

Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, July 13, 2023

Hybrid Meeting

Councilors Present: Liz Anderson (virtual), Sarah Bresolin Silver (virtual), Marybeth Campbell (virtual), Larry Chretien, Kathryn Cox-Arslan (virtual), Julie Curti (virtual; joined at 12:40 PM) Elizabeth Mahony, Amy McGuire (virtual), Kyle Murray, Galen Nelson (virtual; joined at 1:16 PM), JS Rancourt (virtual; joined at 1:16 PM), Jonathan Stout, Andy Sun (virtual), Alex Worsley (virtual), Katherine Wright (virtual), Mireille Bejjani (virtual; designee for Kathryn Wright)

Non-Voting Councilors: Carol Sedewitz, Digaunto Chatterjee, Mark Lambert (virtual; designee for Kevin Sprague; virtual)

Councilors Absent: --

DOER Staff Present: Aurora Edington, Julia Fox, Sarah McDaniel, Joanna Troy (virtual)

Other Attendees: Matt Motley (National Grid), Kerry Britland (Eversource), Erin Engstrom (Eversource), Sofia Owen (Alternatives for Community & Environment), Jolette Westbrook (Environmental Defense Fund), Mary Wambui (virtual; Planning Office for Urban Affairs)

1. Call to Order

Commissioner Mahony, as Chair, called the meeting to order at 12:36 PM.

2. Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda

Commissioner Mahony, Commissioner Department of Energy Resources (DOER):

Commissioner Mahony welcomed all participants to the GMAC meeting. The Commissioner took roll call for voting and non-voting members. The Commissioner walked through the agenda (slide 2).

3. Public Comments

Commissioner Mahony introduced the attendees who registered to provide public comment.

Rich Creegan, Senior Vice President, Anterix: (See full written comments submitted to MA-GMAC@mass.gov [here](#).) Infrastructure investments and the ability to monitor the grid are necessary to modernize the grid. Anterix believes that a private, non-proprietary LTE network is the best way to ensure security and avoid proprietary network restrictions. Optimizing the grid requires a high level of system awareness. The GMAC should consider private wireless broadband communications networks as foundational element of grid modernization.

Chris Derby Kilfoyle, Berkshire Photovoltaic Services (BPVS): The GMAC is a breath of fresh air to us. Regarding the preread material, “Overly Impacted and Rarely Heard”, we feel that at BPVS – we are impacted, but not rarely heard. Our customers are most concerned that long delay from legislation last year – raises cap for 25kw for customers and repairs single parcel rule. Early adopters are still waiting for changes to occur. People are electrifying homes. 10 kw level restricted them from doing more. Had our company install dedicated off grid loads. Emphasis that people are ready for change and that it needs to be accelerated by the GMAC. Great amount of new capacity could come online. Farmers on properties on both sides of the road – consider rural customers. Grateful for the work done by the Acadia Center and the Barr Foundation.

Priya Gandbhir, Senior Attorney, Conservation Law Foundation (CLF): CLF supports the comments of the Barr Foundation and the Acadia Center on the EDCs’ ESMP outline. We emphasize the importance of the ongoing efforts of the council relating to consumer advocacy and environmental justice. Language and action should be used and performed in a deliberate manner with careful consideration. The ESMP outline mistakenly used important terms in a confusing or incorrect manners. Terms like environmental justice have specific meanings in state and federal laws. There needs to be careful consideration of terminology used in these plans. Additionally, the utility industry’s efforts to incorporate hydrogen is unsupported by Clean Energy and Climate Plan; therefore, CLF supports the Barr Foundation’s recommendation to have ESMP section 9.4 revised or removed.

4. Meeting Minutes Review and Voting

Commissioner Mahony asked for any changes to the May and June GMAC and GMAC Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting minutes that were sent out.

Council Discussion and Vote:

No changes requested on the GMAC meeting minutes. Commissioner Mahony asked if there were any motions on the floor. A motion to approve the minutes from the GMAC meetings on May 11, 2023 and June 15, 2023 was called by Councilor Kyle Murray. Councilor Larry Chretien seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All present voted in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. The meeting minutes from the GMAC meetings on May 11, 2023 and June 15, 2023 were approved by the Council.

