



# Opportunities to Improve How Regulatory Agencies Address Climate Change in Massachusetts



November 10, 2022



# Agenda

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**3:00-3:05** Welcome! Agenda & Logistics

**3:05-3:25** Briefing on the Project and Massachusetts's First Workshop

**3:25-4:10** Breakout Session #1: Brainstorm on Public Utility Commission (PUC) Actions

**4:10-4:55** Breakout Session #2: Brainstorm on Support for Other Stakeholders

**4:55-5:00** Wrap Up & Next Steps

# Our Team

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Sophie Kelly, Program Manager  
Jeannie Ramey, Executive Director  
Jen Stevenson Zepeda, Associate  
Executive Director

Prof. Timmons Roberts  
Jared Heern, Post Doctoral  
Research Associate  
Grace Austin, Research Asst.  
Pilar McDonald, Research Asst.  
Juliana Merullo, Research Asst.  
Emma Venarde, Research Asst.  
Callie Rabinovitz, Research Asst.

Jennifer Kallay, Senior Associate  
Lamia Hossain, Energy Justice  
Intern

# Establishing Group Norms

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- The people who are here today want to engage in dialogue
- Collectively we value:
  - That it's ok to disagree!
  - Honesty
  - Respect
  - Diversity of opinion, experience, and background
  - Creating space for everyone to participate
  - Being present
  - Sitting with and working through defensiveness, judgment, and discomfort
  - Questions—there are no bad questions
- We will attempt to speak from experience; use “I statements” when possible
- We will approach conversations from a place of care, remembering that people might be going through something you don't know

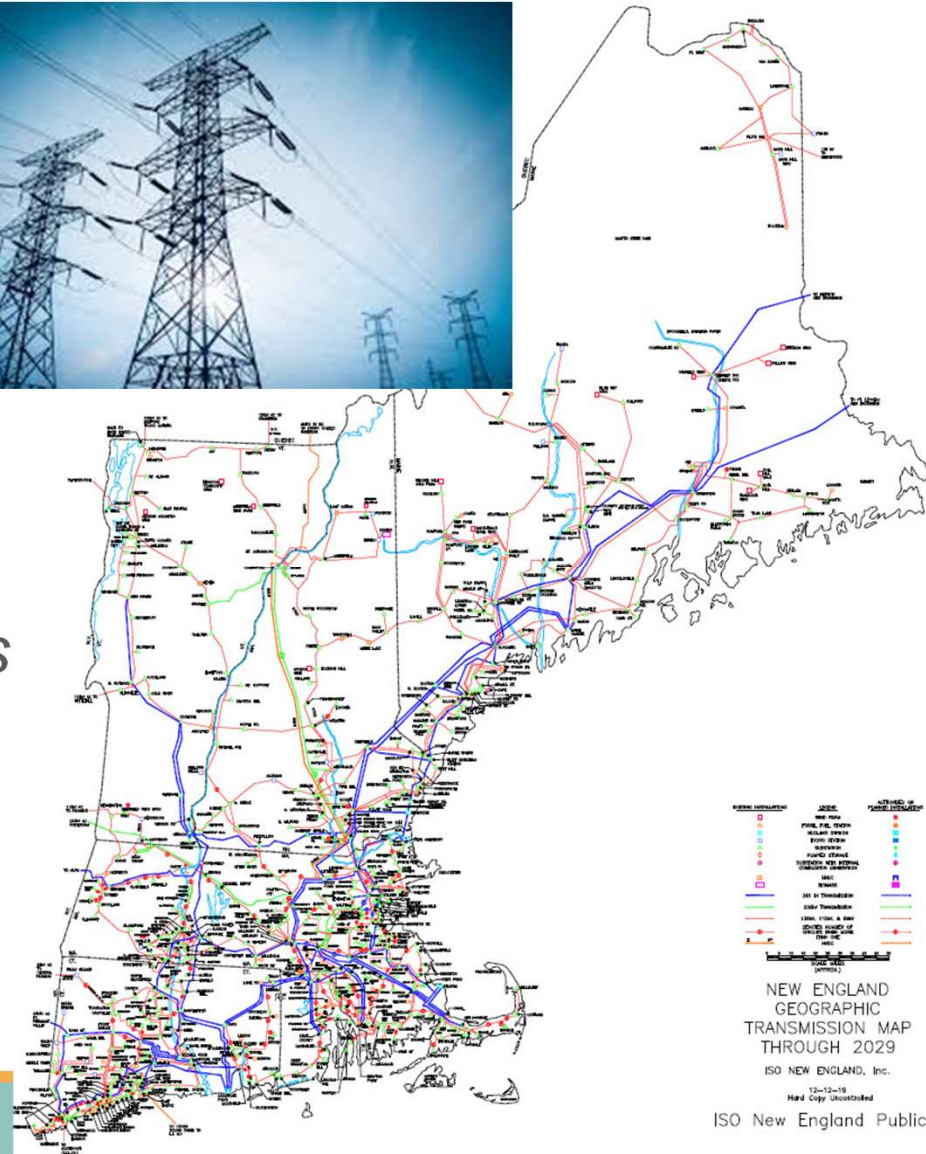
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# Briefing on the Project

