

**Maine Climate Council Equity Subcommittee
Draft Recommendations - for Deliberative Purposes
Energy Sector
Version 8-26-2021**

Please note:

This document contains draft recommendations for deliberation by the equity subcommittee members. Edits and revisions will be discussed during upcoming working sessions of the subcommittee, the schedules of which will be posted on the [subcommittee website](#) in early September.

Public comment on these draft recommendations will be accepted during upcoming subcommittee meetings on September 23 and October 21, or anytime through this [online form](#).

All upcoming meetings and meeting materials can be found [here](#).

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MCC Equity Subcommittee

DRAFT Energy Sector Recommendations

Original Source of Proposed Recommendation (Direct Comments/Notes from Equity Subcommittee Minutes)¹	Proposed Recommendations
<p>Consider where renewable energy will be sited and how that will impact communities; Siting for new industrial plants occurs in low income/vulnerable population areas. Regulatory process changes to recognize vulnerable populations need to be verified/rewritten</p>	<p>1) As per the requirements in LD 1682, the Office of Policy Innovation and the Future in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Protection (along with other agencies) should conduct an assessment to understand the viability of adding an equity assessment review to existing review standards for all projects that require a new Site Location or Development Act permit, as well as permitting processes for new energy infrastructure at the PUC.</p> <p>(ex: Look to New York’s Office of Renewable Energy Siting EJ review requirements for large-scale renewable project siting)</p> <p>2) The Agricultural Solar Stakeholder Group and Offshore Wind Stakeholder groups will consider equity in their processes.</p>
<p>Some may want opportunities for community ownership over distributed energy. Consider diverse options for ownership (community or municipal)</p>	<p>3) Through the recently enacted budget, GOPIF will increase technical support available to municipalities or community organizations interested in clean energy procurement opportunities.</p> <p>4) The PUC will examine emerging best practices for incorporating equity into community solar programs, including the Community Renewable program (P.L. 2015 ch. 232).</p>
<p>There is a need for better financing, attached to the asset rather than to the individual; instead of using incentives or rebates, this uses available market capital in the private sector (PACE residential?)</p>	<p>5) GEO will continue to work with the legislature, the PUC, utilities, and Efficiency Maine Trust to assess the viability of on-bill financing programs to allow homeowners to borrow money for energy</p>

¹ Text in this column is from Equity Subcommittee meeting minutes.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financing program: on-bill financing, savings generated by EE/RE investments are used to pay back investments	<p>upgrades and make repayments over time via the utility bill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Example: LD 1264 was going to address on bill financing for heat pumps, but the committee did not have sufficient time to work on it.• Example: Opportunity for new CPACE program and existing residential PACE program at Efficiency Maine to serve some of these customers. <p>6) Program design for new clean energy programs must include representatives of LMI communities, the participation of frontline communities, and ensuring the opportunity for communities that host large scale renewable projects to receive clean energy benefits from those projects.</p> <p>7) The newly established Clean Energy and Sustainability Accelerator should consider incorporating LMI incentives (or similar mechanisms) that lower barriers to access.</p>
<p>Different communities face different energy burdens. Small island residents are paying the highest energy costs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Want to make sure this group is aware of the report that GEO was involved in and was completed by the Island Institute: https://www.islandinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Bridging-the-Rural-Efficiency-Gap-final-report.pdf	<p>8) Prioritize engagement in frontline communities to increase awareness of financing and rebate options and increase technical assistance. Look to community-based Weatherize initiative in Rockland, ME.</p>

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<p>Low-income Mainers can include many people who are unemployed or underemployed – may not be aware of job opportunities associated with this transition – need to get it on their radar;</p> <p>There is a need for access to training and education opportunities that lead to jobs within clean energy sector. Need to ensure flexibility within those training programs, including when and where you can complete training. Provide this information earlier to students.</p> <p>Geographic distribution of efforts and associated workforce – efforts are currently distributed, align workforce opportunities</p>	<p>9) Through the Governor’s Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan and the Clean Energy Partnership, the state will continue to explore the expansion of high school training programs to provide clean energy workforce skills training and programming to youth. Clean energy workforce training opportunities should seek to recruit women and people of color, and should be accessible to Mainers from across the state. Look to existing programs, such as Bright Solar Futures in Philadelphia, as potential models.</p> <p>10) GOPIF and GEO should partner with DOL to provide info on clean energy career and job training opportunities to unemployed/underemployed Mainers.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Battery disposal siting: where will we site these plants?	<p>11) DEP will continue to work with the legislature and with other northeastern states to study opportunities and challenges associated with PV decommissioning, including battery disposal, and to incorporate battery disposal into decommissioning plans required from solar developers.</p> <p>(Examples)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Federal Level: One DOE initiative, launched by the Office of Energy Efficiency & Renewable Energy, created the first R&D center for lithium ion battery recycling in the nation. “ReCell” will test new recycling practices in battery manufacturing, with the aim of piloting and eventually bringing successful methods to industry-scale.b. PV Decommissioning: NYSERDA Decommissioning Solar Panel Systems information guide; California’s 2015 Senate Bill 489 encourages PV recycling planning.c. EV Battery decommissioning: 3 states (at least) have set up study groups to discuss