No changes requested on the GMAC Executive Committee meeting minutes. Commissioner Mahony asked if there were any motions on the floor. A motion to have the Executive Committee approve the minutes from the GMAC ExCom meetings on May 16, 2023 and June 30, 2023 was called by Councilor Kyle Murray. Councilor Liz Anderson seconded the motion. A roll call vote was taken. All Executive Committee members present voted in favor, with none opposed or abstaining. The meeting minutes from the GMAC ExCom meetings on May 16, 2023 and June 30, 2023 were approved by the Executive Committee.

5. Information Request and Executive Committee Updates

Commissioner Mahony updated the Council regarding an information request for more information about the Asset Climate Vulnerability Assessment the EDCs referenced in their draft ESMP outline (Subsection 10.3 in the June 1st ESMP outline). The EDCs were requested to send across any preliminary findings or study summaries on this climate work. National Grid, Eversource, and Unitil provided summaries of their climate change studies, which are posted on the GMAC website under Information Request #2 (slide 5).

Commissioner Mahony provided Executive Committee meeting updates including the request for quote (RFQ) for consultant. The goal is to have a kickoff meeting in mid-August after hiring the consultant. The statute allows the GMAC to hire a consultant to run the council, which is consistent with process utilized by the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC). We had engagement with DPU to make sure the RFQ satisfied the statute.

Lastly, the Commissioner addressed the agenda topics for the August meeting, which are Distributed Energy Resources (DER) integration and cost allocation.

Discussion:

August GMAC Agenda:

Digaunto Chatterjee, Representing Eversource: Chatterjee asked about the scope of the cost allocation discussion, with a specific question on thoughts about proposals that may have price variation. Commissioner Mahony acknowledged that in the August meeting, the council will talk about cost allocation principles, including the potential for price variations.

Liz Anderson, Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General: Anderson asked if the cost allocation issue is narrowly defined to interconnection of distributed generation.

Carol Sedewitz, Representing National Grid: Sedewitz responded that the cost allocation issue included distributed energy resources (DER) but might include other things. What is the council looking for?

Digaunto Chatterjee: Chatterjee responded that the focus could be on cost allocation principles of DERs, and then a broad level discussion. It would be good for the council to agree on these principles to absorb multiple variables for proposals that could be included in the ESMPs.

Kyle Murray, Acadia Center, Representing the environmental advocacy community: For these presentations, are we expecting them to be utility led or led by outside speakers? It would also be helpful to have these presentations be introductory to get everyone on same page. Commissioner Mahony responded that the presentations would come from the utilities and outside presenters.

Carol Sedewitz: Because September 1st is submittal date for the ESMP drafts, it will be difficult to incorporate what we hear in this session in the proposal. The EDCs will make changes over the course of the fall to make the final submittal in January. On the August GMAC discussion topic of DER integration, I can offer a National Grid UK contact who is willing to speak.

Sarah Bresolin Silver, ENGIE North America, representing the transmission-scale renewable energy: Bresolin Silver agreed that level-setting is important for the August discussion topics, but there needs to be ample time for discussion. There are members on this council with experience in this area who can speak on matters of coordination that should be focused on. For the DER discussion, who gets to frame what the focus of that discussion will be? I recommend that the focus of the discussion is on adoption of technologies that will improve operation of DERs on the system.

Commissioner Mahony: If members have any suggestions on what the August agenda topics should cover, please speak now, or let us know in writing in the next week or so.

Digaunto Chatterjee: The ESMP outline does have 9.1.4., which has the intention of bending of electrification curve.

Sarah Bresolin Silver: I agree – important part of the plan. From the perspective of battery developers, it seems that part of the issue with developing batteries on the grid, tech does not exist or utilities could not adopt because they are cost prohibitive. Operationalizing batteries on the system, important to explore. More information during DER discussion in August. Consultant with knowledge of these tech.

