



## Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Front of the Meter Distributed Energy Resources Program Design Public Webinar Summary

June 25, 2026, 11:00am – 12:30pm

### Overview

The Maine Department of Energy Resources (DOER) held a public webinar on June 25, 2026, from 11:00am – 12:30pm to provide background, context, and an overview of DOER's approach to designing a front of the meter (FTM) distributed energy resources (DER) program. DOER has retained DNV and Current Energy Group (CEG), the "Consultant Team," to support the development of this program.

This meeting was held virtually via Zoom and brought together DOER, the Consultant Team, and more than 100 members of the public. The objectives of this initial webinar were to:

1. Introduce FTM DER program development to interested stakeholders
2. Share project objectives, approach, and timeline
3. Engage stakeholders in program development by providing key information and inviting input during Q&A session.

The agenda items included:

- DOER introduction and background
- Project overview and context
- Proposed framework
- Feasibility and benefit-cost analysis (BCA) framework
- Participant input and discussion on approach via general Q&As
- Upcoming activities and next steps for program development and stakeholder input

Additional information on DOER, this initiative, background "pre-read" materials, and meeting slides are available on the [DOER website](#). Below are summary notes from the meeting.

### Welcome and introductions

DOER Acting Commissioner Celina Cunningham welcomed attendees, reviewed the agenda for the webinar, and provided an overview of DOER, Maine's cabinet-level state energy department tasked with activities relating to state energy policies, planning, and development. Acting Commissioner Cunningham then reviewed DOER's statutory responsibility to design a program that encourages the development of front-of-the-meter

distributed energy resources while providing benefits to ratepayers. Acting Commissioner Cunningham then outlined how to participate throughout the webinar using the Zoom Q&A button to ask questions and previewing opportunities throughout the webinar for individuals to raise their hands to ask questions or clarifications.

## Project overview and context

Dan Cross-Call from the Consultant Team introduced himself and co-presenters and provided an overview of the project and legislative context.

Public Law 2025 Chapter 430 (L.D. 1777) instructs DOER to design a program or programs to encourage the development of FTM DER in the state. Under the law, DOER must submit a proposed program or programs to the Public Utilities Commission (PUC); if the PUC finds that the proposed program provides benefits to ratepayers in the State in excess of the costs to ratepayers, the commission shall by rule implement the program or programs. This program would succeed the net energy billing program for future FTM DER projects.

Mr. Cross-Call reviewed the Maine energy and policy context, highlighting state, federal, and regional goals, regulations, and programs that inform the program framework design, including DOER's Maine Energy Plan priorities, key state legislation, and a summary of existing DER capacity, projects seeking interconnection, and long-term DER capacity estimates.

## Program framework

Mr. Cross-Call introduced the program framework that DOER and the Consultant Team are using to identify program design options. He reviewed the evolution of DER compensation structures in other jurisdictions in the US and abroad, increasing performance and capabilities, and emerging opportunities for DERs to provide enhanced services and value. The framework development is informed by two guiding questions:

1. What grid services and value streams should be recognized?
2. How will the services be compensated, and how will costs be recovered?

Mr. Cross-Call shared additional references used in developing the framework, including the US Department of Energy's Grid Modernization Laboratory Consortium (GMLC), a framework developed by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL), and a market review completed by the Consultant Team to evaluate program structures in jurisdictions throughout the Northeast, the US, and internationally. Example jurisdictions included other

New England states, New York, California, Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, Texas, Australia, and the United Kingdom.

Finally, this discussion covered the primary design features under exploration in this process, including:

1. Interconnection and technology requirements
2. Asset management
3. Compensation models
4. Procurement mechanism
5. Contracting vehicle(s)
6. Cost allocation

This section concluded with examples of design features, and then Mr. Cross-Call opened the participant discussion.

## Public input and discussion

While webinar attendees were able to post questions in the Q&A box in Zoom throughout the presentation, a dedicated period to solicit public input into the process followed the Program Framework Overview. This discussion included targeted prompts for participant reactions as well as open Q&A.

Below is a summary of the discussion prompts for public input along with stakeholder feedback offered for the Consultant Team's consideration:

1. What features or capabilities should the framework reflect (to ensure that it can help provide a fair, accurate, and sustainable structure)?
  - a. Stakeholders suggested that any program framework should provide real, accessible opportunities for Maine businesses, municipalities, and non-profits to make investments to reduce their energy costs and volatility.
  - b. Stakeholders recommended that Maine could either bring back the collocated tariff FTM structure for Maine businesses, non-profits, and municipalities that pay electricity demand charges, or develop a load reducer program enabling such entities to invest in DERs.
  - c. Stakeholders suggested an examination of rate class structures, including the peak demand threshold between small and medium rate classes.
2. What is success for a DER front-of-the-meter framework design in Maine?
3. What peer state programs could be applicable for Maine and why? Are any notable program designs missing from the previewed set?

- a. Stakeholders offered feedback on specific peer programs such as VDER in New York and Xcel Energy Capacity Connect program in Minnesota.

