

## Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC)

### MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, March 27, 2025, 1:00 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Hybrid meeting

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**Councilors Present:** Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, Chris Modlish (virtual), Larry Chretien, Sarah Cullinan, Kate Tohme (virtual), Alex Worsley (virtual), Julie Curti (virtual), Amy McGuire (virtual), Kathryn Wright, Jonathan Stout, Kyle Murray, Marybeth Campbell (virtual), Andy Sun (virtual), JS Rancourt (virtual), Alex Worsley (virtual – joined late)

**Councilors Absent:** Sarah Bresolin Silver

**Non-voting Councilors:** Andrew Schneller (National Grid), Kevin Sprague (Unitil, virtual), Digaunto Chatterjee, Eversource

**DOER Staff Present:** Julia Fox, Colin Carroll, Aurora Edington

**Consultants Present:** Tim Woolf, Kyle Schultz

**Others Present:** Nancy Israel (National Grid Counsel), Jen Schilling (Eversource, virtual)

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#### 1. Call to Order

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy Department of Energy Resources (DOER), as designated Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

#### 2. Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy welcomed all participants to the GMAC meeting and took roll call for voting and non-voting members.

### **3. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

### **4. Meeting Minutes Review and Voting**

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked if there were any corrections or additions to the February 27, 2025, GMAC minutes. None were offered.

Councilor Kyle Murray moved to approve the February 27, 2025, GMAC meeting minutes. Councilor Sarah Cullinan seconded. The motion carried.

### **5. Voting Items**

#### **a. EWG Membership Discussion and Voting**

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy explained that Andrew Schneller (National Grid) expressed interest in adding Marc Lucas from National Grid as an additional Electric Distribution Company (EDC) representative to the Equity Working Group (EWG). The EWG discussed this at their March 24<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Councilor Kathryn Wright stated that the EWG was universally opposed to adding another EDC member and summarized the reasons why, including the concern of additional representatives dominating and taking up airtime. One suggestion was to rotate which EDCs attend the meeting. Additionally, there is a two-year term limit, so the EDCs could put forth Marc as a member after the two-year term limit.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan asked to confirm that the EWG meetings are open so anyone can attend. Kathryn Wright confirmed and noted that EWG members are put in panelist.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked if anyone felt strongly about having a vote. No one expressed a desire to call for a vote.

#### **b. EWG Comments on Metrics/Reporting Review and Voting**

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy explained that the EWG drafted comments on the EDCs' proposed electric sector modernization plans (ESMP) metrics and biannual report. Today, the EWG is seeking approval of the GMAC to post the comments. Kathryn Wright noted that the date for Intervenors to include the comments as part of their comment is April 17.

Councilor Kathryn Wright gave an overview of the EWG comments. In 2023, EWG provided feedback on metrics and stakeholder engagement. Because the conversation of metrics and reporting was deferred to a second phase of the proceeding, they are now revisiting it. This set

of comments is responsive to the changes the EDCs made in their most recent submission to the Department of Public Utilities (DPU or Department). The EWG provided direct feedback on metrics and reporting. The biggest feedback is that stakeholder engagement metrics do not use direct participant feedback. The EWG recommends the EDCs use surveys or similar ways to integrate direct feedback. Similarly, the biannual reports should include a more detailed accounting of how the EDCs are responding to stakeholder concerns. The EWG also provided recommendations related to distributional equity and the ability of the metrics to show the impact of the ESMPs. Wanted to flag some pieces of the ESMPs won't be reported on, as of now, such as the community benefit agreements and the Grid Services Compensation Fund. EWG would like to see those reported on in the biannual reports.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked if anyone has questions or things to discuss related to the GMAC accepting the document.

***Councilor Julie Curti, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC):*** Appreciates the work and would like to hear from the EDCs about what they would plan to do.

***Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee, representing Eversource:*** In terms of implementation, they would circulate feedback across EDCs' management team.

