

March 24, 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

8:30-9:00	Sign-In, Coffee & Snacks
9:00-9:10	Welcome & Logistics
9:10-9:30	Briefing on Maine Climate Goals, Progress, Best Practices, and Barriers
9:30-10:20	Breakout Session #1: Idea Brainstorming
10:20-10:30	Break
10:30-11:15	Breakout Session #2: Force Field Analysis & Idea Prioritization
11:15-11:45	Wrap Up & Next Steps

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In addition to what is already underway, what else can be done to meet Maine's climate goals? How does equity fit in with these ideas?
2. What policies and programs need to be in place to support the development of equitable utility regulation and climate action in Maine?
3. What non-climate effects of climate action do the people of Maine care about?

CLIMATE GOALS

Maine Climate Goals		
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goals	Baseline	1990
	By 2030	45% (act. 18% in 2017)
	By 2050	80%
Renewable Portfolio Standards		80% (by 2030) 100% (by 2050)
Energy Efficiency Savings Targets (% of Total Sales)		2.3% (2020-2022)
Energy Storage Requirements		300 MW (by 2025) 400 MW (by 2030)

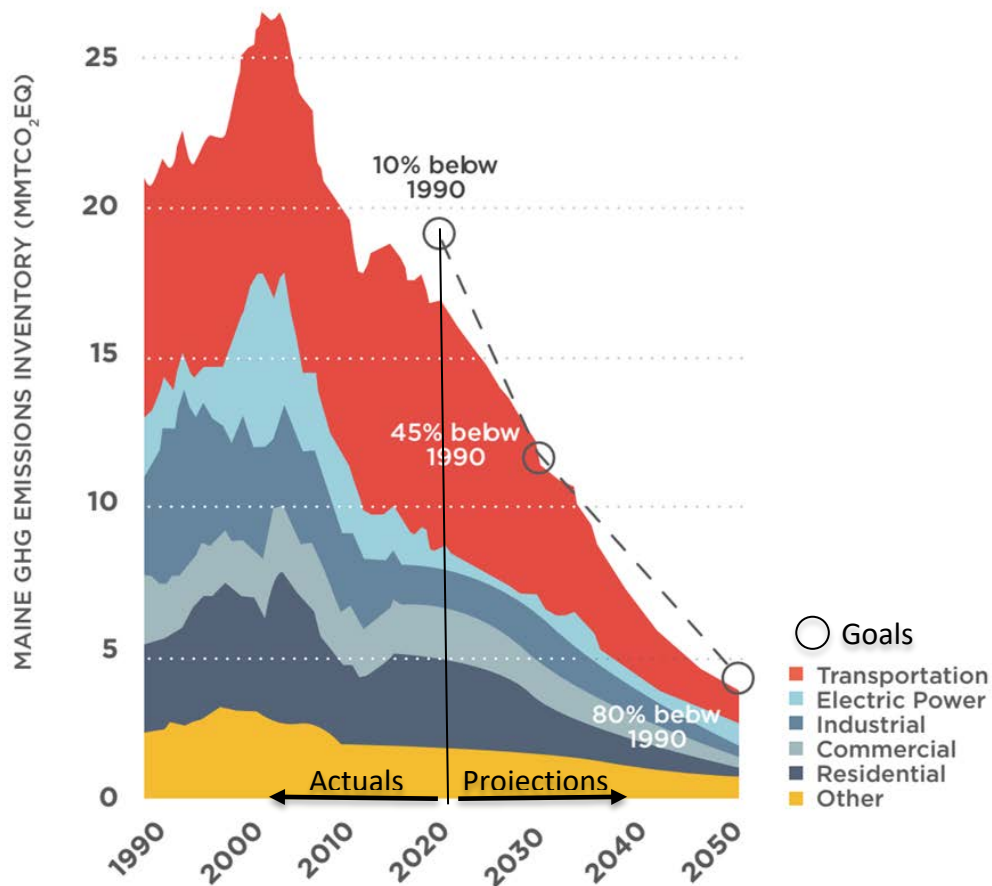
Data Source: Maine Climate Council. 2020. Maine Won't Wait, A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action. Available at: https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov/future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf

PROGRESS

Maine met the 2020 greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal early but has a ways to go to reach the 2030 goal.

- In 2020, 79 percent of Maine's electricity net generation came from renewable energy. Hydroelectric power provided the largest share at 34 percent and wind provided 24 percent. Maine ranks sixth in the nation in the share of its electricity generated from wind.
- A particular challenge for Maine is that three-fifths of Maine's households use fuel oil as their primary energy source for home heating, a larger share than any other state.

Figure 1: Maine Economy-Wide Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Source



Source: Maine Climate Council. 2020. *Maine Won't Wait, A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action*. Available at: https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov/future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf.

Notes: (1) Industrial/Commercial/Residential includes space and water heating building energy consumption. (2) Other includes emissions from industrial processes, agriculture, waste, and non-CO2 emissions from energy.

BEST PRACTICES

- Establishment of economy-wide, mandatory goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and creation of supporting policies such as renewable energy standards, energy efficiency targets, and energy storage requirements to reach the goals.
- Formation of a Climate Council to chart a course to meet the state’s greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.
- PUC mandate to consider the greenhouse gas emission reduction goals.
- Explicit obligation of the PUC to consider energy burdens and environmental impacts on environmental justice communities.

BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

- Legislative action on climate is very recent and the next steps have yet to be defined. The new PUC mandate to consider greenhouse gas emission reduction goals and equity has not been demonstrated.
- Maine faces obstacles in meeting its climate goals including the presence of lobbying and legislative challenges, such as campaign contributions and a lack of technical support for decision-makers.
- Public awareness of PUC proceedings is limited, attendance is sparse, and proceeding topics and outcomes are not reported by the media. Community organizations do not have the capacity to be involved in PUC proceedings.
- Utilities have more power and influence than other stakeholders.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

1. 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>
2. Maine Won’t Wait: A Four-Year Plan for Climate Action. (2020). Available at: https://www.maine.gov/future/sites/maine.gov.future/files/inline-files/MaineWontWait_December2020.pdf
3. Renew New England Alliance. Maine Policy and Program Review. (2020). Available at: https://drive.google.com/file/d/1765LAqvF2b4WZs_ZhXrIAMMs7_sbzugM/view?usp=sharing