Webinar presenters answered some of the questions that participants posed via the Zoom Q&A chat in writing throughout the presentation, and the Consultant Team as well as Ethan Tremblay from DOER answered many of the remaining questions verbally during this section of the webinar. The questions and discussion included the following themes:

- **Questions and clarifications on how this new program will impact existing participants in the prior net metering and net energy billing programs.** DOER clarified that this program is focused on FTM projects that would be developed in the future; projects and customers already participating in NEB will not be impacted by this program.
- **Questions about specific components of the program design,** including coordination with utility IGP processes, utility ownership of storage, boundary conditions or maximum capacities to be pursued locationally, integration with utility communications protocols, flexible interconnection, specific grid services such as peak shaving, build-transfer and tolling agreements, REC ownership, and procurement vs. a walk-up program. DOER and the Consultant Team appreciated the ideas and questions and confirmed they will work to consider each as appropriate in the program benefit-cost and feasibility analyses.
- **Feedback about the opportunity for heat storage in Maine.** DOER appreciated the interest in this topic, and while this initiative is focused on FTM DER program design, DOER encouraged interested parties to connect directly with their office to learn more about other initiatives underway.

## Economic impacts: BCA and feasibility

Nick Posawatz of the Consultant Team introduced the economic impacts analysis, which consists of a benefit-cost analysis (BCA) and a feasibility assessment of implementation risks. Mr. Posawatz reviewed the BCA development process, which includes identifying the specific cost effectiveness tests for this effort, the design features and potential variants that will be used to determine the costs and benefits, and the technology and universal model assumptions that will be determined for modeling and analysis. Mr. Posawatz then reviewed the modeling approach to incorporate the data inputs and calculate the BCA.

Kytson McNeil of the Consultant Team reviewed relevant and parallel efforts in Maine, including the Distributed Generation Working Group (2023), the Maine Solar BCA (2025), and the Storage Procurement Proposal BCA (2025), summarizing the effort and highlighting

the cost effectiveness test(s) used. Mr. McNeil then reviewed the three cost effectiveness tests that the Consultant Team recommends for this analysis:

1. **Utility Cost Test (UCT)** will be the primary test for determining if the program design(s) is beneficial to ratepayers.
2. **The Maine Test** is a customized view of the Societal Cost Test (SCT) that limits the benefits to utility system impacts and societal benefits within Maine. This provides a state perspective vs. a ratepayer-only perspective.
3. **The Societal Cost Test (SCT)** includes benefits outside of Maine and provides a broader perspective than the Maine test.

Mr. McNeil reviewed the specific benefits and costs under consideration for these tests, noting that some benefits, such as electricity system and non-energy avoided costs, have direct ratepayer impacts, while others, such as market revenues, have indirect impacts as they enable project development by offsetting capital and operating expenses.

Mr. Posawatz then provided a summary of the implementation feasibility assessment, which is designed to identify and qualitatively assess risks to the implementation of selected program design(s) as well as the mitigation strategies that may be needed. He presented some illustrative feasibility factors: utilities, third parties, or agencies needing to invest in new or enhanced capabilities that could delay program launch, or planned and future ISO-NE market reforms could create uncertainty for DERs in monetizing participation in wholesale market or participating in multiple markets. Assessment of feasibility and these factors will be conducted as program design options are developed.

## Participant input and discussion

Following the economic impacts section, DOER and the Consultant Team provided an additional opportunity to provide input, both via discussion prompts and general Q&A.

Below is a summary of the discussion prompts for public input along with stakeholder feedback offered for the Consultant Team's consideration:

1. What do you see as top challenges to program implementation?
  - a. Stakeholders suggested that interconnection costs will be a challenge to program implementation and that regulatory change directives must accompany a new program for it to be successful.
2. What specific risks should we be considering?

Webinar presenters answered some of the questions that participants posed via the Zoom Q&A chat in writing throughout the presentation, and the Consultant Team and Mr.

Tremblay from DOER again answered many of the remaining questions verbally during this section of the webinar. The questions and discussion included the following themes:

- **Discussion of how the three proposed BCA tests will be weighted.** The Consultant Team clarified that the approach will assess net benefits to ratepayers, so primarily rely on the Utility Cost Test. The specific program design and features will inform the approach for the other tests, as the opportunity to generate market revenues, for example, may be higher or lower.
- **Discussion of whether this BCA effort will become the accepted approach in Maine.** Stakeholders commented that consensus on a unified BCA methodology in Maine has been elusive, particularly for the existing NWA program. DOER noted that the approach for this program design is specific to the statutory directive and does not replace NWA or other ongoing or future BCA efforts.
- **How will the benefits of more widespread access to these technologies be incorporated into the BCA/feasibility assessment?** If they are not, it may be challenging to communicate the benefits of the program to stakeholders who value community ownership, independence, and control of their power supply costs.
- **Question on whether the Consultant Team will be performing power modeling scenario analysis on a nodal level for individual projects.** The team responded that this effort is looking at an overall program structure applicable to the state and will not be evaluating specific projects at specific locations during the design and proposal phase.
- **Question about how this planning process integrates with planning for additional transmission lines.** The Consultant Team noted that resource planning can inform procurement, and, as more information becomes available through IGP and other efforts, it can be factored into pricing and resource value in future program iterations.

## Next steps and closeout

Acting Commissioner Cunningham revisited the timeline for the program design, highlighting the next steps necessary to deliver the September 30, 2026, program proposal to the Maine PUC. These next steps include:

- DOER and Consultant Team will continue program development.
- Draft program proposal anticipated in late July/early August for public comment.
- 30-day public comment period for the draft proposal.

- Public webinar anticipated in mid-August to review the draft program proposal and solicit additional public input.
- DOER and Consultant Team will develop program proposal for submission to Maine PUC by September 30, 2026.