

ESMP-Relevant Proceedings and Working Groups

Preread & Reference Library for the Grid Modernization Advisory Council

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1. Overview and Summary documents

1.1. 2050 Emissions Limit and Sublimits

On December 21, 2022, in compliance with the Global Warming Solutions Act as amended by An Act Creating A Next-Generation Roadmap for Massachusetts Climate Policy, the Secretary of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) adopted statewide greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions limit and sector-specific sublimits for 2050. The statewide emissions limit for 2050 was set at Net Zero, defined as “A level of statewide greenhouse gas emissions that is equal in quantity to the amount of carbon dioxide or its equivalent that is removed from the atmosphere and stored annually by, or attributable to, the Commonwealth; provided, however, that in no event shall the level of emissions be greater than a level that is 85 percent below the 1990 level.” The sector-specific sublimits are set at levels slightly more stringent than necessary to achieve the required 85% GHG reduction target to allow for some margins for error in meeting each of the sector-specific sublimits.

The sublimit for the electric power sector is set at a 93% reduction from 1990 levels, which is equivalent to 2.0 MMTCO_{2e}.

Determination Letter of Emissions Limit and Sublimits for 2050:

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/determination-letter-for-the-2050-cecp/download>

1.2. Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050 (2050 CECP)

On December 21, 2022, the Administration released the [Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050](#), the Commonwealth of Massachusetts’ comprehensive and aggressive plan to achieve Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions in 2050. The 2050 CECP highlights a broad suite of specific goals, strategies, policies, and actions to reduce statewide gross GHG emissions by at least 85% below the 1990 baseline level, and conserve and enhance carbon sequestration on natural and working lands to help achieve Net Zero in 2050. The 2050 CECP charts out the way Massachusetts will achieve the emissions limit and sublimits in 2050 through building a future in which the heat in homes, power in vehicles, and the electric grid can all operate with minimum reliance on fossil fuels. While this Plan sets out policies specific to each of the sectors of the economy, the 2050 CECP recognizes that clean energy technologies across sectors face some common challenges and solutions. These challenges will be addressed through cross sector strategies such as expanding workforce development, supporting clean energy innovation, and ensuring a thriving and just economic transition that will benefit everyone.

2050 CECP: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/2050-clean-energy-and-climate-plan/download>

1.3. Department of Public Utilities (DPU) Annual Report

This report summarizes the responsibilities of the various Divisions within the Department, provides information regarding the day-to-day functions of the agency, and outlines the major activities and accomplishments of 2022. The **chapter on the Electric Power Division for 2022** is recommended. Many of the summaries for DPU proceedings below are sourced from this report.

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/dpu-annual-reports-to-the-legislature>

2. DPU Proceedings

Note that all proceedings referenced in the section below are publicly available in the DPU filerom:
<https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/DPU/Filerom/dockets/bynumber>

2.1. Grid modernization

Orders 21-80/81/82-A, D.P.U. 21-80/81/82-B

The Department reviewed and adjudicated new grid-facing grid modernization investment proposals and customer-facing grid modernization investment proposals (i.e., advanced metering infrastructure (“AMI”) implementation plans) from the electric distribution companies (EDCs). On October 7, 2022, the Department issued an Order (D.P.U. 21-80-A/D.P.U. 21-81-A/D.P.U. 21-82-A) preauthorizing continuing grid-facing grid modernization investments of \$473 million for the term of 2022-2025.

On November 30, 2022, the Department issued an Order (D.P.U. 21-80-B/D.P.U. 21-81-B/D.P.U. 21-82-B) preauthorizing certain new grid-facing and customer-facing investments and preliminarily approving certain customer-facing investments, for a total of \$1.2 billion (\$80 million for new grid-facing investments, \$937 million for core AMI investments, and \$232 million for preliminary approval of supporting AMI investments). The Department set term limits on these investments to ensure the deployment is on schedule and benefits to customers can be realized as early as possible. The EDCs will implement technologies that will dynamically manage and operate distributed energy resources interconnected to the grid system and deploy new-generation AMI meters in the next few years.

