

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

Welcome and Opening Remarks --

At 1:08 pm, Office of Energy Transformation (OET) Executive Director (ED), **Melissa Lavinson** called the meeting to order, with approximately 65 Energy Transformation Advisory Board (ETAB or Advisory Board) participating either in person or virtually.

ED Lavinson welcomed the Advisory Board to the seventh quarterly meeting and introduced **Toby Berkman**, Consensus Building Institute, as the co-facilitator of the meeting.

ED Lavinson reviewed the agenda and the meeting goals: 1) Review and vote to affirm the final report and recommendations from the Decarbonizing the Peak (DTP) Focus Area Work Group (FAWG), and vote to affirm to sunset the DTP FAWG, 2) Review the pilot site evaluations and potential financing pathways for the Enabling Sustainable Economic Development (ESED) FAWG and vote to affirm moving from Phase 2 to Phase 3, and 3) Discuss the Phase 1 direction and scope of the Peak Energy Demand Reduction (PEDR) FAWG, and vote to affirm the Phase 1 workplan.

Updates on Outreach and Engagement

ED Lavinson provided an update on outreach and engagement, which includes an upcoming meeting on September 30th at Tufts University to connect with members of the Greater Boston Community to provide an overview of local and state-level energy goals and efforts.

ED Lavinson also joined the Green Ribbon Commission for the launch of the BosTEN thermal energy exploration project and will serve on the project's Stakeholder Advisory Group. OET is also co-leading a statewide, interagency Clean Thermal Energy Working Group alongside DOER, with the goal of offering recommendations to shape regulatory, permitting, and workforce environment in Massachusetts to advance thermal energy networks.

ED Lavinson invited questions on outreach and engagement:

Steve Cowell (Northeast Energy Efficiency and Electrification Council), asked if OET's outreach and engagement efforts have any direct connections with the Commonwealth's Energy Affordability Bill.

- **ED Lavinson** responded that OET held public webinars on the outcomes of the Everett Marine Terminal (EMT) and Financing the Transition (FTT) FAWG once the reports were finalized. These reports were shared with the legislature.

Vivian Li (Formerly with Boston Harbor Association), asked if there were also community meetings being held in Everett and Chelsea, to reach residents who may not make it to Tufts.

- **ED Lavinson** responded that all community meetings are coordinated in consultation with the Office of Environmental Justice and Equity. There is not currently a plan to hold meetings in Everett and Chelsea, but efforts are being made to make the meeting at Tufts as accessible as possible, including offering food, choosing a location that is transit

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

accessible, and offering translation. OET is working with community organizations to share the information. This is the fifth community meeting OET has held, with others held in Pittsfield, Canton, Leominster, and Lowell.

Findings and Initial Recommendations of the DTP FAWG

ED Lavinson shared a progress report on DTP activities and presented the FAWGs findings and initial recommendations.

Progress Report

The DTP FAWG met for 24 months, conducting a systematic analysis of both site specific and system-wide considerations for decarbonizing the peak. The FAWG findings draw on multiple analytical components and sources, including case study assessments, expert series webinars, E3 modeling on technologies and policies, reports from the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) and Synapse, ISO-NE Feedback, and a Community Voices Panel. The findings were shared with the ETAB for review, feedback, and approval and the DTP FAWG used the findings as the basis for developing recommendations. With the finalization of the recommendations, the DTP FAWG has completed their deliverable and has proposed the sunseting of the FAWG.

Presentation of FAWG Findings and Recommendations

The Findings include 11 points and were unanimously affirmed by FAWG members. The Findings directly informed the recommendations, which the DTP FAWG voted to accept on August 24, 2026. There were no objections and one abstention. The recommendations, in brief, include:

1. Promote enhanced grid utilization and align utility incentives with grid efficiency.
2. Expand deployment of Multi-Day, Long- and Mid-Duration Energy Storage (Multi-Day Storage, LDES, MDES).
3. Advance flexible interconnection to support clean energy deployment.
4. Support reforms at the regional ISO-NE level.
5. Establish a consistent greenhouse gas accounting framework.
6. Plan for community and workforce engagement in the event of peaking plant decommissioning.
7. Advance demand-side strategies through the Peak Energy Demand Reduction (PEDR) FAWG.
8. Enable Combined Heat and Power (CHP)-reliant customers to efficiently and affordably electrify loads.
9. Implement time-varying rates and align state programs accordingly.

ED Lavinson invited questions on the DTP FAWG progress, findings, and recommendations.

- **Steve Cowell** (Northeast Energy Efficiency and Electrification Council) asked for clarification on implementation and next steps on the recommendations.