Digaunto Chatterjee: Many different applications of DERs and batteries. For distribution line reliability, we have the best in nation microgrid in Provincetown which coordinates with protection systems. We're looking at battery storage in Hyde Park at the substation. We're interacting with not just behind the meter but front of the meter batteries. And we're thinking about cost allocation and the underlying principles we used in CIP filing. There are many different streams woven with each other on this topic.

6. Continuation of ESMP Outline Discussion

Commissioner Mahony shared slide 7 of the presentation and discussed the current state of the ESMP process, including the posting of written comments on the EDCs' first Electric Sector Modernization Plan (ESMP) draft outline on June 1, 2023. An updated outline draft was created based on feedback received and was posted on July 7, 2023. Written comments on the updated outline are requested by July 18, 2023 to MA-GMAC@mass.gov. These comments will be for the EDCs' consideration as they finalize their ESMP draft, which is due on September 1, 2023.

Discussion:

Larry Chretien, Green Energy Consumers Alliance, Representing low- and middle-income residential consumers: Chretien raised his concerns with Section 9.1.2 – transportation.

Someone who charges their vehicle off-peak, it is not a subsidy if based upon cost of service. Essential long term rate reform is needed if we want people to plug in EVs. Chretien rejects the idea it's automatically considered a subsidy. Chretien noted that he would like to see large incentives, whether per KW or c/kWh to get to approximately 1 million electric vehicles by 2030. Chretien then referenced section 9.4 of the ESMP outline, which refers to geothermal and noted that it should not be considered a decarbonized gas solution. It does not align with current state policy, as the Clean Energy Climate Plan (CECP) does not include them. MassCEC does not include them either. RNG was rejected by DPU in the Liberty Utility case. It doesn't make sense to have this included in this GMAC.

Digaunto Chatterjee: Section 8 covers technology assumptions. 11.5 would be better – alternative gas infrastructure. We are talking about solutions there instead of assumptions. Eversource is fine with removing if we move geothermal. In building a decarbonized future, all solutions should be on the table. But no strong opinions on keeping it there. Chretien asked to have what is in parenthesis removed. Murray echoed support for removing hydrogen and geothermal in 9.4, as they are not adopted in state policy. Chatterjee also spoke on incentives versus rates and the complexity of demand management for the transportation sector.

Carol Sedewitz: Sedewitz noted comments on that. She asked members to remember that forecasts that the EDCs have are meeting state policy goals. In that transition, there may be things we have to do. The thinking behind the outline was that it was comprehensive and could speak to the comprehensive nature of everything going on to get us to a decarbonized future. I think it is part of the story of what needs to happen.

Amy McGuire, Highland Electric Fleets, Representing the electric vehicle industry: McGuire responded to Chatterjee, and disagreed that demand response needs to be complex, noting that there are plenty of ways to stagger or randomize. We should be open to program designs that could be effective.

Sarah Bresolin Silver: I agree with what Carol Sedewitz said on the ESMPs being comprehensive and that we should explore all different kinds of solutions. Bresolin Silver acknowledged that RNG and hydrogen are in their infancy and may not be appropriate solutions for now but maybe in the future they might be. Anderson seconded Bresolin Silver's comments on section 9.4. To the extent that EDCs or LDC affiliates are considering larger scheme of goals, they should be included. Anderson added that there is lots of federal funding MA is trying to claim with geothermal and hydrogen. It is part of a larger conversation that we should think about.

Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation, Representing the environmental justice community: Barr asked a broader question on transport to better understand the demand forecasts as it relates to EVs. What is being considered beyond personal EVs?

Kyle Murray: Murray referred to section 9.4. In the interest of keeping the ESMP comprehensive, I am not opposed to leaving it in, but it is not a decarbonized solution. Hydrogen and RNG are disastrous for climate if they leak. He also posted a question on demand forecasts having more granularity beyond jurisdiction and range of sensitivities as requested in comments.