Currently, the costs for grid-facing investments will be collected annually through the pre-existing Grid Modernization Factor (“GMF”) cost recovery mechanism outside of base rates.

The costs for the AMI investments will be collected annually through a new AMI cost recovery mechanism outside of base rates; in Eversource’s last rate case, D.P.U. 22-22, Eversource’s AMI tariff was approved.

Order 21-80/81/82-A:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/15598967>

Order 21-80/81/82-B:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/15824167>

DPU Investigation into the Grid Modernization Phase 1 Implementation and Prudence Review (Dockets 22-40/41/42)

On May 10, 2018, the Department of Public Utilities approved the first grid modernization plans for NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy, Massachusetts Electric Company and Nantucket Electric Company d/b/a National Grid, and Fitchburg Gas and Electric Light Company d/b/a Unitil (“Unitil”). The Department is reviewing the implementation of each company’s grid modernization plan, including the final prudence reviews of grid modernization investments.

Guidehouse evaluation report of electric distribution companies implementation of Grid Modernization Plan Phase 1 investments:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/15154708>

2.2. Electric vehicle charging infrastructure programs

Between 2018 and 2021, the Department approved multiple utility electric vehicle (“EV”) charging infrastructure programs by Eversource and National Grid for a total of \$96 million, enabling deployment of level 2 and direct current fast charging EV charging stations in public and workplace sites and multi-unit dwellings, as well as implementation of off-peak charging rebates for residential customers. The costs for the EV programs are currently recovered through an annual cost recovery mechanism outside of base rates. The Department began an annual prudence review of National Grid’s Phase I and Phase II EV charging programs in late 2020. In each annual prudency review, the Department disallowed cost recovery of certain costs National Grid spent imprudently: \$144,000 in expenses that were spent imprudently during the 2019 program year (D.P.U. 20-64-A), \$305,087 in expenses that were spent imprudently during the 2020 program year (D.P.U. 21-67-A), and \$482,477 in expenses that were spent imprudently during the 2021 program year (D.P.U. 22-63-A). Eversource’s EV program is also under prudence review as part of the 2018-2021 grid-facing grid modernization term report proceeding.

In 2021, the Department issued an Order (D.P.U. 20-69-A) providing detailed guidance to the EDCs on filing EV charging infrastructure plans, including requirements under the Transportation Act to develop demand charge alternatives for commercial and industrial customers. In July 2021, the EDCs submitted their coordinated EV charging infrastructure plans and. On December 30, 2022, the Department issued an Order approving a four year program with a budget of \$206 million for National Grid, the Department approved a four program with a budget of \$188 million for NSTAR Electric, and a five year program with a budget of \$998,000 for Unitil. The costs for these recently approved EV programs will also be recovered through an annual cost recovery mechanism outside of base rates.

Order 20-69-A: <https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/13552861>

Order 21-90/91/92:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/16827694>

2.3. Utility-owned storage investment plans

In May 2018, the Department preauthorized the first two utility-scale storage demonstration projects in the Commonwealth. In September 2022, Eversource commissioned the storage demonstration project in the Outer Cape. The capacity of the Outer Cape project is 25 MW/38 megawatt hours (“MWh”), and the project can provide back-up power by islanding to customers that are served by a single distribution line. The Department established a set of performance metrics for the storage project in 2019 and expects annual performance reports from Eversource starting in 2023. The costs for the storage project are currently recovered through the GMF cost recovery mechanism outside of base rates.

In May 2021, the Department issued an Order (D.P.U. 20-69-A) providing guidance on future utility-scale energy storage proposals. Additional storage investment plans are expected in the near future.

