

STS Fall 2026 Meeting (Zoom)

Summary

Maine Climate Council Subcommittee Meeting

The Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Maine Climate Council held its 21st meeting, focusing on science assets at risk and transitioning between administrations. The meeting began with introductions and land acknowledgment, followed by plans to discuss a white paper on science assets and hear from Anna about the transition process. The agenda included brief comments from Anna and Sean, followed by Nikki presenting an overview of the white paper on science assets. The meeting was structured to encourage open discussion without a specific end product, and public comments were scheduled for the end of the meeting.

Climate Plan Planning Updates

Anna, the new Climate Council coordinator for GOPIF, presented updates on the planning process for the 2028 Next State Climate Plan and the annual report on Maine Won't Wait. She explained that the science assessment needs to begin in early 2027 to inform working groups, with STS reappointments planned for early 2027. The next climate plan must be completed by December 2028, and the annual report will be published on December 1st and shared at the fourth quarter Climate Council meeting.

Maine Mesonet Weather Network Overview

Sean presented an overview of the Maine Mesonet, a new statewide weather station network being built with a \$3.5 million NOAA grant. The network currently has eight stations online with plans to complete the full 26-station network over the next two summers, focusing on agricultural and forestry areas. Glen asked about feedback from weather forecasters on improved forecasting, to which Sean responded that local offices are using the data but he is still investigating whether it's being incorporated into gridded data products.

Federal Dependency Risk Assessment

Nicole presented highlights from a white paper developed by Nicole and the STS co-Chairs on federal dependency risks to Maine's scientific infrastructure, outlining four interconnected pillars of federal realignment impacts and introducing a Federal Dependency Risk Register with 10 core risk categories. She demonstrated how federal changes create structural and long-

lasting effects that ripple down to state and local levels, using over 100 federal scientific assets as an illustrative example from Maine's 2024 scientific assessment. The presentation concluded with questions for the committee to consider regarding how Maine can actively monitor risks to federal science assets and develop appropriate responses.

Federal Science Assets Impact Discussion

The meeting focused on discussing the loss of federal science assets and their impact on state-level climate work in Maine. Stacy reported that while some federal tools have been picked up by external organizations like the University of Maryland, EPA is considering eliminating support for approximately 200 tools and models, including the CMAQ air quality forecast model that Maine uses daily. The group discussed the need to identify which federal data sources are most critical for state decision-making, with Jonathan asking what information is necessary versus "nice to have" for state agencies and legislature. The whiteboard document will remain open for two weeks to capture additional thoughts and comments on these topics.

State Resource Priority Tracking Discussion

The group discussed how to identify and track changing priorities and resources that impact state governments, particularly in light of federal program reductions like the potential loss of CMAQ. Susie emphasized that while they don't have the answers, they welcome input through an open Google Doc until October 14th. Nick raised concerns about potentially making critical resources more vulnerable by highlighting them, which led to a discussion about the benefits of demonstrating public use and support for these tools, with Stacy sharing examples from her EPA experience about when drawing attention can be helpful versus harmful.

Strategic Data Autonomy Planning

The group discussed the importance of building strategic autonomy in data and science assets, with Nicole highlighting the need to plan for federal data loss while Pete and others shared examples of successful partnerships between state agencies, NGOs, and universities to fill data gaps. Sally emphasized the critical role of foundational environmental laws at the federal level, while Nathan and Andrew discussed how data loss could impact regulatory implementation and specific programs like the Forest Inventory and Analysis Program. The discussion focused on finding concrete ways that data loss would directly affect Maine residents, particularly in areas like air quality monitoring and forest management.

Climate Science Communication Strategies

This discussion focused on evaluating the effectiveness of STS and discussing ways to better communicate climate science to the public. Participants suggested creating op-eds, developing

storytelling approaches, producing videos, and using social media to connect scientific data with everyday experiences. The group agreed to gather feedback from working groups more systematically and consider creating printed reports for better distribution. Next steps include contributing thoughts to a shared Google document and continuing discussions about how to address science assets at risk in the context of the new administration and newly appointed STS and Maine Climate Council in 2027.

Follow up:

- For All STS Members: Provide feedback, thoughts, and ideas regarding the discussion topics (science assets at risk and STS effectiveness) in the open [Google Doc whiteboard](#), which will remain open for 2 weeks (until October 14).
- Ivan and Susie: Capture and compile the comments and ideas from the Google Doc whiteboard for future reference and planning.
- Ivan and Susie: Consider the suggestion of a potential task force under the new administration to holistically address the issue of federal science assets at risk.
- STS Members: Consider alternative communication methods (e.g., social media, public presentations) to better resonate with the public, potentially requiring additional resources or partnerships.

10.1.2026

This is an AI summary of the proceedings of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Maine Climate Council edited by STS Co-Chairs for clarity and accuracy.