

Governor's Energy Office

Maine Energy Plan: Pathway to 2040 Kickoff Meeting

Tuesday, August 22, 2023

2:00pm – 4:00pm - Virtual meeting via Zoom

Summary Meeting Notes

Overview

This document is a summary of the August 22, 2023, Kickoff Meeting for the Maine Energy Plan: Pathway to 2040. Nearly 150 participants joined the 2-hour Zoom meeting about the initiative, which builds upon existing work and will provide a comprehensive basis to inform Maine's best pathway to 100% clean electricity and greenhouse gas emissions reductions. This technical analysis and associated public engagement will inform Maine's Energy Plan, which the Governor's Energy Office (GEO) will publish in early 2024.

The meeting provided a range of stakeholders an opportunity to learn about the planning process, the technical work underway, and the initial results from the energy demand analysis. The conversation also provided opportunities for participants to provide feedback on the work and how to engage more Mainers in it.

The next public conversation on the process will take place on September 28th from 2-4pm, registration [here](#)¹. The Governor's Energy Office also encourages input via geo@maine.gov.

Presentations

GEO Director Dan Burgess provided an overview of the development of Maine's Energy Plan, highlighting the state's accelerated commitment to 100% clean energy by 2040, Maine's dependence on home heating oil and the price volatility of fossil fuels. Maine's Energy Plan will build on the work of the Maine Climate Council. The presentation is available [here](#)² (see slides 3-14).

Dean Murphy of The Brattle Group, which is leading the technical analysis, provided an overview of the study, which, for the first time, will look at hour-by-hour energy supply and demand scenarios for the state. The study will develop and compare alternative pathways to decarbonize Maine's economy as well as provide support for future policy decisions and guidance for implementation. The result will be 3 to 5 scenarios in which comparisons will be possible across multiple metrics, including cost considerations and emissions. The presentation is available [here](#)³ (see slides 15-25).

After a period of discussion, Dean Murphy and his colleagues provided additional details on initial results from assessing future energy demand scenarios in the state. Those slides are 29-33 in the same [presentation](#).

¹ https://cbuilding.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUucOCvrT8iG9JOy8v5Rxm_SvNIQGzXDK-H

² https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/ME_GEO_Pathways_Stakeholder_Mtg_1_Aug_22_2023.pdf

³ https://www.maine.gov/energy/sites/maine.gov.energy/files/inline-files/ME_GEO_Pathways_Stakeholder_Mtg_1_Aug_22_2023.pdf

Participant Feedback and Questions

Roughly half of the meeting was dedicated to participant questions and feedback. Participants sought clarifications from the technical team and the Governor's Energy Office and also provided suggestions. Below is a summary of discussion points with clarifying responses from the technical team or the GEO (in parenthesis).

- Electricity demand management will be crucial to minimizing the amount of new generation needed. How do preliminary demand side results compare to the studies in Massachusetts and neighboring states? (They are largely consistent)
- How will the study relate to the regional study by ISO New England? (The study looks at the entire New England grid with a focus on Maine, and should be consistent with the ISO study)
- How will this work be helpful to cities like Portland? (While the model will not give municipal-level detail, it could give guidance around an approximation of a path that cities could take. Suggestions and feedback from municipal entities and other stakeholders is encouraged throughout the process.)
- Will the study look at microgrids? Similarly, how does it incorporate the location of resources and demand? (The study doesn't look specifically at microgrids. In the modeling, location will only be specified at the zonal level. Planning for smaller zones is beyond the scope of this study)
- Does the model look at costs? (Yes, a key priority for this effort is considering affordability)
- Will the study look at workforce and financing needs? (The report will provide important data that can inform future work related to workforce planning in the state, such as through the Clean Energy Partnership)
- Energy efficiency will be very important for load shaping. (The model is incorporating building shell improvements)
- Climate change will likely impact future demand. Does the study take that into account? (Yes, the modeling includes changes in heating and cooling days)
- Transportation is the biggest source of emissions in Maine. How is transportation considered in the modeling? (All of New England is assumed to pursue similar demand-side strategies, including transportation electrification. See [slide 22](#) for an overview of transportation sector end uses modeled.) None of this transition will be possible without grid upgrades.
- Does the goal of 3000 GW OSW and the 400 MW storage by 2040 meet the state's current electric demand? After decarbonization?

Wrap-up and next steps

In a final conversation, participants made suggestions about how to engage Maine people in this planning process. Key points of the discussion, as well as comments in the Zoom chat, included:

- **Identify key questions.** What are the key questions that this report is going to address, and signal how the report will be used? This will help to focus the conversations and motivate participation.
- **Outreach and engagement.** Engagement should include contractors, particularly in rural areas; Rural residents and stakeholders; Diverse groups and women; and youth.
- **Consider engagement with specific groups that have access to other stakeholder groups.** Reach specific stakeholder groups like businesses, engineers - who have access to other stakeholder groups. Potential engagement with related workforce training entities/classes.

Incorporate updates about this work into other ongoing proceedings/meetings related to this topic.

- **Support community based organizations and engage in community events** for community outreach, given their ability to engage community members.

Meet Follow-Up Comments Received

The GEO received the following comments following the meeting:

- Appreciation for the work and the opportunity to provide input.
- Focus on bringing girls and women into the field and the conversation.
- Many suggestions around who to involve in the process, including:
 - Energy auditors
 - Automotive recyclers
 - Unions
 - PTAs and Science Teachers/Admin: Get science curriculum to align with Maine's actual planning
 - Community Action Organizations
 - BIPOC community (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)
 - Immigrant service organizations and veterans service organizations
 - People with disabilities
- A request to perform several sensitivity tests with the model, for instance around improved performance of technology (heat pumps etc.), accelerated retirement of buildings, or greater use of rooftop or brownfield solar sites.
- A request for more line set pressure testing for heat pumps as part of quality assurance inspections in Maine, to ensure coolant isn't leaking.
- Comment about learning from Massachusetts: One of the most successful elements of the MassSave program was the 0% interest loan program for efficiency upgrades of insulation and heating systems. As Maine ramps up weatherization, start collecting data on houses in Maine so that we can measure the effects of what we're doing including radon testing, particulates, mold, humidity, etc. There are smart sensors and diagnostic equipment that can track data remotely.
- The Office of the Public Advocate (OPA) submitted written comment underscoring the need to incorporate load management programs in order to move as much incremental load off of peak as possible. The OPA believes that such an approach will allow the state to achieve its climate policy goals in a manner that helps stabilize energy prices for Maine consumers.

Next Steps:

The next meeting was announced for September 28th, 2023. Staff expressed their interest in receiving additional feedback in advance of the next meeting.