***Councilor Julie Curti:*** Is there a chance for a report back? What recommendations would be taken and why and what ones would not be taken and why?

***Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee:*** This is a process question. Would have to discuss with the EDCs.

***Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:*** We recognize that the GMAC is not an intervenor. These are comments the GMAC would be making to the ether. It is the intention of the DOER to bring the comments into the proceeding.

***Councilor Kyle Murray, Acadia Center, representing the environmental advocacy community:*** Can we still add testimony?

***Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:*** No, the deadline for testimony passed. We can add comments on the GMAC website. Intervenors can add comments in the proceeding, as this is Phase II of the ESMP proceeding.

***Councilor Sarah Cullinan, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, Representing the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center:*** Wants to clarify that this is GMAC comments to the public that will be referenced by Intervenors.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** Appreciated Julie’s recommendation and would like the EDCs to come back and explain why they are or aren’t following recommendations.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked if there is a motion to call a vote to accept EWG comments on behalf of the GMAC.

Councilor Kyle Murray motioned to call vote to accept EWG comments on behalf of the GMAC. Councilor Sarah Cullinan seconded the motion. The motion carried and the council voted to accept the EWG comments on behalf of the GMAC.

### **c. LTSPP Letter to DPU and Voting**

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy noted that Kate Tohme circulated a revised draft letter to GMAC regarding the formation of an LTSPP stakeholder engagement group within the GMAC. Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy reminded the GMAC that the letter is to tell the DPU the GMAC is an option to host a group that would meet the requirements of the stakeholder engagement

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Does the charter of the EWG that determines there is only one EDC member specific to the EWG? So LTSPP group would need to also come up with their own charter.

**Councilor Andrew Schneller, representing National Grid:** I know we’re not talking about the composition. Would hope that all the EDCs would be included in membership.

**Councilor Kate Tohme, New Leaf Energy, Representing the distributed generation renewable energy industry:** We’re not deciding on the composition. Noted that the letter included the most recent LTSPP redlines. Stakeholders are currently putting in additional redlines to finalize non-consensus redlines. Version everyone saw was the clean version that had redlines put in by stakeholders and some accepted by EDCs. Currently, framework includes a composition, which includes two representatives from each of the EDCs.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** The reason we’re saying we’re not talking about composition today is that they want the DPU to feel comfortable receiving it. Wants to make clear what is the ask and what it is the GMAC is open to. Any subgroup would follow GMAC bylaws. Recognize that any such process can’t be directed by DPU.

**Councilor Kate Tohme:** Noted that in reviewing the revisions, she is comfortable with the redlines. Most significant revision is footnote addition. Has recommendations for how to address Chris Modlish’s comments pointing out that: 1) the letter is referencing LTSPP stakeholders, so need to define stakeholders; and 2) question on are we saying or are the stakeholders saying that it is most appropriate to establish stakeholder group under GMAC. Kate

suggested several changes. DOER made live edits to the letter as Kate suggested to address Chris' comments.

***Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee (Eversource):*** Can you articulate the purpose of the footnote?

***Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:*** To recognize that the Department is not ordering us (the GMAC) to take the consensus position of the working group. The working group must be voted on by the GMAC. Footnote is noting that the GMAC is open to it and the Department can suggest the GMAC to do it. But the Department doesn't have the authority to order the GMAC to do it.

***Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee:*** Is puzzled. So the GMAC will decide if the solutions to maintain reliability from connecting solar is right?

***Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:*** No. It's just the ground rules.

***Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee:*** So the ground rules before were that the EDCs had limited ability to even speak. Is that appropriate?

***Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:*** No, this is different.

***Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee:*** So should the composition include multiple EDC members?

***Councilor Kate Tohme:*** Thinks the Department will direct the EDCs, will recommend the stakeholder group be established as a subgroup to the GMAC, and will recommend the composition. The composition that is currently in the framework but is still being talked about includes two representatives from each EDC. The Department doesn't have the authority to direct the GMAC. Has the authority to direct the EDCs to engage with stakeholders.