Digaunto Chatterjee: Yes, to Kyle, we are inherently doing planning and will make it explicit. Question on decarbonized gas solutions, to provide context, when we added it there we were thinking of what sources of hydrogen could be decarbonized. One avenue for Boston is to take advantage of offshore wind, using wind directly to produce hydrogen. Then it becomes difficult to think of use cases of hydrogen. Significant potential to decarbonize shipping and electric, and heating and long haul trucking sectors. Issue is that it could get lost. 9.4 could be 100 pages. Talk about hydrogen – should have this discussion, we can make it specific to decarbonized hydrogen. Or specific use case. Happy to take it in the way the council wants. We cannot rely solely on air source heat pumps to get through electrification.

Carol Sedewitz: The forecasts want us to be explicit where there are scenarios. We will make it clear in the ESMP draft. Sedewitz addressed Wright's question on EVs. Medium and heavy vehicles are in forecasts more at a system level than coming down to the individual feeder level for National Grid.

Digaunto Chatterjee: Specifically in Boston, we have some medium and heavy duty (MHD) in step loads. some known MBTA charging load as firm load will go in base load. Other MHD will make projections based on that data we're collecting on MHD traffic.

Commissioner Mahony: The Commissioner noted that adjustments may have to be made based on what happens in the next couple of months with future clarity on 20-80 and hydrogen hub.

Larry Chretien: Chretien noted that with grid modernization, there are some potential uses, such as in the economy. However, it does not have a role in building heating for homes and businesses. A GMAC report that indicates widespread use of hydrogen it is not something that I can support.

Julie Curti, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Representing municipal or regional interests: Curti commented on section 4.3.1 Municipal Outreach and Mapping. What do you intend to map in the plans?

Carol Sedewitz: The plan is to identify towns served and substation locations necessary for the future.

Digaunto Chatterjee: Same for us. The maps include the subregions, boundaries, and the substations within the region with an overlay of feeder locations. Chatterjee commented that they could also overlay Environmental Justice Community (EJC) defined maps. Chatterjee also responded to Chretien's comment, noting that he does not believe that they will push hydrogen through existing infrastructure. There is a space for building heating in a different context, gas boilers based on hydrogen or hydrogen blending to produce steam. We do not believe it is the right approach.

Commissioner Mahony: The Commissioner mentioned utilizing the mapping tool from the DOER Technical Potential of Solar Study.

7. Topic 1: Stakeholder Engagement

Commissioner Mahony introduced the series of presentations (slide 8).

a. Current plans and activities of the Distribution Companies (10 minutes)

The EDCs shared a presentation on current stakeholder engagement practices and plans. The slides were presented by Kerry Britland (Eversource), Erin Englestrom (Eversource), and Matt Motley (National Grid).

b. Jollette Westbrook, Environmental Defense Fund (10 minutes)

Jollette Westbrook and Sofia Owen delivered an oral presentation on the topic of stakeholder engagement without the use of slides. Discussion with the GMAC followed.

Jollette Westbrook, Environmental Defense Fund: Westbrook spoke on the need for an in-depth examination of transparent communication and engagement on grid modernization topics. We are in the midst of a change not seen before. If we don't get it right, there could be catastrophic consequences. I am glad to have meetings like this to dive deep on what we need to do. Transparency is key. There is a large concern that things are being done in a silo. The public needs to know difference between grid modernization and decarbonization. We have not been taking the necessary step back to say that this is utterly confusing for people. When we talk about transparency and eliminate confusion to the extent possible, there are certain core tenants that should be presented statewide.

For example, if someone has a question on privacy, that answer should be the same in terms of studies available and all municipalities should have the same information. Definitions we are using should be standardized. In the stakeholder working group with AGO office, the responses were jarring in terms of what people do not understand about regulations within the energy space, so we cannot take anything for granted. We must start at ground level and explain topics in a way that is accessible.

Westbrook spoke about other things in the country that are happening. The Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) is involved in proceedings in Illinois under CEJA (Climate Equitable Jobs Act), where companies design grid plans to bring 40% of benefits to equity investment eligible communities. Experts in the case gave testimony that 40% is not sufficient. We need to dig deeper. How can equity be measured? There is a need for specific metrics and meaningful metrics. In Washington, the implementation plans have to involve customer benefit indicator metrics and expected burdens reductions. I find that interesting.

c. Sofia Owen, Alternatives for Community & Environment (10 minutes)

Owen presented on the topic of stakeholder engagement, raising conversation on the areas of environmental justice (EJ), equity, and meaningful stakeholder engagement. Owen presented without the use of slides. Discussion with the GMAC followed.

