

Grid Modernization Advisory Council (GMAC)

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, May 29, 2025, 1:00 p.m.– 3:00 p.m.

Hybrid meeting

Councilors Present: Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy (Chair), Chris Modlish, Kate Tohme, Sarah Bresolin Silver, Amy McGuire, Jonathan Stout, Sarah Cullinan (virtual), Larry Chretien (virtual), Marybeth Campbell (virtual), Kathryn Wright (virtual), Alex Worsley (virtual), Julie Curti (virtual), Andy Sun (virtual), JS Rancourt (virtual), Kyle Murray (virtual)

Councilors Absent: --

Non-voting Councilors: Andrew Schneller (National Grid), Kevin Sprague (Unitil, virtual), Digaunto Chatterjee (Eversource)

DOER Staff Present: Colin Carroll, Charles Dawson, Aurora Edington, Marian Harkavy (virtual)

Consultants Present: Tim Woolf, Aidan Glaser Schoff

Others Present: Nancy Israel (National Grid), Elton Prifti (National Grid), Gerhard Walker (Eversource), Juan Martinez (Eversource), Emily Slack (National Grid), Maya Mastro (Green Energy Consumers Alliance)

1. Call to Order

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy, Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, GMAC Chairperson called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

2. Welcome, Roll Call, Agenda

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy welcomed all participants to the GMAC meeting and took roll call for voting and non-voting members.

3. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

4. Meeting Minutes Review and Voting

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy asked if there were any corrections or additions to the May 01, 2025, GMAC minutes. None were offered.

Councilor Amy McGuire moved to approve May 1, 2025, GMAC meeting minutes. Councilor Kate Tohme seconded. The motion carried.

5. ESMP Activities Updates

a. ESMP Phase II

Councilor Chris Modlish, Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Representing the Attorney General: There are no major updates on the ESMP mechanism. In March, the EDCs provided biannual reports. The Department decided to reopen discovery on metrics and related issues. Discovery opened on May 16th and will close on June 25th. On July 16th, intervenors can provide another set of comments with further opportunity for EDCs to reply.

Councilor Andrew Schneller, Representing National Grid: Given the extension of metrics and reporting is the decision also extended?

Councilor Larry Chretien, Green Energy Consumers Alliance, Representing low- and middle-income residential consumers: My expectation is that the decision would come in before the new dates.

Aurora Edington, DOER: The Department will make a cost recovery Order by July 1. The first biannual report is by September. My presumption is that there should be time for the EDCs to create materials.

Councilor Kathryn Wright, Barr Foundation, Representing the environmental justice community: Are EDCs open to sharing how the Equity Working Group's feedback went into the metrics? I want there to be openness going into that conversation.

Councilor Andrew Schneller: I can't answer that in the room.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: Can you follow up afterwards? There is over a month before the next meeting, so I want to make that request.

b. CESAG

Councilor Andrew Schneller: The CESAG has three meetings left and is on track.

c. IEP Working Group

Gerhard Walker, Eversource: IEP working group was on a good start.

Charles Dawson, DOER: There was an informative and engaged discussion in the IEP working group.

d. Long-term System Planning Process (LTSP) Working Group

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Hold on discussion due to content of presentation this week.

6. LTSP Presentation

Councilor Kate Tohme presented on the background and purpose of the LTSP. She covered prior regulatory background of the LTSP process; the overarching goals of the LTSP, such as proactive planning in advance of applications; the LTSP overarching principles such as effective planning; and the quantity and content of the LTSP meetings.

Charles Dawson presented on the LTSP filing package. He discussed the framework for the LTSP for DG and procedural recommendations for the DPU, including a phased investigation.

Emily Slack, National Grid, presented on behalf of the EDCs. She presented how the LTSP fits within the ESMP process; cost allocation components of the LTSP filing; a flowchart of the LTSP; and how stakeholder input is incorporated into the LTSP.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Can you explain more about the weighting that goes into the specific factors?

