiced an additional reservation that the audience for this recommendation is very small, and those on the legislative side probably wouldn’t understand the issues at play as it is also more of a federal matter than state.

Pfeifenberger said he liked the general point, this is written into law in Germany, for instance, and ISO-NE as an audience will know what this means, but things in the report can get technical quickly. He said that this is one of the most important recommendations in terms of costs for the grid.

Barrett responded that the group wouldn’t likely have time to add a sentence for general readers to explain like Pfeifenberger did, but it was useful context for him.

LaRusso indicated that he would support leaving it in, or in alternative could change an ATT recommendation.

Van Nostrand clarified that the goal was to note abstentions, but leave the recommendation in.

Pfeifenberger suggested language to address Barrett’s point and make it more accessible to a larger audience.

Marshall clarified that there were just two abstentions to 9(v).

Van Nostrand moved on to the two members noting a lack of support for the recommendation that would “Amend Section 70 of Chapter 179”:

Burnham said there are plenty of processes or approaches that the commonwealth could use for clean energy interconnection, and he does not believe additional authority is needed.

Ahern stated that this language enables a new mechanism, and it doesn't appear that another mechanism would help achieve the commonwealth's goals, but he appreciated the motivation. Marshall (not speaking as chair) said he didn't see an issue in having another mechanism, and that this may be helpful in the context of federal funding or the new ISO New England tariff language discussed in a previous module. This flexibility could be helpful and its why he's advocating for it. Issues could potentially be worked out in legislative drafting.

Van Nostrand noted that staff would drop footnote that two working group members are declining to support.

Van Nostrand moved on to the issue of whether FERC should go beyond Order 2023:

Burnham said he wants to reserve a position for FERC process.

Ahern noted the complexity for complying with the order, and thought the current approach is appropriate.

Van Nostrand stated that the report will note that two members are abstaining from that sentence.

Van Nostrand asked whether there were any other comments or abstentions on recommendations:

Regarding local transmission language, Gagnon said that the AGO understood the originally recommended language but didn't understand the reasoning behind the language changing over the last few drafts, particularly why it went beyond identifying upgrades. She elaborated that this raised concerns since the ESMP process is on-going, the ESMPs haven't been filed with the DPU yet, etc. The AGO would like to abstain from the entire paragraph.

Barrett agreed that it seemed premature to approve transmission from ESMPs when they don't exist in their final form. Barrett noted he would abstain from this paragraph.

Marshall stated that "consistent with any direction from the DPU" seemed to limit the concern for him, and was curious what others took away from that phrase.

Van Nostrand agreed, stating that it's not an open-ended commitment.

Barrett said he didn't know if the qualifier does enough for the entirety of the paragraph and suggested additional language to move him from his abstention.

Pfeifenberger suggested moving the language to the beginning of a later sentence so it applies to more of the upgrades, and adding the word "forthcoming" for ESMPs.

Delaney asked a question for clarification of the language on approval process and Pfeifenberger suggested a small edit.

Burnham noted the tension between what DPU can do and other jurisdictional issues, but said the edit addressed this well.

Marshall asked whether this removed abstentions. Gagnon indicated that she still abstains.

Howgate asked to go back to a previous section, and said he would like to abstain from the recommendation regarding Section 70 of Chapter 179.

The working group then revisited the abstentions noted earlier in the body of the report for further discussion. Marshall offered the working group members a final opportunity to state whether they wished to register abstentions or lack of support to specific sections of the report. No members voiced additional abstentions or lack of support.

5. Vote on draft report and administrative motions

Van Nostrand asked Holloway to display the slides concerning the voting process, and confirmed that the group had gone through the report and noted all exceptions group members had to specific recommendations. He said that the report as edited was then ready to vote on. Marshall and Van Nostrand then stated that the working group members could vote on all three motions, which they then reviewed. Howgate requested that staff send to CETWG members the track changed version of the final report for their reference. Holloway said yes, and that the redline could also be posted to the website. Van Nostrand again asked whether the group was comfortable proceeding with the vote on all three motions, and invited a motion to approve them. Barrett moved to approve all three motions and Burnham seconded. Holloway then conducted the roll call vote of the motion to approve the report as well as the motions below:

- First proposed motion: the CETWG approves the final draft CETWG report as amended during the December 21, 2023 public meeting.
- Second proposed motion: The CETWG authorizes EEA, DOER and DPU staff to make typographical corrections, non-substantive edits on matters of drafting and form, and conforming changes, including but not limited to the contents of the executive summary, after the report is voted on, without the need for an additional vote
- Third proposed motion: to allow the co-chairs to review and approve the CETWG’s final meeting minutes for December 21, 2023. The working group authorizes the co-chairs to circulate draft meeting minutes to CETWG members, review and compile any suggested edits sent to the co-chairs one week after the draft minutes are circulated, and then finalize the meeting minutes on behalf of the working group. The final meeting minutes will be posted to the CETWG’s website

The motions passed with Ahern, Burnham, Gagnon, LaRusso, DeCurzio, Garncarz, Marshall, Van Nostrand, Pfeifenberger, Howgate, Pearson, and Delaney (11 members) voting in favor, and Keane, Roy, and Barrett (3 members) abstaining.

Marshall invited Roy and Barrett to address the group. Roy recounted the CETWG’s origin and charge and applauded the group for meeting the statutory deadline for producing the report. He applauded Van Nostrand and Marshall’s efforts chairing the committee, as well as the contributions of the group members, staff and others who participated. He said that Senator Barrett and he had already filed legislation related to the CETWG work, and the group should know that it has already had an impact. Roy said that we owe it to future generations to have a livable planet, and the report will help us get there.

Barrett added his thanks to the co-chairs and staff including Holloway and Slocum for assisting with the report. He said he expects to find the report particularly helpful for legislators as a resource that is accessible and useful. He said that the work of the CETWG will also help to update relevant legislation that the legislature is currently considering. He said that the CETWG’s approach to drafting and editing the report was a useful model that could be applied to other working groups.

6. Close and Next Steps

Draft Meeting Minutes – for approval by CETWG

Van Nostrand expressed his appreciation for the work of the CETWG members as well as staff. He noted that the CETWG website contains a helpful bank of resources beyond the information contained in the report. Marshall thanked Barrett and Roy for their leadership, staff as heroes of the working group, and the group members for a collaborative effort. Marshall and Van Nostrand then adjourned the meeting at 9:17 AM.

Meeting Materials:

- Agenda
- Notice of Public Meeting
- Draft December 15, 2023 Meeting Minutes
- CETWG Draft Final Report