Sofia Owen, Alternatives for Community & Environment: We do not have a common definition on what environmental justice (EJ), equity, and meaningful stakeholder engagement means. If there are definitions, they are not grounded in what is being practiced. With stakeholder engagement, there is a commitment and principle of EJ to deliver meaningful engagement for EJ populations and everyone. Access to information should be digestible and understandable. It goes beyond translating. We need to carefully think how we are explaining things. Education level for outreach needs to be at a fourth-grade education level, meaning that concepts should be made accessible at that level. It does not mean dumbing down, it means making things real in different ways.

For example, in collaboration with the City of Boston on building emissions, an art consultant made animated skit depicting a low-income woman getting impacted by the Building Emissions Reduction and Disclosure Ordinance (BERDO) to help the public learn about indoor and outdoor air quality. We need creativity in engagement. People think and learn in different ways – not just with static fact sheets. We do not have to reinvent the wheel.

We need meetings held that are accessible, but we cannot just rely on internet. Some people do not have reliable internet access. There is a need to think about equity at all stages of the process. It cannot just be spoken about in terms of engagement or getting benefits. We need people who are impacted involved in the decision making. Whiter and wealthier folks have access. As we are thinking about stakeholder engagement, there is a need to be taking action to decarbonize quickly. It does not have to conflict with or hamper bringing people into the process. Avoid situations when organizations or people are calling for litigation or accountability on the back end – do this proactively.

It is also important to be designing things to make it possible for people to digest information and give their feedback. A lesson learned from another process was on a transportation and climate initiative. Stakeholders outside of the EJ space came with a plan on what they wanted to do and had conversations 10 years before communities were brought it. When we sat down with Green Roots and CLF, and DEP and MassDOT, we concluded that if you are going to do stakeholder engagement, it should be done together. We all need to make changes and whose needs we are making changes for needs to be asked.

Discussion:

Commissioner Mahony: The challenge here is that we are not talking about something simple or tangible. How do we achieve goals, how do we plan, who hosts, who benefits? The Commissioner pointed out how many competing interests exist. Hopefully the ESMP plan addresses that and we can look at the statutory requirement through a different lens.

Kyle Murray: Is there any way we can do stakeholder input before we get this draft plan out? There are only so many opportunities to comment.

Erin Englestrom, Eversource: Stakeholder engagement before the draft may not be as robust. We are looking for GMAC to provide guidance: who/what groups should we reach out to?

Kerry Britland, Eversource: Britland noted the importance of translating utility speak to language at a fourth-grade level in ways that would resonate with many groups.

Matt Motley, National Grid: Motley appreciated the comment about laying the foundation. Many groups are not aware of ESMP. Storytelling is important for this complex topic.

Commissioner Mahony: The Commissioner encouraged GMAC members to write to the MA-GMAC@mass.gov email to suggest who should be invited to stakeholder groups. Kathryn, as equity appointee, there are a lot of people here that we will rely on to build out a robust stakeholder engagement list and of course use internal lists.

Kathryn Wright: Wright commented on the distinction of public education and stakeholder engagement, posing questions to Owen on the process of getting regulation and policy together, as well as when to do public education so that the community has the capacity to participate.

Sofia Owen: Public education has to be ongoing. Owen referred back to the example of ACE with the City of Boston on BERDO, noting that the process started two years before the ordinance was signed into law. There were four meetings held in partnership between ACE and Boston where residents and groups came, starting with an introductory 101. In subsequent meetings, they zeroed in on questions and what they wanted to see from the policy. They have continued to do 101 lessons after the ordinance was finalized. They are now in the process of writing the regulations.

Larry Chretien: We want to do the right thing. We want to get feedback from people from all over the Commonwealth. We want to reach everyone, and it is difficult due to the timeline.

