

Buildings, Infrastructure & Housing (BIH) Working Group Meeting

Maine Climate Council

Friday, April 26, 2024, 9am - 12pm

Virtual via Zoom

Meeting Purpose:

- Review & refine draft recommendations, actions, and targets
- Review of all emerging policy recommendations
- Discuss new policy recommendation regarding heating oil tanks
- Discuss the guidance this WG will give regarding heat pumps and weatherization targets

In attendance:

Working Group Members: Michael Stoddard, Kathleen Meil, Naomi Beal, Tom Twist, Representative Chris Kessler, Rozanna Patane, Steven Hudson, Jeff Marks, Pat Stanton, Don McGilvery, Todd Rothstein, Jesse Thompson, Scott Brown, Dale Basher, Sharon Klein, Matt Pitzer, Ania Wright, Greg Payne, Dan Dixon, James Brooks

Staff: David Plumb, Molly Siegel, Aarati Halbe

Presentation on Basement Oil Tanks

Christopher Fournier (Maine DEP) presented about risks, clean-up costs, and policy recommendations for addressing oil spills in residential basements. See handout [here](#).

- Maine recent winter storage damage:
 - December – river flooding, basements flooded, floating oil tanks
 - January – coastal storms, wind and wave damage caused oil tank spills
 - These spills were different than previous spill causes – spills usually not caused by weather/storms
 - It is more complex for DEP to respond to oil spills when there is flooding because oil damage is not limited to the foundation/soil, but may extend throughout the building (i.e., to walls and floors).
 - Everything gets coated with oil because oil floats
 - Typical cleanup costs: \$10,000
 - Cleanup when spill is associated with flooding: \$70,000-\$90,000
 - On average, DEP spends \$1.9 million per year cleaning up oil spills- \$12 million over 6 years from 2015-2020
 - When people switch from oil tanks to other forms of heating, they often abandon the old tank in the basement, which leaves people exposed to flood/oil damage.
- Policy/program questions:
 - Should there be more policies and programs to promote replacing heating oil tanks?

- When public funds are used to install a new oil tank, should there be improved safety standards of the tank to improve resilience to flooding and/or corrosion?
- How much funding should DEP allocate toward cleaning/restoring oil damage in flood prone areas?
- Can the State clarify on non-oil related damage and coverage for residents? FEMA vs. Other state programs?
- Policy ideas
 - Increasing resiliency in high-risk areas or switching to a different heating system. What is the best use of funds?
 - Collect an Up-front fee when a new oil tank is installed to cover the cost of removing/disposing old tanks
 - A small group of BIH members will convene to come up with recommendations related to this

Review/read proposed policy recommendations

Big Picture Discussion:

- MaineHousing – clarified recommendation around data sharing is to require properties that receive MaineHousing support to share data on energy savings to tell the story about the impact of increased standards
- Zero-emission HVACs and water heaters (new language not included in document)
 - Potential language shared in the chat: Encourage policy and participate in initiatives to increase the adoption of zero emissions HVAC systems and water heaters in new construction and the replacement of fossil burning building equipment at its end of life with zero emissions systems.

Small group discussions: each group identified 3-6 high-priority revisions for each recommendation

Recommendation #1 - blue

- Make sure the implementation supports the action (and in enough detail!)
- what if licensed contractor recommendation does not work?
- volunteers need access to proper guidance and information
- “longevity” of policies and programs is really important to sustain actions from one administration to another
- low-income households – need to be called out in addition to disadvantaged communities
- use “weatherization” instead of “insulation” to include other activities such as air sealing

Recommendation #2 – gold

- dialing up the emphasis! – want to define it and pathway to implementing it
- strong stretch codes & “recommend” licensing
- make sure the language used recognizes that there are other applicable building codes besides the Maine code (e.g., HUD code for manufactured homes)

- build the code enforcement infrastructure throughout the state and the resources it needs

Recommendation #3 – light gold

- can we be stronger on how we are pushing low carbon insulation, such as by:
 - make it required use in certain buildings
 - Modifying incentives, e.g., by having people get rebate/funding/ etc by using low carbon material
 - other material besides insulation too
 - be cognizant of funding sources, and which can and can't be used for this type of incentive

Recommendation #4 – orange

- move solar and battery storage to the section on weatherization and heating
- set targets for buildings (solar, tech, etc)
 - Governor's Energy Office is currently doing some work on solar, and this might overlap with energy group
- We should mention preparing homes for external power outlets
- Community solar could target low-income
 - cost savings and benefits for the people who need it
 - community based, co-op ownership for renters

Recommendation #5 – dark blue

- Look into more --> industrials, piloting and demonstrating new applications for industrial process heating, high and low pressure for industrial heat pumps (processing new tech), advanced filtration

Recommendation #6 - purple

- Need to more explicitly call out school buildings or way to integrate schools into recommendation (solar, heat pumps, all of the above!)

Additional comments

- Include mention of bio-based fuels
- Prioritize programs that maximize carbon reduction per \$ spent AND benefit low-income/disadvantaged communities and households

Targets

The co-chairs explained that to set targets effectively, we need to look across the economy and modeling from consultants, which we will not have before June. However, the WG can give qualitative guidance for the MCC to use when setting targets. Comments and suggestions included:

- Can we have some more clear ideas about what kind of targets we are shooting for?

- Increase weatherization and targets for low-income
- We need a longevity factor for funding to help us stay on the current trajectory, and we need to up low-income goals and targets (resiliency)

Public comment

- Richard Burbank would like 5 minutes on the agenda at the next meeting and will write down his ideas for distribution to the group