

## Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC) Equity Working Group Nominees

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*Membership as defined by the Equity Working Group (EWG) Charter:*

The Equity Working Group is comprised of at least 7 members:

1. Voting Councilors or their designees:
    - a. The Department of Energy Resources (DOER),
    - b. Office of the Attorney General,
    - c. Two or more Councilors selected by the GMAC.
  2. Two voting members representing organizations that are not represented on the GMAC, selected by the GMAC,
  3. One representative of the EDCs.
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Nominations Received by [MA-GMAC@mass.gov](mailto:MA-GMAC@mass.gov) by September 11, 2023, 5:00 PM:

- **The Department of Energy Resources (DOER):** Julia Fox
  - **Office of the Attorney General (AGO):** Chris Modlish
  - **GMAC Councilors:** Larry Chretien, Green Energy Consumers Alliance; Kyle Murray, Acadia Center; Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation
  - **External representatives:** Mary Wambui, Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA); Vernon Walker, Clean Water Action
  - **Electric Distribution Company (EDC):** Erin Engstrom, Eversource
  - **EWG Leadership:** Kathryn Wright, Chair
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Statements of Candidacy Received:

### 1. **Julia Fox, Department of Energy Resources (DOER)**

“I am greatly interested in serving on the GMAC Equity Working Group as a representative of DOER. In beginning my role as DOER’s Grid Modernization Program Coordinator just this summer, I have quickly become acquainted with the Council’s statutory requirements and responsibilities and supported its administrative operations. As a student at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I studied Environmental Science (B.S.) and Public Policy (M.P.P.), and largely focused my studies and research on environmental justice and energy equity. I am passionate about the clean energy transition and ensuring the processes for future grid planning involve procedural, distributional, and recognitional justices. Given the tight timeline for reviewing and providing meaningful feedback on the EDC’s ESMPs, the Equity Working Group plays a critical role in ensuring that equity is centered in our recommendations for decarbonized solutions and grid investments. DOER represents diverse stakeholders with a plethora of needs within the Commonwealth, so it is important that the policies and actions the Department supports best meet these needs. I look forward to contributing creative ideas and perspectives on the ESMPs as an energy professional early in their career.”

**2. Chris Modlish, Office of the Attorney General (AGO)**

“The Massachusetts Attorney General’s Office (“AGO”) would like to appoint Assistant Attorney General (“AAG”) Chris Modlish as our representative to the Grid Modernization Advisory Council (“GMAC”) Equity Working Group (“EWG”). In his role as an AAG, Chris has represented the AGO on several of the Department of Public Utilities’ (“DPU”) investigations related to grid modernization, including the electric distribution companies’ Capital Investment Proposals (“CIPs”), which involve many of the same issues that the GMAC must address, including appropriate, cost-effective investments necessary to accommodate building and transportation electrification as well as the complex issue of cost allocation between Distributed Energy Resource (DER) owners and ratepayers. Chris is also the lead on many of the AGO’s consumer protection and equity related efforts, including representing the AGO in its investigations into the competitive electric supply industry, and participating in the Massachusetts Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (“LIHEAP”) and Arrearage Management Payment (“AMP”) meetings on behalf of the AGO.”

**3. Larry Chretien, Green Energy Consumers Alliance**

“I would like to serve on the Equity Working Group. First and foremost, it would be a logical extension of my work on GMAC, as I have been appointed to represent low- and moderate-income consumers. Equity in the clean energy transition is a priority for my organization. I have experience on this issue, having worked at Green Energy Consumers for 24 years and, before that, 8 years at Quincy Community Action Programs. While I am very optimistic that grid modernization investments can benefit everyone, getting the details right is important. I would like to work with others on the committee to identify ways to ensure equity within the purview of the GMAC and ways that would require complementary policies that would require support from outside GMAC.”

**4. Kyle Murray, Acadia Center**

“I nominate myself, Kyle Murray of Acadia Center, for the Equity Working Group for the GMAC. My statement of candidacy is below.

In seeking appointment to the Equity Working Group subcommittee of the GMAC, I hope to help the GMAC play its key role in meeting the urgency of the climate crisis and creating a cleaner, healthier, and better grid for everyone - especially the populations who have been underserved and overburdened by our reliance on fossil fuels. As the environmental representative on the GMAC, I see my constituency as including both the traditional environmental advocacy community, and, more importantly, environmental justice populations. I think the Equity Working Group’s being constituted with representatives from outside the council and seeking feedback from affected communities is of crucial importance. I want to help advance that work.

Acadia Center has long been a pillar of utility planning reform in the region and helped create and has served on the Executive Committee and Equity Working Group of the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council. The perspective gained from my organization’s decade plus of service brings significant assets. In addition to developing and drafting the initial legislation which created the GMAC, Acadia Center has long been a thought leader in grid modernization. We have also published multiple reports on related matters, including UtilityVision (which outlines the specific steps needed to create a new energy system that both meets our needs and supports a fair, healthy economy and environment) and RESPECT (which

proposes key reforms to utility planning processes to ensure that utility investments and decision-making are aligned with state goals to address climate pollution, further environmental justice, and lower consumer costs. I believe I have been an advocate not only for the climate, but also for consumers and environmental justice communities. I look forward to continuing that work.”