Order 20-69-A: <https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/13552861>

2.4. Long-term system planning

In May 2019, in response to increasing interconnection requests and DG saturation on the Commonwealth’s distribution system, the Department opened an investigation (D.P.U. 19-55) into the interconnection of DG to ensure an efficient and effective interconnection process that will foster continued growth of DG while ensuring a safe and reliable EPS. As part of its investigation, the Department also solicited proposals from stakeholders for alternative methodologies to allocate interconnection related costs among DG customers. In February 2020, the Department received six proposals. In response, the Department developed and released its own proposal (“Straw Proposal”) for public comment in October 2020 as part of a separate investigation into distributed energy resource planning and assignment and recovery of costs for the interconnection of distributed generation. Upon identification of an imminent issue of high interconnection costs for almost a gigawatt of DG seeking to interconnect to the EPS, the Department bifurcated its investigation into establishment of a **long-term system planning program** and establishment of a provisional program to address short-term concerns.

The 2022 Clean Energy Act established a new process and requirements for long-term electric system planning. The process established by the 2022 Clean Energy Act effectively establishes a statutory, long-term system planning requirement for enabling distributed energy resource development to increase timely adoption of renewable energy and distributed energy resources. Therefore, by Order on September 12, 2022, the Department found that its continued investigation of a long-term system planning program in D.P.U. 20-75 was moot. Accordingly, the Department suspended its investigation and closed the proceeding.

Order 20-75-C Closing Investigation into Long-Term System Planning Program:
<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/15488190>

2.5. Provisional System Program/Capital investment projects (CIPs)

In May 2019, in response to increasing interconnection requests and DG saturation on the Commonwealth’s distribution system, the Department opened an investigation (D.P.U. 19-55) into the interconnection of DG to ensure an efficient and effective interconnection process that will foster continued growth of DG while ensuring a safe and reliable EPS. As part of its investigation, the Department also solicited proposals from stakeholders for alternative methodologies to allocate interconnection related costs among DG customers. In February 2020, the Department received six proposals. In response, the Department developed and released its own proposal (“Straw Proposal”) for public comment in October 2020 as part of a separate investigation into distributed energy resource planning and assignment and recovery of costs for the interconnection of distributed generation. Upon identification of an imminent issue of high interconnection costs for almost a gigawatt of DG seeking to interconnect to the EPS, the Department bifurcated its investigation into establishment of a long-term system planning program and **establishment of a provisional program** to address short-term concerns.

Following public comment, several rounds of information requests and a technical conference, the Department issued an Order in November 2021, establishing a provisional program for planning and funding essential upgrades to the EPS to foster timely and cost-effective development and interconnection of DG. The provisional framework allows the EDCs to file certain EPS infrastructure upgrade proposals (based on the Department’s Straw Proposal and also known as capital investment projects or “CIPs”) with the Department that limit the interconnection costs allocated to each DG facility. Under the provisional design, customers will help fund the initial construction of the EPS upgrades but will be partially reimbursed over time from fees charged to future DG facilities that are able to interconnect due to the prior upgrades. This new pathway should help facilitate an equitable allocation of costs and remove barriers to the Commonwealth’s progress to a clean energy future. The Department issued its first Order in the provisional program on December 30, 2022, approving the CIP proposal filed by Eversource for the Marion-Fairhaven Group Study. Currently, CIP costs will be recovered through an annual CIP cost recovery mechanism outside of base rates.

Dockets stemming from the Provisional System Program include 22-47, 22-51, 22-52, 22-53, 22-54, 22-55, 22-61, 22-170, 23-06, 23-09, and 23-12. The total estimated distribution cost of the 11 Provisional Program proposals is approximately \$825 million.

Order 20-75-B establishing the Provision Program:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/14232299>

Order 22-47 approving the Marion-Fairhaven Group Study:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/16827728>

2.6. Utility-owned solar energy projects

Section 77 of the 2021 Climate Roadmap Act allows electric and gas distribution companies to construct, own, and operate solar generation facilities, paired, where feasible, with energy storage facilities, on land owned by the utility to assist municipalities, including those with environmental justice populations, at high risk from the effects of climate change. Program goals established by the statute include peak demand reduction and system resiliency. The statute imposes a cap of approximately 286 MW¹ on the amount of solar generation a distribution company can construct, own, or operate pursuant to Section 77.

