

Commission on Fossil Fuel Workforce

Meeting Minutes

July 10th, 2025

2:00 PM – 4:00 PM

ATTENDANCE		
Member	Affiliation	Attended on 7/10/25
Melissa Lavinson, <i>co-chair</i>	Executive Director, Office of Energy Transformation	X
Josh Cutler, <i>co-chair</i>	Undersecretary of Labor, Executive Office of Labor and Workforce Development	X
Abel Vargas	President at Valley Home Insulation	
Amy McGuire	Senior Director, Market Development at Highland Electric Fleets	X
Ana Sofia	Senior Program Director at La Colaborativa	X
Dan Leary	President of Local 369 at Utility Workers Union-America (UWUA)	X
Dave Keating	International Representative at International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)	X
Frank Callahan	President, Massachusetts Building Trades Unit (MBTU)	X
Greandoll Oliva	Youth Leader in Chelsea and Community Organizer with GreenRoots	
Harry Brett	International Representative at United Association (UA)	
Jennifer Applebaum	Managing Director of Workforce Development, MassCEC	X
John Cook	President at Springfield Technical Community College	X
Kristen Gowin	Executive Manager at National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) of Greater Boston	X
Larry Lessard	Director at Achieve Renewable Energy, LLC	X
María Belén Power	Undersecretary of Environmental Justice & Equity	X
Mark Melnik	Director, Economic & Public Policy Research at UMass Donahue Institute	X
Chris Sherman	Senior Vice President at Cogentrix Energy, LLC	
Mike Vartabedian	Assistant Directing Business Representative at International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers	X
Nikki Bruno	Vice President, Clean Technologies at Eversource Energy	
Sarah Wilkinson	Commissioner of Division of Occupational Licensure and Office of Public Safety, Executive Office of Economic Development	X
Steve Finnigan	Sub District Director at United Steelworkers (USW)	Delegate Joe Endicott

Proceedings:

The meeting with the Special Commission of the Fossil Fuel Workforce commenced at 2:03 PM with Co-Chair Melissa Lavinson welcoming attendees and introducing Jay Vilar, Boston Director of the Fountain Fund, an organization dedicated to creating increasing economic opportunities for formerly incarcerated people to improve their lives, remain in their communities and secure and maintain meaningful employment. Currently, the Fountain Fund serves Greater Boston and is the only non-profit focusing on this work nationally. The main challenges incarcerated people face when rejoining the workforce are housing, income, transportation, having a CORI, and training programs that do not lead to jobs. The Fountain Fund had five main recommendations for the Commission:

1. Decide if working with previously incarcerated individuals is a priority for this Commission and for Massachusetts.
2. Be clear and communicate about policies regarding previously incarcerated individuals and supporting the Clean Slate Initiative Bill.
3. Provide stipend-based training programs partnered with existing re-entry organizations.
4. Support rental assistance and voucher programs.
5. Support the current ecosystem of re-entry organizations through public and private partnerships.

After the Fountain Fund presentation, the Commission discussed the timeline for report writing and approved the current proposed timeline, noting that the amount of time for review by executive level stakeholders, including secretaries and potentially Governor's office, will need to be flexible. There will be a rough draft of the report for the Commission to review in August. The Commission then moved to discussion around three main questions.

- Discussion Question One: How can we close the gap between available jobs and available workers. A Commission member noted that some contractors are not utilizing apprentices as much as they could be, especially when it comes to women and people of color. There is also a large need for tradesmen in residential work. The Commission discussed ways to connect qualified contractors, including union labor, to all types of work, including in the residential market. The Commission discussed the issue that the general public is often not aware of resources unions can provide (e.g. IBEW) for helping individuals source qualified contractors.

Several Commission members suggested creating a list of qualified contractors for projects as a helpful addition to the report, including non-union companies. This list could also be put on the state website as a resource for the public. Similarly, several members suggested that the Mass Save preferred contract list denote which contractors used apprentice and/or union labor. Several Commission members also mentioned that the level of unemployment we are seeing in some of the trades and with some unions may be connected to reductions in federal money to the state, causing a decrease in projects and therefore fewer

employment opportunities. One Commission member commented that some companies, especially in the residential market, hire “helpers” to do jobs where apprentices may be better utilized. These helpers face a higher turnover rate, lower pay, and no clear path to a career.

- Discussion Question Two: This question focused on determining the appropriate timeline to use in the report vis-a-vis the energy transition to assess employment impacts. Several members proposed the timeline align with the Massachusetts Clean Energy and Climate Plan (CECP) for 2050, including interim milestones in 2030 and 2040. Additionally, several Commission members raised the point that recent federal policy may have an impact on the pace of the transition and should be called out in the report. Since this discussion question was tied to the following question regarding how to address the impact of federal policy, the Commission moved to the next question.
- Discussion Question Three: This question focused on the impact of federal policy on the energy workforce in Massachusetts and how to address in the report. One Commission member suggested analyzing and referring to the impact of federal policies on the energy workforce throughout the report, instead of in one focused section. Another Commission member suggested a “thought model” or scenario planning approach that suggests how energy jobs could increase/decrease based on policies. Several Commission members agreed the report should highlight state policies and projects that continue to support and push forward clean energy in this time, as well as technologies not as impacted by recent federal policies, such as geothermal and nuclear. Some Commission members noted the importance of emphasizing that Massachusetts will continue with its clean energy work despite challenges associated with federal cuts, calling out case studies like the Sublime Systems facility being built in Holyoke, MA, despite the loss of federal funding.

After concluding the discussion, the Commission discussed next steps, including scheduling additional gas pipeline work site visits to National Grid and/or Eversource with United Steelworkers.

Action items included sending information on union workers and their salaries for report data and scheduling a call with a subset of Commission members on the geothermal workforce. The meeting concluded at 3:53pm.