***Councilor Andrew Schneller (National Grid):*** The footnote leaves it open for the GMAC to exclude the EDCs.

***Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:*** Would it be better to say the GMAC will take into consideration the recommendations of the Department?

***Councilor Andrew Schneller (National Grid):*** Can we remove the footnote?

***Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:*** Afraid that without it, the Department will do nothing.

***Councilor Kate Tohme:*** Noting that this is an opportunity for stakeholders to provide input to EDCs plan.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** How about instead of reserves its ability to constitute, “the GMAC will establish any LTSPP stakeholder engagement group pursuant to its bylaws. And will take into considerations any recommendations from the Department.”

**Councilor Chris Modlish, Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Representing the Attorney General:** Point isn’t to reserve the authority to not listen to the Department.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** Do those edits work for everyone?

**Councilor Andrew Schneller (National Grid):** Can we get rid of the “including but not limited to...” part?

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** Yes. That part is just listing out our bylaws.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** What I heard Kate say is the Department has the authority to direct the EDCs to engage with stakeholders. Can say we expect engagement to include “xyz” stakeholders? The vehicle of that would be a subgroup of the GMAC. To the extent that the subgroup didn’t look like what the Department ordered, would not fulfil the Department’s orders.

**Councilor Kate Tohme:** DPU legal will make the determination of what they can and cannot direct. Assumption is the DPU will determine that engagement with a representative group is sufficient to meet the requirement. If EDCs meet with stakeholder group that has these requirements, they will be in compliance.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** Motion to approve letter with the following amendments?

Councilor Kyle Murray motioned to call vote to approve the letter with the discussed amendments. Councilor Sarah Cullinan seconded the motion. The motion carried and the letter was approved. Deputy Commissioner Troy discussed the next steps for the letter.

**Councilor Kate Tohme:** If EDCs are comfortable, we could include this letter in the April filing package. Julia Fox will post edited letter to GMAC website.

## **6. Synapse Cost Recovery Memo**

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy discussed the cost recovery memo, noted that it was provided at the GMAC members’ request and that Andrew Schneller (National Grid) had some feedback. Did GMAC members find this helpful? Any comments on the work product?

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Potentially a role for this kind of memo. Recommendation for the future is that the memo is context setting. Prior DPU Orders and findings is helpful context. Would recommend limiting it to something like that and for it to be shorter. Looking ahead at

the other materials from today – something like comparing to other jurisdictions is also helpful. Maybe other GMAC members wouldn't get through the length and detail.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** 10 pages is a slough.

**Councilor Larry Chretien, Green Energy Consumers Alliance, representing low- and middle-income residential customers:** Being in GMAC is a challenge. But we did accept the positions. Would prefer to read 1 page from 10 pages, but doesn't think 1 page tells the whole story. This is an ongoing experience for all of us. What's in this memo is stuff that we're going to have to come to grips with. We can debate if memo is perfect, but this is where it is at.

**Councilor Julie Curti:** Found memo helpful. It was hard to understand what the process would be to lead to the changes the consultants were recommending.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** I am hearing a shift towards what's happening in other jurisdictions, in the proceeding now. Recommendations can be useful. Need more pieces in procedural part of recommendations.

**Councilor Julie Curti:** To clarify, not against recommendations, just was unclear how they would be enacted.

## **7. ESMP Activities Updates**

### **a. ESMP Phase II**

**Councilor Chris Modlish:** Phase II A. Finished evidentiary hearings. April 4<sup>th</sup> for Intervenor briefs. Reply briefs due on April 18<sup>th</sup>. Phase II B – EDCs submitted filings; intervenors have until April 17.

