

# Governor's Energy Office

## Distributed Generation Stakeholder Group

### Meeting Summary

**Tuesday, December 6, 2022**

**2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Hybrid meeting with attendees in person in Augusta and via Zoom**

## Attendees

Stakeholder group members: Dan Burgess, Governor's Energy Office; Phil Bartlett, Maine Public Utilities Commission; Bill Harwood, Office of the Public Advocate; David Norman, Versant Power; Fortunat Mueller, ReVision Energy; Jesse McKinnell, CEI/Bright Community Capital; Neal Goldberg, Maine Municipal Association; Sharon Klein, UMaine School of Economics; Phelps Turner, Conservation Law Foundation; Sue Clary, Central Maine Power; Tony Buxton, Preti Flaherty – Industrial Energy Consumers Group; Jeremy Payne, Maine Renewable Energy Association; Jessica Robertson, New Leaf Energy; Mike Judge, Coalition for Community Solar Access

Staff: Celina Cunningham, Ethan Tremblay, and Caroline Colan, Governor's Energy Office (GEO)

Consultants: Tim Woolf, Synapse Energy Economics, Inc.; Jim Kennerly, Sustainable Energy Advantage (SEA)

Members of the public.

## Welcome and introductions

Ethan Tremblay welcomed all stakeholders and members of the public. After stakeholder members introduced themselves, Ethan reviewed the agenda for the meeting which included a presentation from Synapse on the final results of the cost-benefit and rate impact analyses, including energy storage and several sensitivities. The consultant presentation was followed by a presentation from Ethan on the timeline for remaining work to be completed between this meeting and the end of the year.

## Presentations

### Synapse Energy Economics

Tim Woolf, Synapse, led a presentation and discussion on the final benefit-cost analysis results and sensitivity analyses incorporating stakeholder feedback. This included a review of modeled program designs and key methods and inputs. While most of the information had been previously presented to stakeholders, new additions included a storage case, cost sensitivities, and updated avoided energy costs. The slide deck is available [here](#).

### Governor's Energy Office

Ethan Tremblay presented an overview of the timeline and remaining tasks to accomplish to deliver a final report to the legislature at the end of the year. The proposed successor program framework

remains open for public comment until Wednesday, December 14. After the close of the comment period, all comments will be shared with the stakeholder group with a request for stakeholder feedback by December 23. The GEO anticipates sharing a draft of the final report with stakeholders along with public comments.

Ethan also shared an outline of the final stakeholder group report. The final technical report from Synapse Energy Economic and Sustainable Energy Advantage will be included as an appendix to the report. The slide deck is available [here](#).

Stakeholder discussion on the proposed framework and remaining processes included the following:

- General agreement from stakeholders that unallocated capacity in a procurement in any single year should roll over to the following year's procurement or be spread evenly among remaining years.
- Several stakeholders noted that they support the proposed framework being majority wholesale with no offtakers, noting cost-implications of existing offtake programs.
  - Other stakeholders spoke up in favor of maintaining an offtaker option in the 30% walkup, allowing an opportunity for true community ownership or other innovative ownership models.
- On program administration, stakeholders noted that several other states have designated their energy office to design their DG program with PUC review and/or implementation.
- In discussion about the walkup program, several stakeholders expressed concern about the 20<sup>th</sup> percentile cap, noting that the intended participants for the walkup may not be able to meet such a low threshold.
- Regarding IRA assumptions, one stakeholder advised the group to be cautious about IRA rules and implementation in program design prior to receiving final guidance from the U.S. Treasury in 2023.

## Public Comment

Ethan opened the floor for public comment.

Barbara Alexander, AARP: Barbara noted that AARP is preparing to submit comments on the proposed successor program framework. She emphasized a program focus on least cost options and minimal ratepayer impact. Her comments were supportive of the competitive bidding design elements of the proposed framework.

Trevor Laughlin: Asked a clarifying question about the eligibility of rooftop solar projects in the proposed successor framework.

Shelley Megquier, Maine Farmland Trust: Shelley noted that she participated in the Land Use issue-focused work session in October. MFT is preparing comments in response to the successor framework which will primarily focus on the desire for increased specificity in the program design focused on land use considerations or preferences for procurement bids, particularly relating to protections for agricultural lands.

Steve Weems, Solar Energy Association of Maine: Given that the analysis provided by Synapse and SEA shows net benefits resulting from models 2-4 plus the hybrid program, Steve suggests providing an opportunity for individual, institutional, and commercial customers to participate directly in the new program in some way. He expressed opposition to making everything a wholesale procurement, wanting to preserve some consumer choice.

Nick Lacasse, Perennial Energy: Asked a question about how the state's energy storage goals are accounted for in the successor program framework. In addition, he noted an interest in seeing more direct support of agrivoltaics in program design, as well as the inclusion of milestones for procurement participation.

David VonSeggern: David supported comments made by the Public Advocate regarding the challenges existing customers face in accessing community solar. Noted that he finds community solar contracts and offers very difficult to understand.

## Next steps and timeline

The proposed successor program framework remains open for public comment. Interested parties and members of the public are invited to submit comments on this proposed framework. All comments will be considered when preparing a final report to be submitted to the Legislature at the end of 2022.

**All comments must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on December 14, 2022.**

- [The LD 936 Proposed Successor Program Framework \(PDF\)](#)
- [Comments can be submitted using this form](#)

GEO staff and consultants from Synapse and SEA are available to answer questions. Please extend questions to [ethan.tremblay@maine.gov](mailto:ethan.tremblay@maine.gov).

### Next meeting

The next meeting of the DG Stakeholder Group will be on Tuesday, December 20 from 2:00-5:00 p.m., with attendance via Zoom ([register here](#)) and in-person in Augusta.