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# The Origins and Goals of this Project

*To collaborate and crowdsource ideas on the opportunities and challenges for regulatory agencies implementing lasting and equitable climate and energy solutions in New England states*



# Climate and Development Lab Reports on Utilities and their regulators: PUCs and Legislatures



Available at:  
[www.climatedevlab.brown.edu](http://www.climatedevlab.brown.edu)

## CSSN Research Report 2021:3 Who's Influencing Connecticut Climate and Clean Energy? Five Questions

Policy Briefing  
 The Climate and Development Lab  
 Institute at Brown for Environment and Society  
 December 2021



## CSSN Research Report 2021:2 Who's Delaying Climate Action in Massachusetts? Twelve Questions

Policy Briefing  
 The Climate and Development Lab  
 Institute at Brown for Environment and Society  
 January 2021



## Deeper Decarbonization in the Ocean State:

The 2019 Rhode Island Greenhouse Gas Reduction Study

September 12, 2019



Authors: Cole Tiedman, Daniel Traver, Brett Cotler, Benjamin G. ...  
 Institute at Brown for Environment and Society

## Can State Utility Commissions Lead in the Clean Energy Transition? Lessons from Six States

A Brown University Climate and Development Lab Report, October 2021  
 A report by Cole Tiedman, lead researcher, and Eve Lukens-Day, Amanda  
 Hinh, and Noah Ball-Burack, research team, with support from  
 Timmons Roberts, Professor of Environmental Studies & Sociology at  
 The Institute at Brown for Environment & Society (IBES)



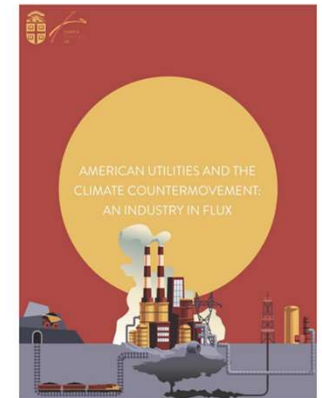
New Mexico  
 Public Regulation Commission

October 28, 2021

This report should be cited as: Tiedman, Cole, Eve Lukens-Day, Amanda Hinh, & Noah Ball-Burack, "Can State Utility Commissions Lead in the Clean Energy Transition? Lessons from Six States." Brown University Climate and Development Lab, October 28, 2021.

BROWN CLIMATE AND DEVELOPMENT LAB FALL 2019 UTILITIES REPORT

## American Utilities and the Climate Change Counter Movement: An Industry In Flux



A report by Cole Tiedman, Andrew Javens, Jessie Sugarman, David Wingate for the  
 Brown University Climate and Development Lab (CDL)  
 Visuals by Derek Russell & Dana Kurriawan

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 We welcome input. Contact us at [climatedevlab@gmail.com](mailto:climatedevlab@gmail.com)

