

# September 21, 2022 Maine 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

5:30-6:00	Networking (optional)
6:00-6:05	Welcome & Logistics
6:05-6:25	Briefing on Maine's First Workshop
6:25-7:10	Breakout Session #1: Brainstorm on Public Utility Commission (PUC) Actions
7:10-7:55	Breakout Session #2: Brainstorm on Support for Other Stakeholders
7:55-8:00	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>Build Equity into Planning and Implementation</b>	A. Definitions of equity and environmental justice should be standardized in legislation.
	B. All state agencies should be more proactive in their efforts to reach out to frontline or affected communities.
	C. The PUC and other governmental bodies should do more to provide general, plain language materials about key topics and explain why they are important/what the impact will be.
	D. PUC proceedings and other public meetings should allow more opportunities for public comment.
	E. There is a need to build municipal energy planning capacity and community resilience partnerships.
	F. Green job training should emphasize youth workforce development and education and underserved communities.
	G. PUC and other governmental body appointments should include diverse perspectives and experiences.
<b>Reform the PUC</b>	H. A comprehensive grid planning effort is needed to address electrification. The Public Utility Commission (PUC) may benefit from a separate division dedicated to grid planning.
	I. Rate-of-return (ROR) regulation for public utilities should change, which requires legislative changes.
	J. Engagement opportunities with the PUC should be compensated.
	K. More technical capacity is needed at the PUC and the utilities.

Priorities	Actions (cont'd)
Increase and Sustain Funding	L. Funding for energy efficiency (with a focus on heating and transportation electrification) and renewable energy should be accessible to more people and sustainable over time.
	M. More financial support should be available for local energy committees and sustainability coordinators.
	N. The cost drivers for the grid and how these cost drivers affect planning needs to be better understood.
	O. Legislation should address inclusion of equity and social cost of carbon in PUC benefit-cost analysis.
	P. There should be a clear difference between the costs associated with carbon and non-carbon choices.
	Q. The sale of renewable energy credits to corporations can increase investment opportunities in clean energy.
Improve Coordination	R. A comprehensive strategy should be developed to synthesize goals and tactics and assign roles and responsibilities.
	S. An office should be tasked with coordinating and disseminating updates across all state agencies/departments.
	T. A centralized repository should be developed to provide updates.
	U. There should be more cohesion around energy facility siting.

### 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 Public Utility Commission (PUC) take to address the actions equitably?
2. Please select a few actions from the table. How can stakeholders (outside of the PUC) be empowered to meaningfully engage and lead on these actions?

## CLIMATE GOALS & PROGRESS

Maine has a legally binding goal to reduce emissions by 45 percent below the baseline by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050. As of 2017, Maine achieved a reduction of 18 percent. The state also has strong Renewable Portfolio Standards, an energy storage requirement, and energy efficiency savings targets of just over 2 percent of annual sales.

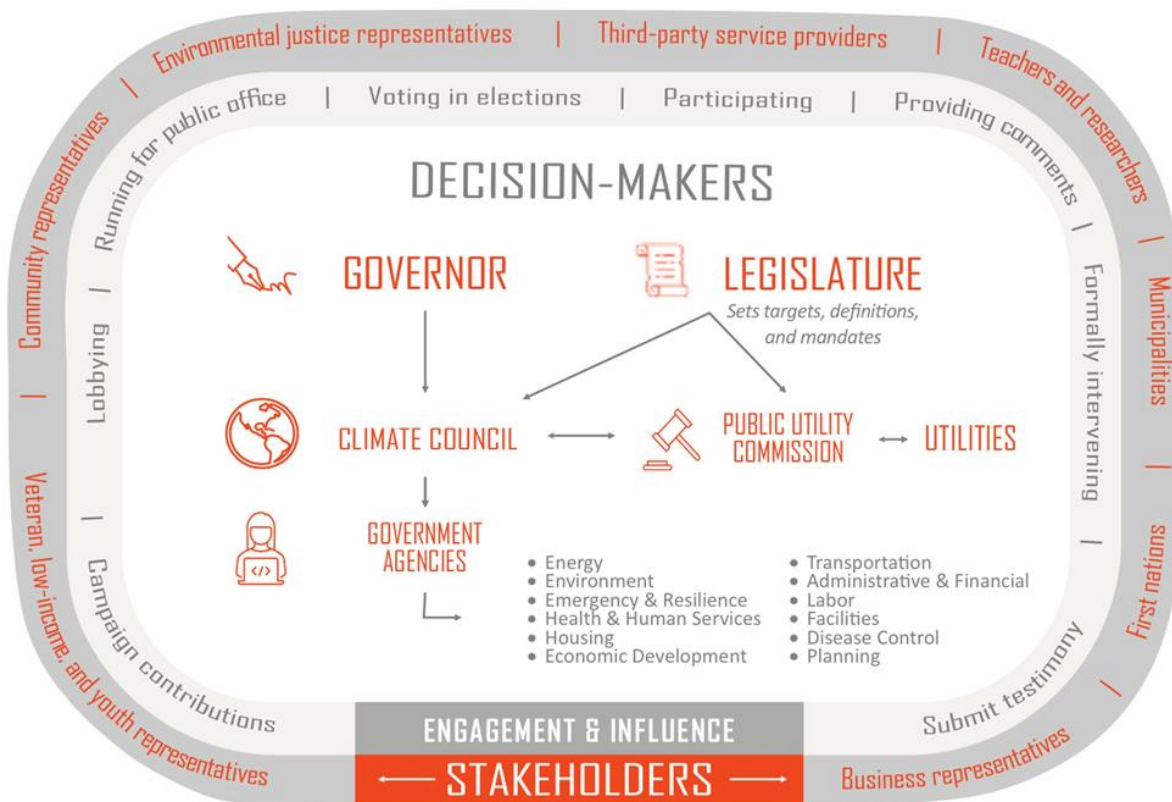
**Table 1: New England State Climate Goals and Achievements**

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.