

# November 10, 2022 Massachusetts Workshop: Opportunities to Improve How Regulatory Agencies Address Climate Change

## Workshop Goals & Outcomes

Brown University engaged Synapse Energy Economics and Climable to host a series of workshops in New England states. The purpose of these workshops is to collaborate and crowdsource ideas from stakeholders on the opportunities and challenges for regulatory agencies implementing lasting and equitable climate and energy solutions.

The effort includes:

- [a background report](#) to summarize research about best practices, barriers, and opportunities across New England states.
- [public workshops](#) in each state to gather stakeholder input and facilitate collaboration on solutions.
- a final report to accumulate and enable action on lessons learned and next steps for all New England states.

## WORKSHOP AGENDA

3:00-3:05	Welcome & Logistics
3:05-3:25	Briefing on the Project and Massachusetts' First Workshop
3:25-4:10	Breakout Session #1: Brainstorm on Department of Public Utility (DPU) Actions
4:10-4:55	Breakout Session #2: Brainstorm on Support for Other Stakeholders
4:55-5:00	Wrap Up, Next Steps, & Distribute E-Survey

## SUMMARY OF PRIORITIES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS WORKSHOP

The following is a summary of the priorities and actions from the in-person workshop in your state. Please note that the summary is two pages.

Priorities	Actions
<b>Promote Equity and Environmental Justice</b>	A. Gaps in knowledge of various stakeholders need to be bridged.
	B. Conversations with more stakeholders can improve future legislation.
	C. Community input needs to be collected upfront. Community representatives (including local elected officials) need to be identified and the DPU and others should develop a process to consult with these individuals. The ability for community representatives to intervene proactively needs to be expanded.
	D. Prevailing wage requirements need to be applied to the solar and other clean energy industries. Fixed pricing can be used to curb excessive inflation practices and excessive pricing increases in response to the influx of federal funding for clean energy.
	E. More people should be engaged in the clean energy industry through initiatives such as paid, language accessible job training and career buyouts to transition the mid-to-late career workforce to other industries.
<b>Enact Clear and Transparent Climate Policies and Practices</b>	F. Legislation needs to be more specific as to actions, authority, and enforcement.
	G. The benefits of reduced climate change and health impacts need to be accounted for in the evaluation of solutions.
	H. Limits need to be imposed on additional gas system investment and aging and uneconomic assets need to be retired.

Priorities	Actions (cont'd)
<b>Strengthen Leadership and Coordination</b>	I. Decision making for electric and gas needs to be centralized and coordinated at the state level. An energy planning commission with longer terms of service and authority should be established with a diverse group of representatives.
	J. Alternative gas utility business models should be pursued.
	K. The Department of Public Utilities (DPU) file room needs to be easier to use and complex processes need to be streamlined.
	L. Fossil fuel and renewable infrastructure siting needs to be reformed to prevent siting in overburdened communities.
	M. Community marketing campaigns for heat pumps should provide incentives to refer a friend, leverage social media influencers to spread the word, and change NIMBY attitudes.
	N. State entities need renewable energy and electrification goals.
<b>Expose and Counter Misinformation, Conflicts of Interest, and Excessive Lobbying and Utility Control</b>	O. Third parties should be enlisted to evaluate what is going on and call out misinformation.
	P. Issues with excessive utility lobbying and control should be addressed by reducing utility power and decision-making.
	Q. The state should not support more utility-owned renewable generation.

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

This workshop is designed to further develop the actions shown in the table above. Please reference this table as you work with others to develop responses to these questions.

1. What steps should the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) take to address the actions equitably?
2. Please select a few actions from the table. How can stakeholders (outside of the DPU) be empowered to meaningfully engage and lead on these actions?

## CLIMATE GOALS & PROGRESS

Massachusetts has the highest economy-wide, legally binding goals to reduce emissions of the New England states, with targets of 50 percent below the baseline by 2030 and 100 percent by 2050. The state also has stringent renewable portfolio standard, energy efficiency savings, and energy storage requirements. In 2018, Massachusetts was nearly halfway to its 2030 greenhouse gas emission reduction goal and had demonstrated more progress towards this goal than other New England states.

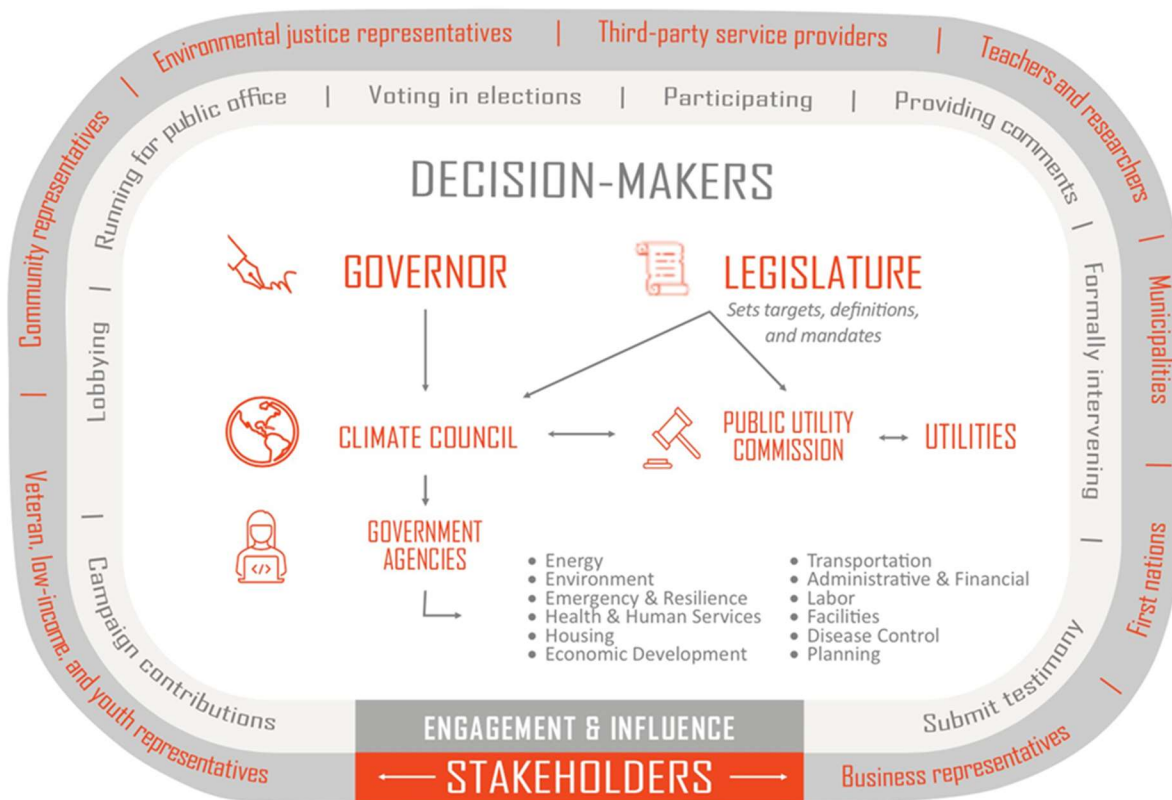
**Table 1: New England State Climate Goals and Achievements**

