Dear Department of Public Utilities,

The Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC) was established by An Act Driving Clean Energy and Offshore Wind (the Climate Act) and is charged with reviewing and providing recommendations to the Massachusetts investor-owned electric distribution companies (EDCs) regarding their electric-sector modernization plans (ESMPs). As Massachusetts continues its leadership in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions with the commitment to achieve Net Zero emissions in 2050 and its reliance on an expanded role for the electric power system,[[1]](#footnote-2) the GMAC is an integral part of improving transparency and stakeholder engagement in the electric distribution system planning process in the Commonwealth.

On August 29, 2024, the Department issued its Order in the ESMP proceedings (D.P.U. 24-10, D.P.U. 24-11, and D.P.U. 24-12), finding that the EDCs are required to include a proactive, long-term system planning process (LTSPP) as part of their ESMP filings and directing the EDCs to coordinate an LTSPP stakeholder working group (“LTSPP WG”) to develop an LTSPP proposal and submit the proposal and associated report to the Department on April 4, 2025.

The GMAC understands that the LTSPP WG has been meeting regularly and has a draft LTSPP framework. Within the draft LTSPP framework, specific stakeholder engagement is contemplated to inform the EDCs’ LTSPP analysis. We also understand that the LTSPP WG stakeholders request that the Department recommend establishment of a stakeholder engagement group to inform the LTSPP analysis and that a subgroup of the GMAC is the most appropriate forum for such a group to be established.

The GMAC does not at this time comment on whether an LTSPP stakeholder engagement group should be established nor the membership and operating procedures of such a group. Nonetheless, the GMAC informs the Department that if it sees fit to recommend establishment of an LTSPP stakeholder engagement group and finds it appropriate to recommend that the engagement group be established as a subgroup of the GMAC, the GMAC will support the Department’s recommendation and assist in facilitating such a group.[[2]](#footnote-3) We find that providing the GMAC as a forum for an LTSPP subgroup is in alignment with the Council’s mandate of improving transparency and stakeholder engagement in the electric distribution system planning process in the Commonwealth.

Thank you,

GMAC Chair Joanna Troy,

DOER Deputy Commissioner

1. Clean Energy and Climate Plan for 2050 states that Massachusetts’ path to economy-wide decarbonization relies on an expanded role for the electric power system. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. GMAC reserves its authority to constitute the LTSPP stakeholder engagement group pursuant to Section 4.2(B) of its bylaws, including but not limited to composition, length of authorization, group charter, ground rules and any other governing policies or documents GMAC establishes for the LTSPP stakeholder engagement group. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)