# Why isn't faster climate action happening in New England?

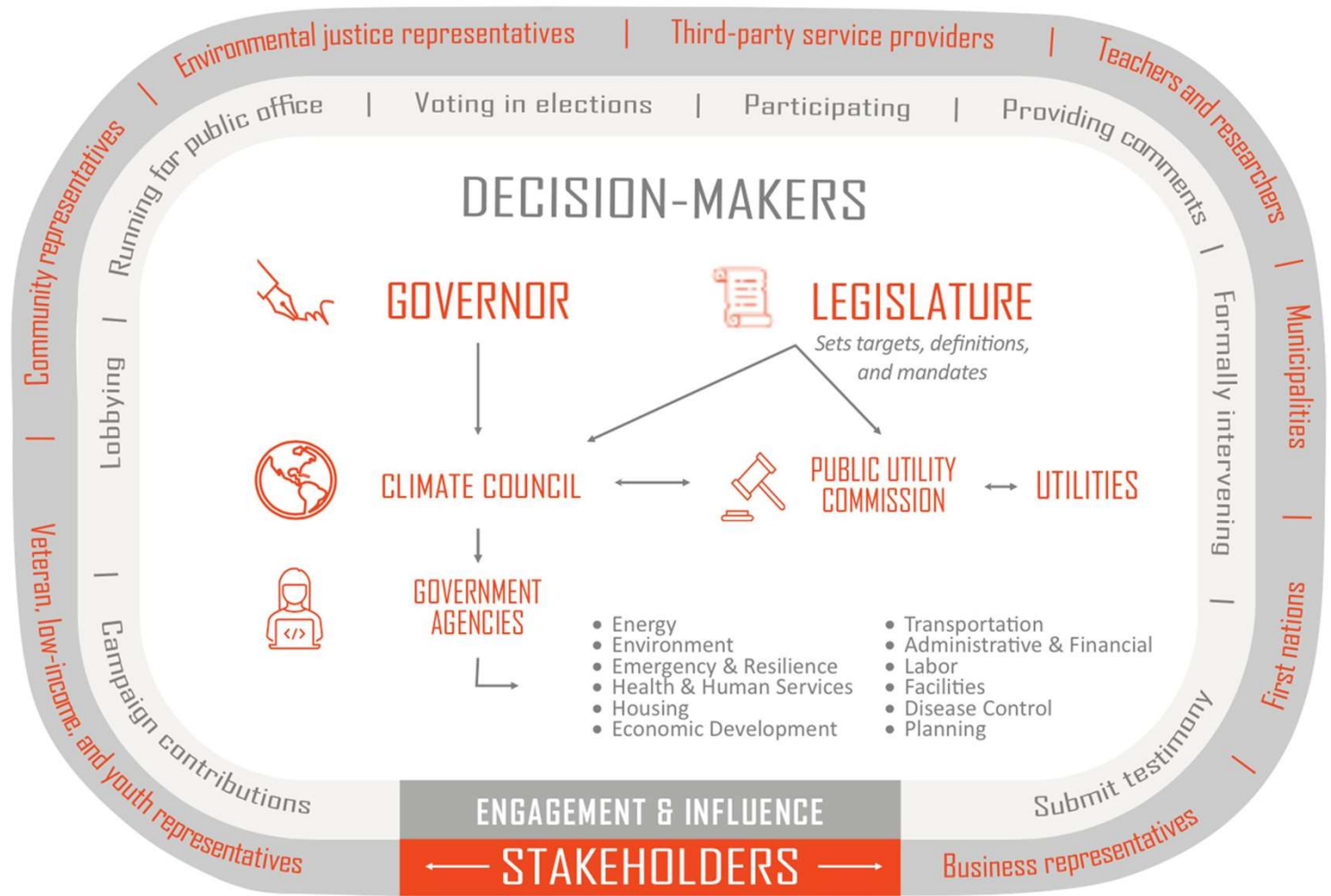
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1. With deadlock in Washington, states are now the focus of most climate legislation
2. Public Utilities Commissions (who regulate monopolies) are the key gatekeeper
3. PUCs were created with mandates from a century ago (cost, reliability)
4. PUCs and their importance are poorly understood
5. Participation in PUC cases is difficult and expensive--highly technical and legal
6. Utilities have a vastly imbalanced influence

**We wish to open dialogue of routes forward.**

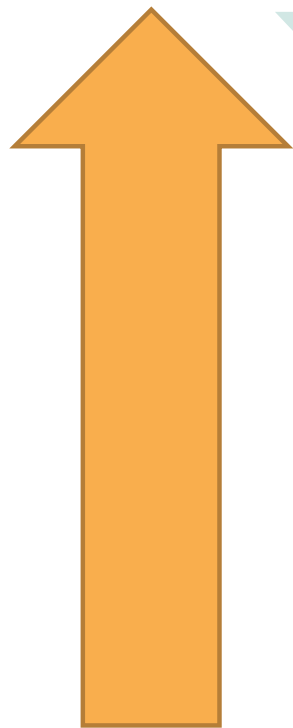


As core regulators of our monopoly gas and electricity suppliers, Public Utility Commissions are central to state climate action.