In June 2022, NSTAR Electric Company d/b/a Eversource Energy and Eversource Gas Company of Massachusetts d/b/a Eversource Energy filed the first petitions pursuant to Section 77 with the Department. The petitions, docketed as D.P.U. 22-64 and D.P.U. 22-65, propose solar facilities paired with battery energy storage on company property in Yarmouth, Brockton, and Lawrence. Eversource’s total capital cost estimate for three proposed projects is approximately \$37 million.

¹ Under Section 77, a distribution company shall not construct, own, or operate new facilities equaling more than 10 percent of the total installed megawatt capacity of solar generation facilities in the Commonwealth as of July 31, 2020.

2.7. Energy Efficiency Three-Year Plan

The energy efficiency programs administered by the Utility Energy Efficiency Program Administrators (PAs) operate in accordance with three-year plans developed in collaboration with the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC) and approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities. The currently approved plan covers 2022 through 2024. In addition to the three-year plans, mid-term modifications and regular reporting are also put in place to ensure program success. Energy Efficiency costs are currently recovered through an annual EE cost recovery mechanism outside of base rates.

To view the 2022-2024 Three-Year Plan, visit the [EEAC website](#).

Order 21-120 through 21-129: https://ma-eeac.org/wp-content/uploads/2022-2024-3YP-Order_1.31.22.pdf

2.8. Rate cases

National Grid Rate Case (D.P.U. 18-150)

National Grid filed its rate case on November 15, 2018. Pursuant to statute, DPU had ten months to investigate and make a determination on the rates. The Department issues its Order on September 30, 2019 reducing the increase from approximately \$132 million to \$90 million. New rates took effect on October 1, 2019. The rate case also considered matters potentially relevant to ESMPs, including: performance-based ratemaking; performance incentive mechanisms related to peak demand reductions, and transportation electrification; capital investment recovery mechanism; solar phase II and smart grid pilot program roll-ins; energy storage demonstration program; phase II electric vehicle program; and rate structure.

Order 18-150:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/11262053>

Unitil Rate Case (D.P.U. 19-130)

Fitchburg Gas and Electric Light Company d/b/a Unitil Electric Division filed its rate case on December 17, 2019. Pursuant to statute, DPU had ten months to investigate and make a determination on the rates. The Department issued its Order on April 17, 2020 approving the proposed settlement between Unitil and the Attorney General's Office.

Order 19-130

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/12053943>

Eversource Rate Case D.P.U. 22-22

NSTAR Electric d/b/a Eversource filed its rate case on January 14, 2022. Pursuant to statute, DPU had ten months to investigate and make a determination on the rates. The Department issued its Order on November 30, 2022 reducing the requested increase from approximately \$89 million to \$64 million. New rates took effect on January 1, 2023. The rate case also considered matters potentially relevant to ESMPs, including: performance-based ratemaking; performance

metrics related to peak demand reductions and resiliency; SMART program and solar expansion program investments; advanced metering infrastructure; and rate structure.

Order 22-22:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/15824195>

2.9. Performance-based ratemaking mechanisms

A performance-based ratemaking mechanism (PRBM) adjusts base distribution rates annually through the application of a revenue cap formula that accounts for – among other factors – economy-wide inflation minus a productivity offset and consumer dividend and adjusted for significant costs beyond the company’s control (i.e. exogenous events). The Department of Public Utilities is then responsible for ensuring the annual PBR adjustments complied with directives approved in each company’s last base rate proceedings. PBRMs use incentives and adjustments through a formula approach as a means of setting utility rates – in contrast to traditional rate-of-return rate making, which is based on a company’s cost of service.