Jolette Westbrook: Westbrook noted that asking communities what makes sense is important to do.

Sofia Owen: We do not have a lot of time here. Example: RGGI – Listening sessions were held all over state and the public asked questions such as, how does this impact my bills? How am I benefitting? If we do decarbonize everything, we need more electricity to do that. We need to let people know that their bill can go up and where to get relief for it. A one stop shop or FAQ resource is immensely useful.

Marybeth Campbell, Worcester Community Action Council, Representing a local agency administering the low-income weatherization program: I represent low-income customers. MassCAP is a good conduit to get information out. In thinking about public education and stakeholder engagement, there ought to be a consideration of the cost of doing business in those communities. Organizers should not be doing this for free. There needs to be considerations for

resources to budget for this. Utilities are not trusted in low-income communities. It cannot be a volunteer service to support messaging and education in the public sector. Resources should be established to pay people for their time.

Liz Anderson: Anderson raised that as a rate payer advocate, there needs to be a consideration for customer costs. How much is this going to cost and what will my bills look like? Also what are we doing to minimize those costs? We need to explore this as a council.

Commissioner Mahony: The administration is taking a fresh look at how we engage and improve our performance. We are lucky to have a Undersecretary of Equity on EEA. The Commissioner spoke about where and how to make improvements. We are starting to translate meeting minutes and agendas. We need to think about interpretation services. Notice period – need to give enough notice and where we give notice.

Sofia Owen: Glad to hear that Undersecretary is looped in. This is the role of agencies and government, it is not just the responsibility of the utility companies to budget for this, it is the government as well. Echoing that communities should not be volunteers. Timeline obligation, advocating for policy change, we know the urgency we are under thinking about what the right balance is. There is a need for an honest conversation about what we are building and who it is for.

Jollette Westbrook: Westbrook mentioned the tension between moving forward and gaining community input. We have to find the right balance. In terms of being inclusive, we are talking about having information available on the website, but there is a segment of the population that does not have access. If there are FAQs on website, consideration should be given to automated telephone messaging to get the same information out.

Sofia Owen: Owen noted that it is important that stakeholders should have an influence on the outcome besides having access to information.

Commissioner Mahony: The Commissioner noted that the DOER staff from GMAC should have engagement with the Environmental Justice Council (EJC) and/or MassPowerForward.

Sofia Owen: EJC is starting point. FixtheGrid is another great resource.

The Commissioner thanked the speakers for their presentations.

Break from 2:53 PM to 3:03 PM.

8. Topic 2: Equity

Commissioner Mahony welcomed the Council back from break and introduced the second topic of discussion: Equity.

a. Mary Wambui, Planning Office for Urban Affairs

Mary Wambui delivered a presentation beginning on slide 19 of the meeting slides.

Discussion:

Commissioner Mahony: The Commissioner posed a question: When we think about making sure the grid is ready for clean energy future, we want to have every community involved but it will require infrastructure changes. Some circles do not want to add infrastructure where communities have been overburdened by infrastructure, but we also want to make sure they get access. Suggestions for balancing that? It requires thinking about infrastructure upgrades we will need and where we go first.

Mary Wambui: I hear your struggle. I do not consider it a struggle; it is an opportunity. The problem with past infrastructure is that it never gave community ownership. It did not include community decision making. I believe that energy should be local and those who live in that community get jobs, or even shares/ownership structures. It depends on how you shape your intention to have infrastructure. Are there any community benefits? Connecticut is trying to begin the process for equitable grid planning. Massachusetts should learn from them.

Mireille Bejjani, designee for Kathryn Wright: Bejjani appreciated the question, “whose grid is this?” and the need to be centering people. That is what we think of at FixtheGrid—how to reframe stakeholder engagement as partnership. How can tone and framing of stakeholder engagement can be shifted to that?

Kyle Murray: Murray asked Wambui to speak further on the example given on ownership structures in Vermont.