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

- **ED Lavinson** responded that the recommendations are being advanced in a variety of ways. For example, DOER petitioned the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) to open a docket on time varying rates, which it did (D.P.U 26-62). Many of these recommendations, including implementation strategies, will be addressed further through the PEDR FAWG.
- **Tina Bennett** (Power Options) asked if there is concern about any of the recommendations being stranded (i.e. not having a forum or mechanism where they can be advanced).
 - **ED Lavinson** responded that none of the recommendations are stranded, but several need more work. The PEDR FAWG is being created to fill this gap, particularly around demand reduction.
- **Mekala Krishnan** (McKinsey Global Institute), suggested that it would be helpful to lay out more clearly at the beginning of the report the scope of the analysis, and the parameters for potential solutions.
 - **Liz Mettetal (E3)** responded that there was broad agreement in the FAWG about the limited potential of renewable resources to completely replace services provided by peaker plants, and the ability of storage to support but not replace the role of peaker plants. These areas of consensus are outlined in the report and shape the parameters for potential solutions. These, and other considerations related to peaker retirement could be called out more explicitly at the beginning of the report.
- **Mary Wambui** (Planning Office for Urban Affairs and Co-Chair of the Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Advisory Council Equity Working Group) raised several concerns about the recommendations: 1) the report implies unchecked industrial growth, especially related to data centers, and focuses disproportionately on heating and transportation. Block load consumers should also be mentioned. 2) The report suggests engaging communities in peaker decommissioning but does not recommend community veto power around plans for site re-use. 3) Recommendation 5 leaves open the possibility of alternative fuels, without fully acknowledging disagreements between FAWG members on alternative fuels, as mentioned elsewhere in the report.
 - **ED Lavinson** responded that recommendation 5 proposes a consistent greenhouse gas accounting framework as a first step. The full report aims to make points of disagreement clear, including on alternative fuels, while the presentation materials were meant to synthesize the Findings and Recommendations at a high level. ED Lavinson noted that the disagreement surrounding alternative fuels had been raised and discussed at previous ETAB meetings.
- **Nicole Obi** (Black Economic Council of Massachusetts) suggested an addition to recommendation 6, including participation targets that prioritize women and minority owned businesses, and explicitly name the need for registered apprenticeship programs.
- **Paul Chodak** (Eversource Energy) noted in reference to recommendation 2 that there are limited technologies currently available to enable multi-day and mid-duration energy

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

storage, and those that are available are very expensive, today. Affordability is a key concern.

- **ED Lavinson** responded that these considerations are covered in the full report. Liz Mettetal added that the recommendation calls out technologies that are anticipated to be available in the future, increasing feasibility.
- **Julie Chen** (Chancellor, UMass Lowell) suggested adding an addendum to the report that outlines who (e.g. agency, working group, etc.) is moving forward each recommendation.
 - **ED Lavinson** noted that the EMT FAWG report includes this, and it would also be possible for DTP.
- **Patrick Field** (Undersecretary, Executive Office of Economic Development) asked if there will be a storage working group created, as suggested in the recommendations.
 - **ED Lavinson** and **Joanna Troy** (DOER) responded is that there is not currently a working group on storage, but that this could be a conversation.

Voting/Decisions and Next Steps:

Toby Berkman called for a vote:

- *The Advisory Board affirms the FAWG's Recommendations and Final Report, as amended per comments by Advisory Board members, and agrees to sunset the DTP FAWG.*

VOTED: to affirm the FAWG's recommendations and final report and agrees to sunset the DTP FAWG.

In the room:

- none opposed, none abstained

Online:

- none opposed, none abstained

(One member who was unable to attend in-person or virtually voted to approve via email.)

Progress Update and Review of Phase 1 Workplan for ESED FAWG

ED Lavinson shared an overview of the Enabling Sustainable Economic Development (ESED) FAWG work to date.

Phase 1 progress update

In Phase 1, the ESED FAWG laid the groundwork to pilot clean energy ready zones, potentially paired with economic development rates, to accelerate speed-to-power and provide affordable energy for companies growing their businesses in Massachusetts. In Phase 2, the FAWG

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

engaged in a robust discussion on site-selection criteria, financing approaches, and ensuring development delivers tangible benefits to host communities.

Proposed Pathway and Next Steps

The FAWG selected pilot sites based on criteria defined by the FAWG. Currently, the most likely sites are the Worcester GreenTech Park and Pittsfield William Stanley Business Park. Once the sites are finalized, a utility engineering study will be conducted to determine available capacity and potential range of upgrade costs. In the proposed development pathway, a public entity (e.g., MassDev) will initially pay the contribution in aid of construction (CIAC), which is paid back by businesses locating at the site. Each future load customer will pay for their pro-rata share of enabled capacity. The public entity can then recycle the cost to enable development at a new site. The business becomes the customer of record with the utility under a DPU approved tariff.