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	safe handling of decommissioning: MA, CA and NY.
More rural areas tend to have lower reliability, as we electrify, it will increase vulnerability related to reliability challenges. Have other states used storage technology to address this issue?	12) As directed by recent legislation passed on storage (LD 528), GEO will conduct an energy storage market assessment, which will explore the impact of storage on grid reliability in both urban and rural areas.
Understand who has the incentive, such as those that go to building owners when renters pay utilities may not encourage building owners to participate in certain programs	13) Efficiency Maine Trust should explore opportunities to work with landlords to upgrade heating systems and install renewable energy, in order to increase access to clean energy and heating technologies for renters.
Opt-in models for community ownership are a barrier for those who are too busy to consider options. Programs should not require you to “go out of your way” <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ The opt-in opportunities are a barrier themselves; are there other ways to ensure that benefits are flowing?	14) The state will work with utilities to explore opt-out models for renewable energy project participation, where those models would provide a cleaner and less expensive electricity mix to consumers.
Most data we have are regional data. Need to better understand neighborhood level data, particularly about air pollution, which is blown in from out of state sources. What are the health impacts of those emissions?	15) GOPIF will work with DEP, the University of Maine, and other partners to explore opportunities to gather increasingly local air quality data across Maine communities; and to provide additional information about the relationship between pollutant exposure and health impact.

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Heat pumps transfer heating costs to electric bills – does LIHEAP transfer?	16) The state will ensure that heating assistance eligible residents can transfer heating assistance payments from fossil sources to electricity bills when participating in heat pump installations.
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Summary of data needs and future research²

In addition to the above recommendations, the Equity subcommittee recommends that the state study the following areas for future consideration by the Equity subcommittee and the Maine Climate Council:

- The current diversity of clean energy sector workers, and opportunities to increase access to these jobs for underserved communities, as well as for workers in climate vulnerable and fossil-based industries.
- Opportunities to accelerate the provision of energy efficiency/weatherization services, particularly in areas of the state with large waiting list backlogs such as Aroostook county
 - In areas with documented weatherization need and low uptake by residents, additional resources should be spent identifying barriers and recruiting households.
- Are there particular low-income or rural communities whom currently experience disproportionate health impacts from fossil fuel combustion?
- What economic opportunities exist in low carbon liquid fuels (ie biofuels) which can both advance Maine’s climate goals and create jobs?
- Additional data needs*:
 - Up-to-date data from Efficiency Maine on the impacts or outcomes of municipal PACE programs. As of November 2020, 193 [Maine towns have PACE ordinances](#)
 - Demographic data about energy burden, including heating type etc.

* Note: Some of this data is available, would need more specifics about exactly what would be helpful for this group. The GEO Renewable Energy Goals Market Assessment includes a social vulnerability index, which may offer some helpful information. Additionally, it references a 2019 Maine OPA study regarding energy burden: <https://www.maine.gov/meopa/sites/maine.gov/meopa/files/inline-files/Maine%20Low%20Income%20Energy%20Burden%20Study%20June%202019.pdf>

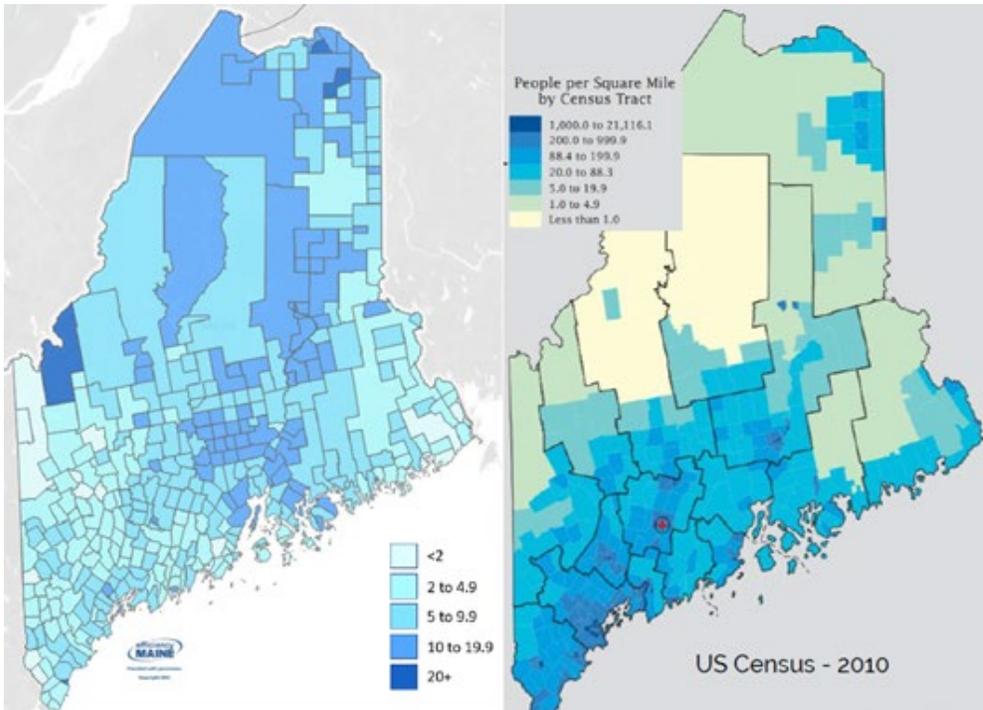
² Comments recorded from the Energy and Building Equity Subcommittee meeting minutes that require further research, data, or interviews

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Left

Geographic distribution of Maine's heat pump program

- cumulative rebates per 100 population

Right

Population density of Maine