



State of Maine
Office of the Public Advocate
112 State House Station, Augusta, Maine 04333-0112
(207) 624-3687 (voice) 711 (TTY)
www.Maine.gov/meopa

Heather Sanborn
PUBLIC ADVOCATE

Electric Ratepayer Advisory Council

Meeting: January 26, 2026 at 2:00 PM via Teams

Council Members: Jessica Fay, Victoria Forkus, Katy Childs, Mark Morissette, Amy Turner, Sharon Klein, Eloise Vitelli, David Zachow, Shawn Lovley. **Absent:** Lisa Henaghen, Andrea Steward, Nakia Dana, John Bliss.

Ex-Officio: Heather Sanborn, Kiera Reardon (in place of Dan Burgess), Ian Burnes. **Absent:** Phil Bartlett; Erik Jorgensen.

Other Attendees: Derek Davidson (PUC), Deirdre Schneider (PUC), Elizabeth Deprey (OPA), Kris Winther (OPA), Alf Anderson (AARP), Kathy Largay (Versant), Rich Hevey (OPA), Kathleen Bowman (CMP), Kevin Kelley, Tim Howington, Sylvia Most (OPA) (Total attendance = 23)

Introduction

Heather Sanborn welcomed everyone on a very snowy day in Maine and brought the meeting to order a few minutes after 2pm. Heather stated that the goal of this meeting is to reach consensus on a policy proposal resulting from the CEP report.

Competitive Electricity Supply Report

Tim Howington provided a general overview of the 2026 report. Heather then opened the meeting for questions and comments. Council members engaged in discussion, seeking clarification on the report's content, updates since the previous version, and the implications of individual tables and graphical representations of the data.

Heather then shifted the discussion to the draft memorandum circulated with the report. The memorandum summarizes key findings and outlines a recommended policy direction for the Energy, Utilities and Technology (EUT) Committee. Specifically, ERAC recommends that the EUT Committee consider legislation this session to ensure that no utility customer enrolled in the Low-Income Assistance Program (LIAP) is charged more than the standard offer rate for electricity supply. Council members discussed the feasibility of this recommendation, the potential for advancing a stronger policy position, and the implications for competitive electricity providers' ability to serve LIAP customers under such a framework.

Each Council member was given the opportunity to comment on the proposed policy recommendation. With one abstention, all voting Council members present supported the recommendation. Additional discussion focused on implementation details, with general agreement that Public Utilities Commission rulemaking would be the appropriate forum for the PUC, the Office of the Public Advocate, the Department of Energy Resources, and other interested parties to address specific issues.

Heather thanked the Council for its support, noting that the consensus recommendation would allow her to present the report to the EUT Committee on Thursday as an ERAC-endorsed position. She clarified that the policy would be advanced through a committee bill and that, following the

presentation, the EUT Committee will hopefully report out legislation subject to a public hearing. Council members would be encouraged to participate in the hearing, as feasible. Heather asked whether there were any process concerns related to the meeting; none were raised. She concluded by thanking Tim Howington, Central Maine Power, and Versant for their assistance in producing the report.

Work Group Reports

Two work groups met in January following the information sessions with the PUC to continue development of the two new ERAC initiatives for 2026.

Focus Group Project (Work group: Jess, Eloise, Sharon, David, Andrea, Victoria)

The Focus Group Working Group met on January 16th. The group agreed to familiarize themselves with two relevant reports in advance of continuing to refine the focus group project. Both Sharon and Victoria agreed to provide the group with their suggestions as to what to pay closest attention to in each report.

Sharon's summary was provided to the Council with the meeting reminder and includes a link to the report to the Maine Climate Council and a slide deck with related graphs.

Here is the link to Victoria's report as well as the breakdown of sections/pages that are most applicable to our work: [2025 State Report Final 04082025.pdf](#)

- Pg. 12, 'Socioeconomic Empowerment'
- Pg.14-16, 'Community Conditions' (Note that **74.4%** of survey respondents indicated that the cost of utilities negatively impacts them, a loved one, or their community)
- Pg.66-86, Maine Shared Community Health Needs Assessment Statewide Survey 2024

The group set a next meeting date of March 4th at 11AM. Please notify Sylvia if you would like a meeting link.

Winter Disconnects Project (Work group: Katy, Lisa, Amy, Mark, David, John)

The Winter Disconnection Working Group met on January 23 to consider whether revisions to the winter disconnection moratorium study were warranted in light of the PUC's recent presentation and related Q&A sessions.

The Working Group reaffirmed that the Council's overarching objective is to help customers better afford electric service and to reduce arrearages when they occur. Members discussed pending legislation (LD 1949) currently under consideration by the EUT Committee, as well as an upcoming PUC docket that may result in revisions to Chapter 815 governing winter disconnection requests. The outcomes of these efforts could lead to policy changes that would either render the proposed ERAC project unnecessary or significantly alter the context in which it would be conducted, raising concerns about the efficient use of resources.

As a result, the Working Group concluded that ERAC may have a role in engaging on these policy issues, although it has not yet done so in a substantive way. The forthcoming discussion of the EUT memo related to the CEP report may effectively serve as an initial step in that direction. Accordingly, the Working Group requests guidance from the full Council on whether—and through what process—ERAC should be able to speak with a unified voice on potentially controversial policy matters.

Discussion ensued on this topic including the difficulty of following bills and dockets through their winding paths. Heather summarized by suggesting that in a group with as many diverse viewpoints as ERAC, it may be more possible to reach consensus on broad policy direction than on detailed legislation.

Next meeting of the work group is tentatively scheduled for February 27 at 10AM. Please notify Sylvia if you would like a meeting link.

Public Comment

- Alf Anderson expressed his support of the recommendations in the CEP report and his intention to support resulting legislation.

Next Meeting

March 9, 2026 @ 2pm – at the Public Utilities Commission, 26 Katherine Drive, Hallowell (Teams option)

Meeting adjourned at approximately 3:10.