Proposed next steps:

The FAWG will engage with site owners at Worcester GreenTech Park and Pittsfield Williams Stanley Business Park on next steps. Once the sites are finalized they will work with utilities to conduct an engineering study for each site in partnership with the state, pending confirmation of funding from DOER to use monies set aside for the Power Forward initiative. Sources of state capital for the CIAC payment still need to be identified and confirmed. When these pieces are in place, the FAWG will seek final approval from the ETAB, and EEA and EOED leadership, with the goal of announcing the pilot in Winter 2026.

Toby Berkman invited questions on the ESED FAWG progress, findings, and recommendations.

- **Hudson Gilmore** (LineVision) noted that a general assumption is that the state should only step in where private companies do not exist. The possibility of the state fronting capital for private companies risks the state overstepping its role. He suggested reaching out to site development companies, such as Cloverleaf Infrastructure, to understand what they experience as barriers to development and interconnection.
 - **ED Lavinson** clarified that the CIAC payment would be paid back by private entities. This initial funding from the state fills a gap related to the initial steps of site development.
 - **Undersecretary Patrick Field (EOED)** added that without these upfront investments, the Commonwealth is not able to compete with other states that already have excess electric capacity and ready interconnections. The state is aiming to fill a market problem with this proposal, in order to attract and retain companies.
- **Steve Cowell** (Northeast Energy Efficiency and Electrification Council) asked if the companies moving into a site will be known in advance, and if this determines advance planning for interconnection capacity.

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

- **ED Lavinson** responded that the FAWG is working with EOED and the pilot sites to right size capacity for potential companies. For each site there is a general estimate of the amount of MW that are needed.
- **Mekala Krishnan** (McKinsey Global Institute) asked if the proposed pathway includes risk mitigation for both state financing, and the possibility of businesses not choosing to locate at the site.
 - **ED Lavinson** clarified that risk mitigation is part of the FAWGs discussion and planning.
- **J.D. Chesloff** (Massachusetts Roundtable) commented that the alignment with EOED's statewide and local level development strategy is very important. In Pittsfield, in particular, the pilot project is aligned with the local prioritization of investment in innovation. Chesloff also affirmed revolving fund models as a financing strategy that is sustainable and proven.
- **Nicole Obi** (Black Economic Council of Massachusetts) emphasized the need to include participation rates for diverse providers, to be specific about workforce developments, and to see community benefits defined before finalizing financing approaches. These are all equity measures.
- **Julie Chen** (Chancellor, UMass Lowell) asked if the FAWG provided feedback to sites that were considered but not selected, in order to help advance their development.
 - **ED Lavinson** noted that not all sites needed support. The FAWG prioritized sites that were slated for redevelopment, not new development, and were tied to a municipality, not a private developer.
 - **Undersecretary Field** (EOED) added that selected sites aimed to be approximately 10 acres. Very few sites met all the selected criteria.
- **Zeyneb Magavi** (HEET) asked if a substation would be needed for the site in Worcester if Worcester were to pursue a geothermal network.
 - **ED Lavinson** responded that this would need a further conversation with Worcester.

Voting/Decisions and Next Steps:

Toby Berkman called for a vote:

- *The Advisory Board affirms the ESED FAWG proceeding from Phase 2 to Phase 3, pending identification of a source of public capital for the CIAC(s).*

VOTED: to affirm the ESED proceeding from Phase 2 to Phase 3.

In the room:

- none opposed, none abstained

Online:

- none opposed, none abstained

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

(One member who was unable to attend either in person or virtually voted to approve, via email.)

Progress Update and Review of Phase 1 Workplan for PEDR FAWG

Toby Berkman, CBI, provided an overview of the PEDR FAWG including the mission and context, and a review of the proposed workplan.

Issue Overview:

Massachusetts is pursuing affordable, reliable pathways to achieve its clean energy and climate mandates while reducing costs and emissions. Executive Order 654 (March 2026) set a target of 3.5 GW of new electric load management by 2035 and called for identifying opportunities to accelerate gas demand reduction in locations served by Everett Marine Terminal (EMT).

Mission: The PEDR FAWG will develop a prioritized set of gas and electric peak demand reduction actions for Massachusetts to minimize future supply and infrastructure investments and enable the affordable, reliable, and equitable achievement of the Commonwealth's climate and clean energy goals.

The PEDR FAWG will identify and prioritize strategies to:

- Reduce system-wide peak gas and electric demand, and
- Reduce peak demand growth in targeted locations where it could otherwise require electric infrastructure upgrades or continued LDC contracting with the EMT.

Phase 1 progress update and workplan

Phase 1 is focused on understanding the peak demand challenge (i.e. where we are now). In the coming months, meetings will do a deep dive into existing programs, electric and gas peak demand forecasting, timing, assumptions, and current usage patterns. The FAWG will identify barriers and opportunities related to peak demand reduction. Phase 1 will conclude in February or March 2027, with a foundational document that surveys the learnings to date and outlines a path for Phase 2.