Gerhard Walker: The way the forecast works is that the tool that we use develops an ROI on each property based on various factors. So, one question is: what factors go into this? Secondly, how does each factor affect the amount of money? For example, how do local zoning restrictions add to extra costs? The tool then ranks those properties.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: So, does zoning have a single value throughout the state?

Gerhard Walker: That's what we are looking for from the stakeholder groups.

Emily Slack continued presenting on beneficiary pays cost allocation.

Charles Dawson presented on DOER non-consensus items such as incorporating electrification needs and addressing flexible interconnection.

Councilor Chris Modlish presented on AGO non-consensus items such as flexible interconnection and cost allocation.

Councilor Kate Tohme presented on the Distributed Generation (DG) industry's non-consensus items such as having the first LTSP investments being submitted within one year; flexible interconnection; capacity reservations and treatment of behind-the-meter DG systems.

Councilor Chris Modlish presented key takeaways from the LTSP for the GMAC.

A break began at 2:13 p.m.

7. LTSP Facilitated Discussion

The meeting resumed at 2:22 p.m.

Councilor Kate Thome started the facilitated discussion.

Councilor Sarah Bresolin Silver, ENGIE North America, Representing the energy storage industry: I appreciate all the work done in these 6 months. At a high level can you characterize consensus and non-consensus perhaps as a percentage?

Councilor Kate Tohme, New Leaf Energy, Representing the distributed generation renewable energy industry: I think we are a majority of the way there. The purpose of the procedural recommendations is recognition that there is more work to be done on topics we didn't get to. However, that doesn't need to delay the establishment of the overall LTSP.

Councilor Andrew Schneller: I would agree. It should be a fairly smooth process through adjudication. The framework of what needs to get done is there.

Elton Prifti, National Grid: On the non-consensus items, we are more towards consensus than non-consensus. The issue from my perspective is timing. The ability to have the time and capability to develop those processes. For example, the aforementioned 8-year substation, flexibility is something new. It will take time to get where we are all in agreement for the details of flexible interconnection.

Charles Dawson: On the scope issue, DOER has been proposing a comprehensive process, yet DOER likes the bones of this framework.

Kathryn Wright: Following up on DOER's comment. I'm trying to understand the non-DOER side of the argument. I'm trying to get a sense of where the disagreement is coming from.

Andrew Schneller: The things that you plan for in terms of DG for flexibility and land use is a different analysis than those done for load. There's a timing difference there. Load analysis has already been completed for the ESMP. They have to be done in an iterative manner since they have different technical processes and have different stakeholder processes.

Gerhard Walker: From the EDC's perspective, once an area is identified for DG, we will look at load growth after. The trigger is what is unique to DG. All these projects are triggered by DG. We will review load and scale solutions accordingly afterwards.

Emily Slack, National Grid: There is language in the framework tying these together. The stakeholder process and cost allocation methodology differentiate the DG process from the load process.

Councilor Amy McGuire: To that end, vehicle to grid and vehicle to X blurs the line of the two aspects that we are talking about. With our particular organization, it gets complicated when interconnecting with the utilities when looking at new service and interconnection. The Commonwealth has a directive to consider these technologies in our long-term plans. This should be something that may be considered now.

Elton Prifti: Industry can join in the discussions in the subgroup. As of now, we don't treat it any different than a standalone battery application.

Councilor Amy McGuire, Highland Electric Fleets, Representing the electric vehicle industry: In the long-term planning perspective, we should think about how to look at this industry.

Councilor Kate Tohme: From a DG perspective, DG proactive planning was left out of the ESMPs and thus we should recoup what wasn't done in the first ESMP. A real question is how we should coordinate the LTSPP and ESMP process.

Councilor Julie Curti, Metropolitan Area Planning Council, Representing municipal or regional interests: There was a proposed membership. Can members explain the proposed membership of the subgroup?

Councilor Kate Tohme: The membership was started by the DG industry as a minimum. We tried to pull from the active representatives from the LTSPP process.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: The subgroup would be a subgroup of the GMAC and thus subject to open meeting law which makes the subgroup less of a black box.