### **b. CESAG**

**Councilor Andrew Schneller:** First meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, March 28<sup>th</sup>.

### **c. IEP Working Group**

**Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee:** Established stakeholder working groups and held multiple meetings. Finalized framework that will be filed with the DPU. Can think of IEP more holistically. Expanding stakeholder engagement. Meetings will be held every two months and will be three hours each. Request for one GMAC representative and one alternate. There are separate seats for MassCEC, AGO, DOER.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** If there is anyone from the GMAC who would like to sit on the IEP, email Julia before next meeting. Will vote on it at next GMAC meeting.

*Councilor Sarah Cullinan:* Its four meetings. 12 hours.

#### **d. LTSP Working Group**

*Councilor Kate Tohme:* We are getting to a final point with framework and redlines. Have done back and forth, by Friday or Monday stakeholders will be providing additional redlines. Will have a conversation for three hours on April 2<sup>nd</sup> to find consensus. Meeting after will vote on consensus and non-consensus redlines.

*Aurora Edington, DOER:* Wants to raise that the key dates are included because there's a lot coming in.

### **8. Synapse Presentation: Massachusetts EDC Reports**

Tim Woolf (Synapse) delivered a presentation on current EDC reports. The EDCs file a lot of reports that cover a lot of key issues. The topic brief that accompanies today's meeting has more detail on reports. Also includes a summary of the DPU's directions on what should be included in grid modernization annual reports.

### **9. EDC Reporting and Metric Proposal**

Andrew Schneller (National Grid) talked about EDCs' proposal for biannual reporting.

#### **a. March Report -look back at year just completed**

In March they file the ARR. Will include information in how they're doing in terms of load versus forecasted. Will also talk about outside funding, stakeholder engagement, and stakeholder working groups done the prior year. Metrics and appendices on costs, data tables.

#### **b. September –**

Will be a look forward at the reminder of the year and the remainder of the year.

#### **c. Stakeholder Metrics**

Have both quantity and quality in terms of these metrics. Will report number of meetings. Will also be looking at host communities, making sure materials are delivered in their languages, make sure outreach materials allow people to engage and provide opportunities for feedback. Will be taking into consideration the EWG feedback.

#### **d. Network Investments**



Will be talking about whether investments are on schedule. Measure how much DER capacity is enabled, how much load serving capacity is enabled. Will also track whether it is enabled in an EJ community or not. Will have how much energy is saved from voltage reduction program.

Jennifer Schilling (Eversource) discussed the Resiliency and DERMs and GHG reduction metrics.

#### **e. Resiliency and DERMs metrics**

EDCs are proposing a resiliency metric to track the number of customers benefitting from ESMP resiliency investments.

DERMs metric is a carryover from grid modernization metrics. Will carry over for all utilities into ESMP term. Looks at the number of participating sites (count) of customers who can be dispatched and the corresponding size. Will also report on the instances of dispatch.

#### **f. GHG Reduction**

Metric measures the enablement of GHG reduction across the commonwealth. For example, if a VBR/CBO program was dispatched in 2026, would look back and say we enabled XX reductions in 2026.

Also noted that EDCs will provide links to existing metrics.

### **10. Facilitated Discussion**

Councilor Kyle Murray led a facilitated discussion regarding EDC reporting. He gave an overview of slide 24 - principles for ESMP reports that the consultants created. What does everyone think of this proposal? Are there things missing or are there things that should be modified?

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** Reports should have a clear purpose and should state their purpose.

**Councilor Chris Modlish:** When talking about report purpose, are we also talking about purpose of the investments themselves?

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** These are generic. Are principles for all reports. Maybe what isn't here is the information should tie back to its clear defined purpose.

**Councilor Alex Worsley, Stack Energy Consulting, Representing the transmission-scale renewable energy industry:** Something to consider adding- reports need to be accessible. Should be able to find them. Wouldn't want to see them buried in a DPU docket.