# Project Outcomes

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# Briefing on Massachusetts' First Workshop

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# Background Report

Available at: <https://www.synapse-energy.com/project/study-climate-action-and-public-utility-commissions-new-england-states>



March XX, 2022

## A BETTER NEW ENGLAND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK FOR MITIGATING CLIMATE CHANGE

A preliminary research report to inform stakeholder workshops in all New England states



# Best Practices

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## Clarity and Transparency in Climate Legislation

- Setting and achieving economy-wide, legally binding greenhouse gas emission reduction targets and other supportive policies

## PUC Authority

- Requiring PUC to address climate change in its mission and decision-making

## Promoting Equity and Environmental Justice

- Enacting environmental justice legislation and policies and defining environmental justice

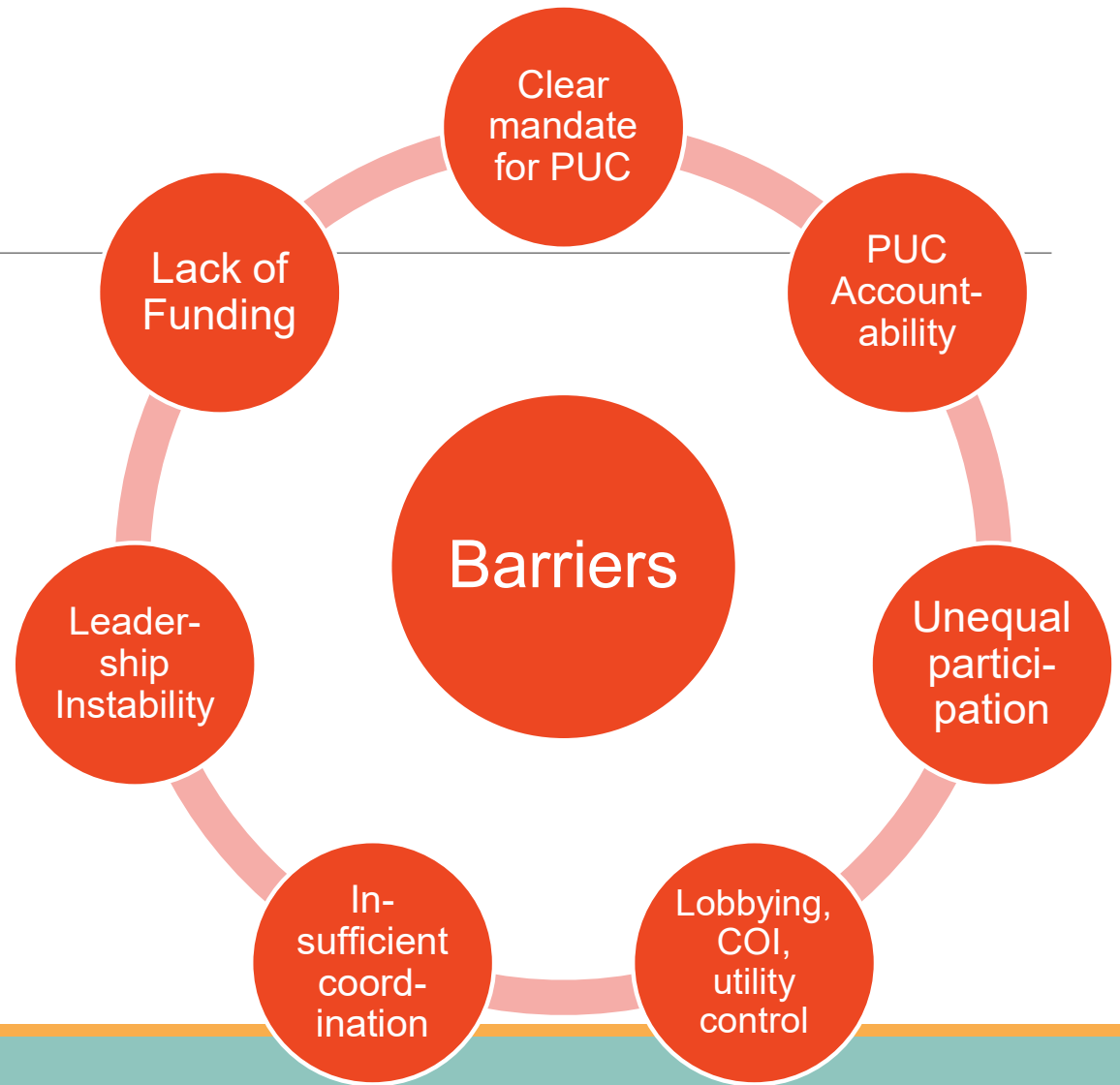
## Strengthening Interdepartmental and Interagency Coordination

- Establishing a Climate Change Coordinating Council and collaborating on action

# Barriers

Many significant barriers were identified, and many are likely relevant to many states.

Every barrier was not explicitly identified in each state.



# What We Heard

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Priorities	Actions
Promote Equity and Environmental Justice	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.

# What We Heard (cont'd)

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Priorities	Actions
<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 natural gas system investment and aging and uneconomic assets need to be retired.