#### **5. Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation**

“I am writing to self-nominate for the Equity Working Group. My name is Kathryn Wright, and I am the Senior Program Officer for Clean Energy at the Barr Foundation. I am currently serving in the representative seat for environmental justice on the Council. This is based on the Foundation’s collaborative partnership with environmental justice advocates and organizations across the state. I regularly update these groups on GMAC proceedings and would bring their perspectives into meetings alongside my own experiences working on climate justice with cities across the country from my previous roles. Beyond my professional experience, equity and environmental justice is also of significant personal interest to me. I grew up next to the South River in metro Atlanta, a polluted waterway which remains under a federal consent decree. That experience sparked my lifelong interest in environmental issues. I am open to serving as a co-chair.”

#### **6. Mary Wambui, Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA)**

“Greetings

In seeking appointment to the equity working group subcommittee of the GMAC, I hope to continue steering the Commonwealth of Massachusetts towards a just and equitable clean energy transition. My work at the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council and beyond has been focused on identifying structural barriers to energy equity and finding strategic, measurable, ambitious, realistic, timebound, inclusive goals or targets to the existing energy policy infrastructure that directly address these barriers. practical actionable solutions. When I joined the EEAC in 2017 I sat next to a wonderful utility executive who was a core person in the development of the State’s 3 year Energy Efficiency Plan, when my time for contribution to the discussion at the meeting came I spoke about centering people and becoming equitable, the gentleman turned to me after I finished my comment and asked me “ Mary – what are you talking about? What do you mean by equity?”, a few years later I was in a public EEAC meeting where I asked why there were such sharp differences in the implementation of the States energy efficiency program between one gateway city and its wealthier neighboring towns, the response given by the utility PAs was that “nobody wanted to work in that gateway city”. I have made it my personal mission to make sure :

- 1) There is deliberate awareness of historical legacies in our State’s energy policy and practice framework.
- 2) There is awareness throughout the process communities that have been left behind by our energy system.
- 3) That procedural fairness through including voices that have been left behind by our policies and practices becomes our experience and practice. How ? The EEAC’s EWG had a robust stakeholder engagement process which brought so many voices to the table that had not participated meaningfully in energy efficiency planning, the result of this inclusive process was changes in the performance incentive and inclusion of equity targets in the 2022-2024 term sheet.

- 4) There is a focus on unintended consequences of energy policy actions – these should be planned for and interventions to mitigate identified.
- 5) That community's benefit beyond access and affordability to extending financial benefits and creating shared ownership opportunities , good jobs and more.

**What value would I add to GMAC-EWG?**

- 1) Accessibility and procedural justice - "If You're Not at the Table, You're on the Menu" – Massachusetts low-income residents , BIPOC residents and other disadvantaged groups have been on the menu for far too long in the energy ecosystem. I would like to participate and meaningfully represent those communities that have been left out of grid related decisions.
- 2) Local control and shared ownership of clean energy resources -The benefits of a clean energy system should reduce energy burdens , decrease environmental exposure and burdens , increase clean energy enterprise contracting and creation , increase clean energy jobs, resilience, and energy democracy in disadvantaged communities . I would like to participate and see that these elements of a just transition are not left out of the Electric Sector Modernization Plans.
- 3) Climate goals- I would like to participate and ensure grid investments prioritize the integration of renewable energy sources.
- 4) Institutional coordination and alignment were a goal identified in the Clean Heat Commission as a core value in achieving a Net Zero Future. I am currently engaged in energy related policy and practice areas in the Commonwealth. Having insight into these other elements/processes will add value to the GMAC-EWG.

With Gratitude

Mary Wambui – [Ciiruwambui@gmail.com](mailto:Ciiruwambui@gmail.com) [mary@poua.org](mailto:mary@poua.org)"

**7. Erin Engstrom, Eversource (nominated by the EDCs)**

"Erin not only authored Stakeholder Outreach Chapter 3 of the Eversource Electric Sector Modernization Plan but also led EDC discussions on community outreach planning. More specifically, Erin drove consensus amongst the EDCs on establishing a Community Engagement Stakeholder Advisory Group – a foundational platform to provide a voice to communities including EDCs and a platform to inform EDC Planning decision making. Erin brings over ten years' experience in the Energy sector. Erin started her career in Energy Efficiency and then transitioned into Community Relations – directly interfacing with the EDC municipalities and community organizations to advocate for their needs and priorities, identifying the intersection between community priorities and Eversource needs. These skills continue to be transferable as she has spent the last 3 months meeting with GMAC members in this space, gaining insights and feedback, for the EDCs to shape their respective ESMPs. She can continue this work of bridging both EDC and Community priorities while on this WG and is committed to ensuring that all three EDCs successfully work with and listen to our stakeholders to help all of us achieve the Commonwealth's clean energy goals."

**8. Vernon Walker, Clean Water Action (Nominated by Cindy Luppi, Clean Water Action and Clean Water Fund)**

To Be Voted on by the GMAC on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023

“Reverend Walker is also an associate pastor on social justice based in Dorchester and represents Clean Water at both the Green Justice Coalition and the EJ Table.”