**Councilor Kathryn Wright:** Seconds what Alex said. Mentions online dashboards. Thinking about what would be easier for public to use – EDCs proposing to report data in excel. General comment, doesn't know exactly where it goes.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** Is there any need or availability to translate a one-pager? An executive summary?

**Andrew Schneller (National Grid):** Communities tend to be interested in actual projects, which we deal with them directly. Less so the regulatory reports.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Might be another reason for an online dashboard – automatic translation services.

Councilor Kyle Murray moved on to the appendix slides highlighting what other states do for reporting. Gave an overview of information on slide 28 (Minnesota), slide 29 (Hawaii), and slide 30 (California). Back to slide 23 – questions on ESMP reporting.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** What do EDCs see purpose of annual reports being?

**Councilor Andrew Schneller (National Grid):** progress update on what we're doing versus what we proposed.

**Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee:** For investments seeking cost recovery, will see additional detail on individual investments.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** What do other GMAC members see as the function of the reports?

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** There's an opportunity to build trust with all of the rate payers. Someone with less knowledge can pick something up and say "oh wow they put a lot of thought into this." A good ESMP report would address concerns about how big some of these investments are and the thought behind it.

**Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee (Eversource):** Old construct: EDCs would plan investments, would come to communities and say we need permits. New construct: bring communities in at the beginning. Even more granularity on the why for increases in investments scope, timing, etc.

**Councilor Andrew Schneller (National Grid):** Have to remember that these are proactive investments. There are forecasts about how fast people will be adopting EVs, building to stretch codes, installing heat pumps, etc. Reports will show how they are flexing plans as things change.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** Sounds similar to Minnesota. The narrative piece is really important.

**Councilor Alex Worsley:** A key function of these reports should be to inform next plans. A mechanism to look back on what we've learned, what's changed. Lessons learned is an important piece.

**Councilor Kyle Murray:** These reports will help us know what's changed. Will inform what actions we may need to do (legislative action?)

Was their key information or metrics you were hoping to see in EDCs proposals that wasn't included or not to the extent you were looking for.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** Would love if there were a map. Someone from the town could open it up and see what activities are going on in their area. Thinks interest in this area is geographic. Recognizes how big an effort that is.

**Sarah Cullinan:** Question about load forecasting method. Is what was in the ESMPs different from what is in the ARR. Why would you rely on the ARR and ESMP forecast?

**Councilor Andrew Schneller (National Grid):** They are the same. The forecast is refreshed once a year.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Are load forecasting updates as conceived for the reporting going into the same geographic granularity as was in the ESMPs?

**Councilor Andrew Schneller (National Grid)** Would see it in the project narrative- why "xyz" narrative was delayed. Not in the re-write of the ESMP narrative.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Do ARRs break it out by sub geography?

**Councilor Andrew Schneller (National Grid)** Believes they do.

**Councilor Sarah Cullinan:** Will it show, say, a red arrow going down and a green arrow going up to show how the load is changing compared to forecast?

**Councilor Andrew Schneller:** Would have to talk with the team

**Councilor Chris Modlish:** Would be helpful to track actual goals of investments in the ESMPs. E.g., each investment has a certain service quality improvement associated with it (e.g., a SAIDI improvement) not just track how many customers were on a feeder that went underground, but also the service quality improvements before/after the investment.

**Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:** The more that the reports can demonstrate change, that EDCs are constantly evaluating change.

*Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee:* SAIDI/ SAIFI are stochastic in nature. Have to be careful about false precision. Work at a system level. Have developed an algorithm that assess the reliability improvement of different improvement types. Helps with capital planning.

## **11. Close and Next Steps**

*Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy:* Next ExCom meeting is April 24. Next GMAC meeting is May 1. Pending legislation re: open meeting law is on the governor's desk.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 2:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kyle Schultz

Synapse Energy Economics

Meeting Attachments

- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Slide Deck
- GMAC Reporting Fact Sheet
- March Activity Tracker
- EWG Comments on ESMP Metrics and Reporting