# What We Heard (cont'd)

Priorities	Actions (cont'd)
Strengthen Leadership and Coordination	I. Decision making for electric and natural gas needs to be centralized and coordinated at the state level. <u>A</u> 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.

# What We Heard

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## (cont'd)

Priorities	Actions (cont'd)
Expose and Counter Misinformation, Conflicts of Interest, and Excessive Lobbying and Utility Control	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.

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Questions?

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# Breakout Discussion #1

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**Please refer to the priority actions table that was developed at the in-person workshop earlier this year. (Pages 2-3 of your handout.)**

- What steps should the DPU take to address the actions equitably?
- Discuss the main barriers to these priorities progressing.

*This session lasts 45 minutes.*

# Breakout Session 1: Report Back Ideas

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## Breakout Session #2

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The energy transition in Massachusetts needs to happen without sacrificing meaningful and equitable stakeholder engagement.

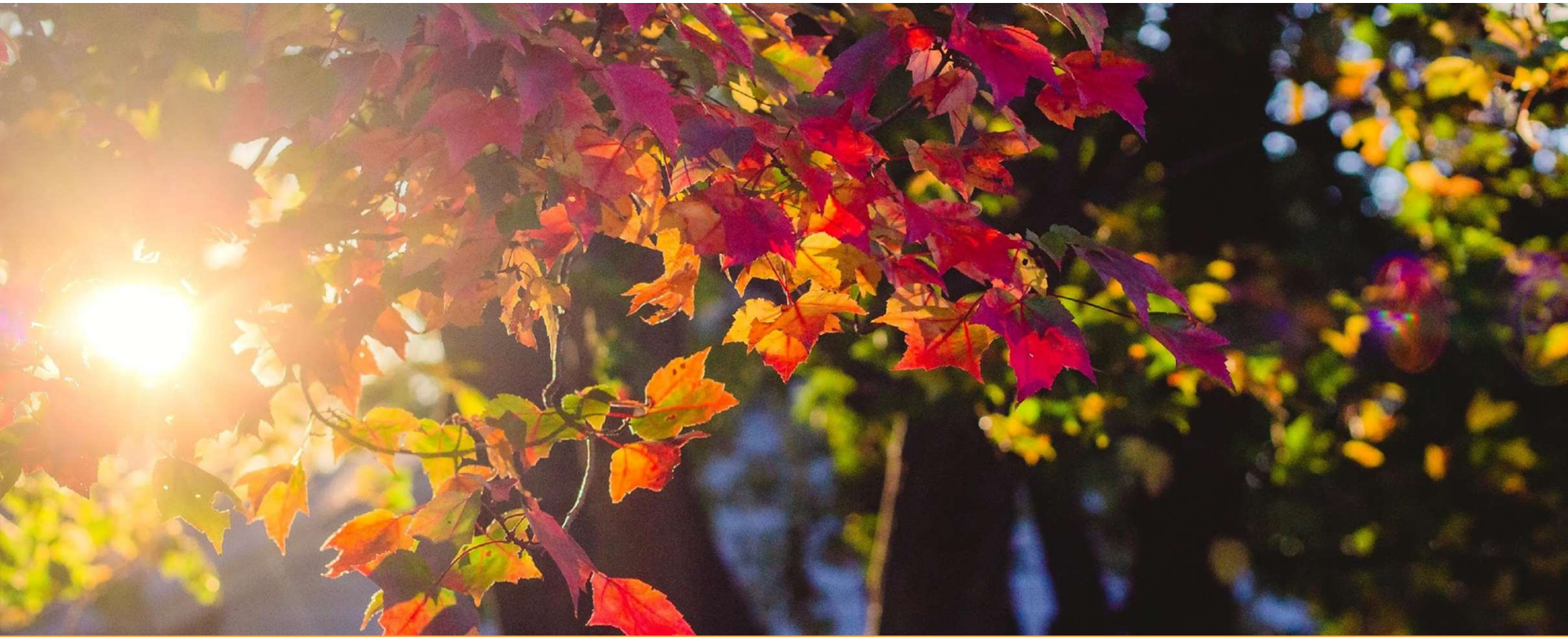
- How can stakeholders *outside of the DPU* be empowered to provide meaningful engagement and leadership on these actions?
- What support do those stakeholders need? How can stakeholders collaborate to provide that support?

*This session lasts 45 minutes.*

# Contact Information

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Timmons Roberts, Brown University:  
timmons@brown.edu



This presentation is an educational resource to help facilitate conversation amongst stakeholders around opportunities and challenges associated with advancing climate action in New England.