Toby Berkman invited questions on the PEDR FAWG progress, findings, and recommendations.

- **Nicole Obi** (Black Economic Council of Massachusetts) noted the need to intentionally call out opportunities for small and diverse businesses in potential demand reduction actions.
- **Tina Bennett** (Power Options) asked for clarification on how the workplan will integrate gas and electric sectors.
 - **Toby Berkman** (CBI) responded that the gas and electric sectors will be intentionally brought together in the meetings focused on current usage patterns and opportunities.

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

- **ED Lavinson** added that the PEDR FAWG will also bring in larger institutions who are thinking about both gas and electric in demand response challenges and opportunities.
- **Paul Chodak** (Eversource Energy) noted that affordability is a central issue. It is important to be clear about where the 3.5 GW of new electric load management is coming from and how expensive it is compared to dollars per ton of CO2.
 - **ED Lavinson** responded that this will be part of the evaluation criteria.
- **Steve Cowell** (Northeast Energy Efficiency and Electrification Council) asked how the PEDR FAWG is taking into account changing peak demand over time?
 - **ED Lavinson** responded that the FAWG will be actively factoring in forward looking assumptions, informed by AMI data.
- **Mekala Krishnan** (McKinsey Global Institute) asked for further information on what would be included in the foundational section, noting that she would like to see this section covering the nature of demand side responses, different types of gas and electric peaks, varying time frames, use cases, and specific evaluation criteria.
 - **ED Lavinson** confirmed that all of these elements would be covered.
- **Vivian Li** (Formerly with Boston Harbor Association) noted that it will be important to include medical facilities in discussions. Given that many are active 24 hours a day, their demand needs are different than many other institutions, and many are also expanding.
 - **ED Lavinson** responded that several institutions are participating in the PEDR FAWG that also have medical facilities associated with them.

Voting/Decisions and Next Steps:

Toby Berkman called for a vote: The Advisory Board affirms the Peak Energy Demand Reduction FAWG's Phase 1 Workplan.

VOTED: to affirm the FAWG's Phase 1 Workplan.

In the room:

- none opposed, none abstained

Online:

- none opposed, none abstained

(One member who was unable to attend either in person or virtually voted to approve, via email.)

Executive Order on Data Centers

ED Lavinson provided an update on recent actions by the Healey-Driscoll Administration on Data Centers.

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

- On June 25, 2026, the Healey-Driscoll Administration paused acceptance of new sales tax exemption applications for data centers until stronger protections are in place and concurrently released a framework for responsible development.
- On September 8, 2026, the Healey-Driscoll Administration issued executive order 658 – Protect and Support Ratepayers, Communities, and the Environment. The EO establishes that state agencies shall not issue permits to a data center project unless it has demonstrated conformance with the framework for responsible data center development and operations and submitted a community benefits agreement with key stakeholders.
 - EEA committed to publishing a Municipal Guide by the end of the year and to establishing annual reporting and disclosure guidance for operating data center projects.

ED Lavinson invited questions on the data center executive order.

- **Frank Callahan** (Massachusetts' Building Trades Union) noted that there is lots of varied, and at times conflicting, information circulating about data centers. He emphasized that it is important to demystify this information, including on actual water and energy usage.
 - **ED Lavinson** affirmed the comment.

Remarks by Secretary Rebecca Tepper

ED Lavinson welcomed **EEA Secretary Rebecca Tepper**.

Secretary Tepper thanked the Advisory Board for their ongoing commitment, noting that the group has just passed 2 years of meeting. She emphasized that the alignment achieved in the Advisory Board and FAWG is rare amongst large, multi-stakeholder collaborative efforts. The work of the Advisory Board and FAWGs have actively informed decision making at the state level through executive orders and legislation. The ongoing work of the ESED and PEDR FAWG are critical. Energy ready zones are a key strategy for attracting and retaining businesses to/in the Commonwealth. Reducing peak energy demand is among the best strategies for advancing affordability and clean energy.

Next Steps:

ED Lavinson summarized the next steps emerging from this meeting:

- The DTP FAWG will sunset. The final report and recommendations will be shared publicly and disseminated to relevant parties after it is amended to reflect the Advisory Board comments. A revised report will be provided by October 12th.
- The ESED FAWG will proceed to Phase 3, moving forward with the pilot sites.
- The PEDR FAWG will advance the Phase 1 workplan, pending incorporation of ETAB feedback.
- The next ETAB date is yet to be determined.

**Minutes from
Energy Transformation Advisory Board Meeting
September 28, 2026**

ED Lavinson closed the meeting by thanking the Advisory Board for its work and time.

Meeting adjourned at ~3:45pm.