Eversource PBRM (D.P.U. 17-05 and D.P.U. 22-22)

NSTAR Electric first proposed and was approved for a performance-based ratemaking mechanism (PRBM) in D.P.U 17-05 to adjust their base distribution rates annually. In D.P.U. 22-22, the Department approved an additional 5-year term of the prior PBRM with further modification, including the addition of a “K-Bar” formula to allow for annual cost recovery associated with the Company’s capital investments in order to provide the Company with “flexibility to address the evolving energy and climate policies governing EDCs, as well as to maintain aging infrastructure and enhance resiliency to address the impacts of climate change.” Order, at 61. Specifically, the Department’s Order approved the use of a “rolling average” of the Company’s actual plant additions placed in service starting from 2018 to 2022 to calculate the annual K-Bar adjustment. Order, at 61, 65. Moreover, the Department set a cap for the Company’s annual K-Bar adjustments based on the Company’s forecasted five-year capital investment budget—that is, when calculating the K-Bar adjustment, the amount allowed for recovery may not exceed the Company’s forecasted capital budget by more than ten percent. Id. at 64.

Order 17-05:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/9171660>

Order 22-22:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/15824195>

National Grid PBRM (D.P.U. 18-150)

National Grid first proposed and was approved for a PBRM in D.P.U. 18-150 to adjust their base distribution rates annually. The current PBR term will conclude on September 30, 2024 and the company is expected to file its next base distribution rate case with a proposed PBRM later this year.

Order 18-150:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/11262053>

2.10. **Distribution system reliability and safety dockets**

The Department requires each EDC to periodically file reports on issues related to electric distribution system safety, service quality, and reliability. The Department reviews these reports and meets with the companies, as necessary, to ensure that the companies' actions are consistent with Department requirements. Some of the periodic reports filed with the Department are described below.

Annual Planning and Reliability Report

The annual planning and reliability report include an analysis of the company's distribution system, including:

- A ten-year load growth forecast capable of identifying high-growth areas/zones;
- A description of the company's transmission and distribution design and planning criteria and an explanation of how those criteria are applied;
- A distribution system operating study focused on contingency analysis and management;
- An update to corrective actions and significant capital investments planned for the next five years;
- A Resiliency Report, pursuant to G.L. c. 164, § 146, will be filed with each Company's 2022 Annual Reliability Report; and
- Heat Maps, as part of the Resiliency Report, indicating highly loaded and highly constrained areas as well as outage vulnerability.

The 2023 annual planning and reliability reports are filed with the Department under the following dockets:

- National Grid: 23-ARR-01
- Eversource: 23-ARR-02
- Unitil: 23-ARR-04

Reporting of outage events

Each EDC is required to maintain, on a real-time basis, information regarding planned and unplanned outages that occur on its distribution system. Each company's outage report can be accessed by Department staff via a secure internet-based Outage Reporting Protocol ("ORP") system. The ORP information includes, for example:

- The location of the outage;
- Number of customers affected;
- Number of circuits affected or out of service;
- Likely cause;
- Any bodily injury; and
- Whether a critical facility, such as a hospital, is involved.

Each company annually files a report of all customer outages that occurred on its system in the prior year.

Service Quality Performance Reports

The Department requires that each EDC submit an annual service quality report that details how the company has performed with respect to standards established in the Department’s service quality guidelines. The reports for 2022 were recently filed under the following dockets:

- Until, 23-SQ-10:
<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/17108169>
- National Grid, 23-SQ-11:
<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/17112932>
- Nantucket, 23-SQ-12:
<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/17112796>
- NSTAR (Eversource), 23-SQ-13:
<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/17114883>

Vegetation Management Programs

The Department oversees the full-scale base and pilot vegetation management programs implemented by the EDCs to trim trees and other vegetation near electric utility lines. The base vegetation management program requirements for the EDCs were established in the D.P.U. 11-85/11-119 series of Orders. For base vegetation management, each circuit is trimmed to certain specifications on a four-to-five-year cycle (i.e., ~25% of all circuit miles each year) regardless of vegetation clearance or overhang. Additionally, mid-cycle pruning is performed where needed. Hazard and risk trees are removed in coordination with the cycle pruning schedule, with additional off cycle profiling for risk and hazard trees based on reliability. Per the D.P.U. 11-85/11-119 series of Orders, all removed trees are tracked and reported to the DPU. Most of the pruning and tree removal work is completed by contractors with oversight performed by Company arborists. The EDCs also have more aggressive vegetation management pilot programs (e.g., Resiliency Tree Work (“RTW”) Pilot Program). These programs are add-on/expansions of the EDCs base vegetation management program and support reliability performance and enhanced distribution system resiliency. Costs for the more aggressive vegetation management pilot programs are currently recovered through an annual RTW cost recovery mechanism outside of base rates. Both the base vegetation management programs and the pilot programs are reviewed by EPD staff for approval through their annual compliance filings, cost recovery filings, and electric distribution rate cases.