Climate Goals		CT	ME	MA	NH	RI	VT
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goals	Baseline	2001	1990	1990	None	1990	1990
	By 2030	45% (18%, 2018 act.)	45% (18%, 2017 act.)	50% ( 22%, 2018 act.)		45% (-2%, 2018 act.)	40% (0.51%, 2019 est.)
	By 2050	80%	80%	100%		100%	80%
Renewable Portfolio Standards		40% (by 2030)	80% (by 2030) 100% (by 2050)	40% (by 2030)	25% (by 2025)	100% (by 2033)	75% (by 2032)
Energy Efficiency Savings Targets (% of Total Sales)		1.1% (2019-2021)	2.3% (2020-2022)	2.7% (2019-2021)	0.6% (2022 est.)	2.5% (2018-2021)	2.4% (2018-2020)
Energy Storage Requirements		1,000 MW (by 2030)	300 MW (by 2025) 400 MW (by 2030)	1,000 MWh (by 2025)	None	None	None

*Source: Synapse Energy Economics. (2022). A Better New England Regulatory Framework for Mitigating Climate Change. Available at: <https://www.synapse-energy.com/project/study-climate-action-and-public-utility-commissions-new-england-states>. Updated 8/31/2022.*

# CLIMATE DECISION-MAKERS AND STAKEHOLDERS AND THEIR ENGAGEMENT AND INTERACTIONS

During this discussion, it will be important to consider the entities in each state that have power and influence, what their sphere of influence is, and what mechanisms they use to exert their influence. The figure below provides a generalized depiction of the various entities that may be involved in climate decision-making. It is important to note that this figure is not state-specific, and some entities such as Climate Councils may not be present in every state. One of the key points shown here is that Public Utility Commissions, the core regulators of electricity and gas utilities, are central to state climate action.



Source: Synapse Energy Economics. (2022). *A Better New England Regulatory Framework for Mitigating Climate Change*. Available at: <https://www.synapse-energy.com/project/study-climate-action-and-public-utility-commissions-new-england-states>.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acronym	Name	Definition
<b>DER</b>	Distributed Energy Resource	Technology for generating and managing electricity at the place of consumption
<b>DR</b>	Demand Response	Reducing energy consumption on the consumer side during peak demand
<b>DSM</b>	Demand-Side Management	Managing demand for energy on the consumer side to reduce overall consumption
<b>DSP</b>	Distribution System Planning	Planning for the incorporation of DERs into the grid, oftentimes by improving grid flexibility
<b>FERC</b>	Federal Energy Regulatory Commission	An independent agency that regulates the interstate transmission of electricity, natural gas, and oil. FERC also reviews proposals to build liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals and interstate natural gas pipelines as well as licensing hydropower projects.
<b>FIT</b>	Feed-In Tariff	A policy guaranteeing a price for each unit of renewable energy generated
<b>ISO</b>	Independent System Operator	An independent organization that coordinates, controls, and monitors the operation of the electrical power system. New England's system operator is ISO New England (ISO-NE)
<b>PIM</b>	Performance Incentive Mechanism	A policy that encourages utility performance in areas such as reliability, safety, customer service, and energy efficiency
<b>PTC</b>	Production Tax Credit	Federal tax credit that incentivizes renewable generation
<b>REC</b>	Renewable Energy Certificate	Certificate representing renewable energy generation that utilities must purchase to fulfill RPS requirements
<b>RGGI</b>	Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative	A cooperative, market-based effort among the states of Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, and Virginia to cap and reduce CO2 emissions from the power sector
<b>RPS</b>	Renewable Portfolio Standard	A regulation requiring increased production in renewable energy, usually involving a percentage goal by a specified year

### **Sources:**

1. Harvey, Hal, Robbie Orvis, and Jeffrey Rissman. *Designing Climate Solutions: A Policy Guide for Low-Carbon Energy*. Island Press. November 2018. Available at: <https://islandpress.org/books/designing-climate-solutions>
2. American Council for an Energy Efficient Economy website. Available at: [www.aceee.org](http://www.aceee.org)
3. Synapse Energy Economics website. Available at: [www.synapse-energy.com](http://www.synapse-energy.com)
4. Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative website. Available at: [www.rggi.org](http://www.rggi.org)
5. King, Dawn. *Energy Policy and Politics*. Brown University Class.