Councilor Julie Curti: Other stakeholders could be: stakeholders concerned with costs, and stakeholders concerned with siting. The list appears to be a technical list of stakeholders, but broader planning seems to be left out.

Councilor Andrew Schneller: It is a good suggestion. Looking back to slide 17, the inputs that the subgroup is providing are fairly technical, which is why this is a mostly technical list of stakeholders on the proposed membership slide. This is only what goes into the planning process. It will also go through the next ESMP process.

Councilor Kate Tohme: The LTSPP subgroup should be incorporated into the ESMP process.

Councilor Kathryn Wright: I'm glad to see that there are more smaller developers within the DG group rather than only large developers. I know that there are some groups that provide technical assistance to communities, for example in microgrids, and I don't believe that they would neatly fall into the listed categories.

Councilor Sarah Cullinan, Massachusetts Clean Energy Center, Representing the Massachusetts Clean Energy Center: Is there consideration for an observer role or planned touchpoints with a second set of members. I understand that a smaller group can move fast and can be more efficient. Also, we are all on too many working groups. If there are observational roles, then it opens up the conversation but doesn't cause the group to become too large.

Councilor Chris Modlish: A municipality may make sense for membership. If there are more representatives covering costs, I'll always encourage that.

Gerhard Walker: Ideally this group would produce consensus points that the utilities can act on. We need the consensus points to move forward. The stakeholder group should produce actionable consensus points.

Councilor Andrew Schneller: This is the inputs into the forecast that is planned. Once the plan is developed, everyone will be involved. These inputs become a forecast which is hard to describe and comment on in concrete terms.

Councilor Kate Tohme: The last topic is the non-consensus items raised by DOER, AGO, and DG industry. Any other follow-up there?

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: I'd like to bring up some break-time Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) and flexible interconnection discussion.

Gerhard Walker: As a theoretical exercise, looking at how flexible interconnection can change the goals. If we curtail solar, we may need to install more to meet the goals.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: The GWSA are guideposts. There are multiple pathways. The only goals are emissions reductions.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee, Representing Eversource: Those guideposts were set a while ago. It may be helpful to model out these goals incorporating information from the ESMPs.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: The Clean Energy and Climate Plan (CECP) must be updated every 5 years and EEA is discussing that now. That would be good to discuss with EEA.

Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee: If our policies result in maximum curtailment of solar it may be against the goals.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: For the GWSA, some solar investments may not be worthwhile depending on factors.

Councilor Kate Tohme: We didn't get to DG specific milestones. We can all agree that we don't want to overbuild the system, recognizing how expensive the cost is.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Thank you so much to Kate and everyone who has presented. I know that the DPU is excited to have the same review as us.

8. GMAC Stakeholder Session Agenda

Aurora Edington presented on an upcoming municipal GMAC event.

At 2:52 p.m. Councilor Digaunto Chatterjee left, and Gerhard Walker took his place.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy clarified that this event is an in-person event which is capacity constrained. The meeting will discuss what the ESMPs mean for the towns.

Sarah Bresolin-Silver: Is it ESMP specific?

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Moreso, what does building out of the grid in future mean? Municipal leaders know that something is going on, but may not know the specific name of the ESMPs.

Councilor Amy McGuire: What component of the municipality is this directed towards?

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy: Most are growth and development based. For example, we support clean energy, but we don't want to be taken advantage of. It's important for municipalities to know what kind of impact they can have, both positive and negative. We want this to be a GMAC forward event.

9. Close

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy discussed the upcoming substation tour and upcoming ExCom, EWG, and stakeholder meetings.

Deputy Commissioner Joanna Troy adjourned the meeting at 2:59 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Aidan Glaser Schoff

Synapse Energy Economics

Meeting Attachments

- Meeting Agenda
- Meeting Slide Deck
- Draft May 1, 2025 GMAC Meeting Minutes
- Interconnection Topic Brief
- May Activity Tracker