2.11. Future of Gas Investigation

In October 2020, the DPU opened an investigation to focus on the gas local distribution companies’ (LDCs’) role in the Commonwealth’s achievement of its target 2050 climate goals. On March 18, 2022, the LDCs filed an Independent Consultant’s Report, which included (1) Technical Analysis of Decarbonization Pathways Report (Pathways Report); (2) [Considerations and Alternatives for Regulatory Designs to Support Transition Plans Report \(Regulatory Designs Report\)](#); (3) a [Stakeholder Engagement Report](#) by Environmental Resources Management

(Stakeholder Report); and (4) [the LDCs' Common Regulatory Framework and Overview of Net Zero Enablement Plans](#) (Framework). Each LDC also filed a company-specific Net Zero Enablement Plan (NZEP). On May 6, 2022, interested stakeholders filed comments in response to the LDCs' filings with the LDCs filed Reply Comments on July 29, 2022, and in accordance with the Department's procedural schedule, stakeholder Final Comments were submitted by October 17, 2022.

Vote and Order Opening Investigation 20-80:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/12820821>

3. Working Groups

3.1. Energy Storage Interconnection Review Group (ESIRG)

In 2022, the Department issued an Order directing the DG and Clean Energy Ombudsperson to facilitate establishment of an Energy Storage Interconnection Review Group ("ESIRG"). The ESIRG was established in April 2022 and continues to meet regularly.

Order establishing ESIRG (19-55-E):

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/14486015>

Working group website: <https://ngus.force.com/s/article/Energy-Storage-Interconnection-Review-Group>

3.2. Technical Standards Review Group (TSRG)

In its Final Report to the Department of Public Utilities, the Massachusetts Distributed Generation Interconnection Working Group, as established in D.P.U. 11-75, recommended the creation of a Technical Standards Review Group to further address interconnection issues.

Report recommending establishment of TSRG:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/9254143>

Working group website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/massachusetts-technical-standards-review-group#upcoming-meetings->

3.3. Advanced metering infrastructure (AMI) stakeholder working group

In Order 21-80/81/82-B, the Department directed the EDCs to convene and facilitate an AMI stakeholder working group to discuss and reach consensus on 4 topics related to implementation of the Companies' respective AMI implementation plans approved by the Department on November 30, 2022.

The Department found the AMI Stakeholder Group may elicit valuable input to inform the Companies' implementation of AMI. Specifically, the Department directed the AMI stakeholder working group to focus on:

- Customer and third-party access to customer usage data;
- Customer education and engagement;
- Billing of time varying rates ("TVR") offered by competitive suppliers; and

- AMI deployment strategies that may expedite the ability for competitive suppliers to offer TVR products.

The Companies convened the stakeholder group by February 1, 2023. Starting on May 15, 2023, the Companies shall submit a quarterly status report to the Department in the instant proceedings. A final status report is due on August 1, 2024.

Order establishing the AMI stakeholder working group:

<https://fileservice.eea.comacloud.net/FileService.Api/file/FileRoom/15824167>

3.4. Clean energy transmission working group (CETWG)

The Clean Energy Transmission Working Group was established by the 2022 Climate Law and is charged with providing a comprehensive cost analysis of major transmission infrastructure upgrades that may be needed to deliver clean energy generation procured pursuant to the laws of the Commonwealth for the use of residents of the Commonwealth and the region.

