

Commission on Fossil Fuel Workforce

Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2025

1:00 PM – 3:00 PM

ATTENDANCE

Member	Seat / Affiliation	Attended on 5/14/25
Melissa Lavinson, <i>co-chair</i>	Executive Director, Office of Energy Transformation	X
Josh Cutler, <i>co-chair</i>	Undersecretary of Labor and Workforce Development	X
Abel Vargas	President at Valley Home Insulation	X
Amy McGuire	Senior Director, Market Development at Highland Electric Fleets	
Ana Sofia	Senior Program Director at La Colaborativa	X
Daniel 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	X
Harry Brett	International Representative at United Association	
Jennifer Applebaum	Managing Director of Workforce Development at MassCEC	X
John Cook	President at Springfield Technical Community College	X
Kristen Gowin	Executive Manager at National Electrical Contractors Association of Greater Boston	X
Lawrence Lessard	Director at Achieve Renewable Energy, LLC	X
María Belén Power	Undersecretary of Environmental Justice & Equity	
Mark Melnik	Director, Economic & Public Policy Research at UMass Donahue Institute	X
Meghan Leahy	Regional Vice President at Cogentrix Energy, LLC	X
Michael Vartabedian	Assistant Directing Business Representative at International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers	X
Nikki Bruno	Vice President, Clean Technologies at Eversource Energy	X
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 on Fossil Fuel Workforce commenced at 1:00 PM. Members were present both in person and via video conference. The meeting began with introductions and a welcome from Co-Chair Melissa Lavinson, who provided a brief recap of the April 9th meeting and previewed the May 14th agenda. Key agenda items included: a presentation from the Barr Foundation on their 2022 clean energy workforce report, review of proposals from the Data Strategy and Modeling subgroups, a discussion of Commission objectives and report outline, planning for site visits, and next steps.

Co-Chair Josh Cutler facilitated a vote to approve the minutes from the April 9th meeting, and the minutes were approved unanimously.

Kathryn Wright from the Barr Foundation, Cai Steger from BW Research, and Alexis Washburn from Emerald Cities presented on the 2022 report from the Barr Foundation, *Access to Clean Energy Jobs: Expanding Opportunities, An Assessment of the Clean Energy Workforce in New England*. Key themes from the presentation included:

- Assessed Massachusetts' clean energy workforce ecosystem and training landscape, with a focus on equity and accessibility.
- Analyzed training infrastructure across the Northeast, highlighting Massachusetts as a leader in diversity and equity-focused initiatives.
- Identification of a broad range of occupations requiring varying levels of training for clean energy transitions.
- Emphasized the need for high-quality jobs and greater job accessibility for historically excluded communities.
- Data was collected through public desktop research, program catalogs, and interviews.

Panelists discussed the report's continued relevance despite evolving policy and funding conditions since it was published in 2022. Panelists emphasized the importance of improving job quality to support workers' economic mobility and welfare. The presentation also highlighted:

- The importance of aligning employer demand with training supply.
- The opportunity to leverage the MassCEC workforce needs assessment.
- Disparities between urban and rural regions, particularly Greater Boston and Springfield.
- The need for intentional cooperation across stakeholders to reduce duplicative efforts and support under-resourced areas.

Commission members discussed the apparent worker shortage, with labor representatives commenting on there being a job shortage for union members, citing high demand for apprenticeship programs and noting different challenges by occupation. Commission members agreed that the worker shortage only extends to the residential sector or certain occupations and is not true across the board. The Commission has the opportunity to address the divide between worker shortages in some occupations where union workers are trained and available to work.

In response to a question around how the report findings could be contextualized in light of recent policy and funding shifts, the Barr Foundation stated that funding shifts may change the pace of the transition, but does not change the trends observed in the report.

Katherine O'Malley presented takeaways from the Data Strategy Subgroup, which proposed leaning on the MassCEC workforce needs assessment for the list of fossil fuel occupations and then gathering data on wages and demographics from public sources. The subgroup also proposed bucketing occupations into categories based on how difficult they are to transition and addressing the divide between worker shortages and job shortages in some occupations to include in the report.

Upcoming site visits are being coordinated for June and July. Suggested sites include:

- National Grid Lineworker Program
- IBEW Local 103
- La Colaborativa workforce development programs
- Highland Electric Fleets
- MBTA mechanic training program
- United Steelworkers (USW)

Co-Chair Melissa Lavinson asked members to confirm whether these represent balanced and diverse training opportunities across the state, and all were in favor.

Rob Cohen led a discussion from the Modeling Strategy Subgroup, emphasizing that due to time and resource constraints, new modeling would not be feasible. Instead, the subgroup will rely on existing MassCEC data and other reports to inform this report. The subgroup has begun to catalog other reports to reference, which Rob Cohen plans to share with the broader Commission.

Katherine O'Malley walked through the objectives of the report, including:

1. Provide a clear and accurate understanding of the existing fossil fuel workforce.
2. Identify future energy jobs needed over the next ten years.
3. Provide high-level mapping of current workforce to future needs.
4. Provide an overview of existing apprenticeship and other training programs.
5. Provide an understanding of current workforce needs and existing/available skilled workforce.
6. Identify major barriers and opportunities to creating pathways to energy careers.
7. Create a set of actionable recommendations for policymakers, educators, and employers.

Commission members agreed with the seven report objectives and had no further additions. The Commission then walked through subsections of the report outline and Commission members volunteered for tasks to work on by the next meeting to begin drafting the report. Commissioners were encouraged to submit materials by the morning of June 2nd to allow sharing ahead of the next meeting.

Next steps include Commission members researching and drafting sections of the report tied to each objective that Commissioners volunteered for and OET working to coordinate upcoming site visits.

A poll will be sent to determine availability for the next full Commission meeting on June 5th or 6th. The floor was open for final questions and comments.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:44 PM.