Mary Wambui: Wambui responded that it is having cooperatives own power. Wambui lives in Lowell and a geothermal project at UMass Lowell was proposed. We would like to see people in Lowell be part of the decision making process and ownership process. It has been done in the UK. We cannot say we have a just transition and continue with big power companies. Something must change and that is where the community can fit in and be more receptive to new infrastructure in their communities.

Digaunto Chatterjee: Chatterjee asked Wambui to clarify which CT example was being talked about and what components of the docket are important to follow. Speaking about the amount of load, if we have disadvantages communities be at forefront of adopting technologies, the demand should, in theory, lead demand growth in other areas. How do you think the infrastructure build should follow?

Mary Wambui: In CT, I liked the principles at the end. It involved being up front about advancing energy affordability dialogue in underserved communities. If we electrify, bills will increase. The way we structure affordable housing will change. I liked the principle on access that is more resilient and reliable. We need to think about where the infrastructure is located now and why it got placed there. Think of places in the Commonwealth that can support it that are not EJ communities.

Digaunto Chatterjee: How do you see electric infrastructure in Brookline serving Dorchester? We must come to reality with electric design. With feeders going significant miles, you incur significant losses and expose neighborhoods with long lines with inherently worse reliability. Reliability is the highest with the shortest wires. Longer distribution wires come with more failures.

Mary Wambui: I am not an engineer, but I do know that the Commonwealth must operationalize justice. Whatever that is, they need to do it. We need to move away from the argument that reliability and equity cannot be in the same point. We have experts who give us ideas and these ideas end up opresesing those with not a lot of resources. Whatever it takes to operationalize justice and equity in grid modernization needs to be done.

Larry Chretien: Chretien raised a concern that the GMAC is one silo. There should be a focus on benefits and costs. Heat pumps are the purview of EEAC; EVs – EVICC, RGGI – MOR-EV, SMART program, Clean Peak Standard. All these things will change bills over time. It is time to cross different silos and have a major review of looking at the low-income discount rate.

Commissioner Mahony: The Commissioner addressed the previous discussion between Chatterjee and Wambui. We need to make sure everyone is benefitting from what is coming from the ESMPs. MassSave costs have failed and succeeded in different communities. Need to ask who's benefitting first versus equitably benefitting. How are these plans serving those communities first so that they are getting electrified first? The Commissioner noted the challenge of where to site infrastructure and the need to push the engineering questions. She also raised the idea that maps can help with public engagement and education.

Kyle Murray: Siting on all infrastructure is a challenge. We need to push engineering to its limits but there are times when infrastructure will have to be in EJ communities. The hope in that instance is that meaningful engagement and benefits occur. The local community should be consulted before plans and long-term engagement from the start. That is why we see frustrations, because that has not been the case in the past.

Digaunto Chatterjee: As a utility person, I hope we have mutual understanding that electric infrastructure is not a bad thing. Ideas are conflated with substations, distribution line in streets, versus fossil fuel power plants. We deregulated decades ago, so we do not own generation. We own wires, poles, and substations. Transmittal of power, we must think about infrastructure. Reliability statistics are blind to the type of customer you are. How infrastructure was built before, was measured on SAIDI/SAIFI which are customer blind. There is a natural incentive to serve all customers and make sure there are no outages and burdens on customers. Historically, this caused development in communities with peak demand. We are driving incentives for EV chargers, heat pumps, but those communities then will need substation upgrades. Socialize the costs that are not seeing that demand, that is how we can drive a different way of how to build infrastructure.

Mireille Bejjani: Bejjani raised that it is important to think about how we got to where we are, in terms of relationships. There is a lack of trust in those communities. Acknowledgment of history to build trust. Needs to be deliberate trust and relationship building.

Commissioner Mahony: Thank you Mary Wambui for joining us today.

9. Close

The Commissioner went over next steps on the final slide of the presentation.

Commissioner Mahony, as Chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:01 PM.

Meeting Materials:

- Meeting agenda
- Meeting presentation slides
- Preread: Fostering Equity through Community-Led Clean Energy Strategies
- Preread: Overly Impacted & Rarely Heard May 2023 Report
- Preread: EDCs' ESMP Updated Draft Outline - 07/07/23
- Prior Minutes for Approval