The working group is also required to assess and report on any necessary transmission upgrades that may be required to support the deployment of clean energy projects that may interconnect into the commonwealth for the benefit of residents of the commonwealth and the region, including but not limited to offshore wind projects.

3.5. Electric Vehicle Intergovernmental Coordinating Council (EVICC)

The EVICC was established by the 2022 Climate Law and is charged with assessing and reporting on strategies and plans necessary to deploy electric vehicle charging infrastructure to establish an equitable, interconnected, accessible, and reliable electric vehicle charging network across the Commonwealth.

The council is also required to regularly seek data and input related to electric vehicle charging stations, fueling stations and related infrastructure, equipment, equipment maintenance and technology, from stakeholders, which stakeholders shall include, but not be limited to, investor-owned and publicly-owned electric utilities, state and local transportation agencies, companies involved in products, services, technologies and data collection related to clean energy charging and fueling, automobile manufacturers, groups representing environmental, energy and climate perspectives, and groups representing consumers including, but not limited to, low-income consumers.

EVICC website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/electric-vehicle-infrastructure-coordinating-council-evicc>

3.6. Gas System Enhancement Program (GSEP)

In 2014, the Massachusetts Legislature passed An Act Relative to Natural Gas Leaks (the “Gas Leaks Act”). The Gas Leaks Act permitted local distribution companies (LDCs) to submit to the DPU annual plans to repair or replace aged natural gas infrastructure in the interest of public safety and to reduce lost and unaccounted for gas (“LAUF”).

On or before October 31st of each year, the gas distribution companies are permitted to submit annual Gas System Enhancement Programs (“GSEPs”) for replacement of aged (non-cathodically protected steel, cast-iron, and wrought-iron) infrastructure during the following calendar year.

In July, 2022, the Massachusetts Legislature passed An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind, St. 2022, c. 179, which amended G.L. c. 164, § 145. The amendments require the gas LDCs to consider including the use of advanced leak repair technology to repair any existing leak-prone gas pipe to extend the useful life of such gas pipe by no less than 10 years and replacing gas infrastructure with utility-scale non-emitting renewable thermal energy infrastructure, such as geothermal systems.

The Act also requires the Department to convene a stakeholder working group to develop recommendations and legislative changes to align the GSEPs with statewide emission limits, as well as encourage development of geothermal systems.

GSEP Working Group website: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/gseps-pursuant-to-2014-gas-leaks-act>

3.7. Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB)

The Energy Facilities Siting Board (EFSB) is an independent state board that reviews proposed large energy facilities including power plants, electric transmission lines, intra-state natural gas pipelines, and natural gas storage tanks.

To obtain EFSB approval, a proposed facility must demonstrate that it would provide a reliable energy supply, with a minimum impact on the environment, at the lowest possible cost. The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) administratively supports the work of the EFSB and its staff, but the nine-member EFSB makes its decisions independently. EFSB staff also conducts DPU siting-related cases that do not fall within the EFSB’s jurisdiction.

EFSB Website: <https://www.mass.gov/energy-facilities-siting-board>

3.8. Commission on Clean Heat

In September 2021, Governor Baker signed Executive Order 596 to establish the Massachusetts Commission on Clean Heat. The Commission has worked together since January 2022 to develop recommendations on the strategies and policies to achieve deep emissions reductions from the use of heating fuels in the Commonwealth. The Commission's recommendations offer a framework for a long-term decline in emissions from heating fuels as well as policy directions that seek to accelerate the deployment of energy efficiency programs and clean heating systems in new and existing buildings, and transition current distribution systems to clean energy, while doing so as equitably as possible.

One recommendation from the Commission is on joint energy system planning. In order to accelerate and ensure the longevity of the Commonwealth’s electrification transition, the Commission recommended the Governor and Secretary — working with the Legislature as necessary — direct the DPU and DOER to lead statewide joint energy system planning across

Massachusetts' gas and electric utilities and municipal gas and electric companies, and in conjunction with key stakeholders and communities. For more details on this recommendation, see the final report below.

Final Report: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/commission-on-clean-heat-issues-final-report>