

June 23, 2022 New Hampshire 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 New Hampshire Climate Goals, Progress, Best Practices, and Barriers
9:30-10:20	Breakout Session #1: Idea Brainstorming
10:20-10:30	Break
10:30-11:20	Breakout Session #2: Force Field Analysis and Idea Prioritization
11:20-11:50	Wrap Up and Next Steps

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In addition to what is already underway, what else can be done to meet New Hampshire’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 New Hampshire?

CLIMATE GOALS & PROGRESS

New Hampshire does not have a legally binding goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. However, the state is part of the New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers (NEG-ECP) through which the state agreed to a nonbinding reduction goal of at least 35 to 45 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. In 2017, statewide greenhouse gas emissions were down 5 percent.¹ The state established some supportive policies such as renewable portfolio standards and energy efficiency savings targets, though they are less stringent than other New England states.

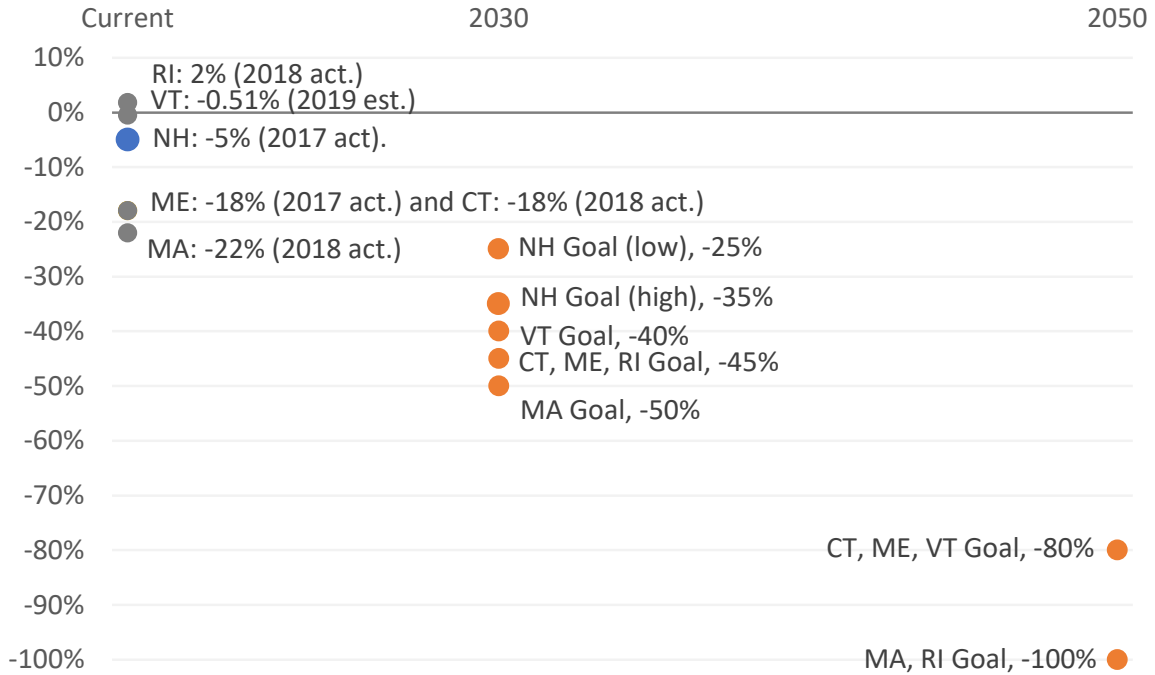
Table 1: New England State Climate Goals and Achievements

Climate Goals		CT	ME	MA	NH	RI	VT
Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Goals	Baseline	2001	1990	1990		1990	1990
	By 2030	45% (18%, 2018 act.)	45% (18%, 2017 act.)	50% (22%, 2018 act.)	None (Non-binding goal of at least 25-35% by 2030)	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)	39% (by 2035)	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 5/2/2022.

¹ NH Department of Environmental Services. (2017). Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. Available at: <https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/greenhouse-gas>

Figure 1: New Hampshire Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions, Compared to Other States and Goals



Source: New Hampshire data from NH Department of Environmental Services. (2017). Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. Available at: <https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/greenhouse-gas>

NEW HAMPSHIRE BEST PRACTICES

- New Hampshire has set a non-binding greenhouse gas emissions reduction target and has some supportive policies such as renewable energy standards and energy efficiency programs. In 2008, the NHPUC staff created a sustainable energy division, which has become increasingly effective at addressing renewable energy issues.
- The state offers financial compensation for stakeholder participation in PUC proceedings.

NEW HAMPSHIRE BARRIERS & CHALLENGES

- New Hampshire has not set legally binding goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and its non-binding goal is not as stringent as other New England states. Policies such as renewable energy standards and energy efficiency targets are likely not stringent enough to meet the non-binding goals.
- The volatile political climate in New Hampshire makes it challenging for the New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission (NHPUC) to adopt a consistent and long-term view on clean energy and environmental policy. Over the past 13 years, the state has frequently oscillated between Republican and Democrat majorities in the legislature. This volatility is exacerbated by the fact that New Hampshire is one of just two states with two-year rather than four-year gubernatorial terms.
- NHPUC's suspension of the Grid Modernization Stakeholder Group undermined and stalled the prospects for grid modernization in New Hampshire.
- Historically, New Hampshire has received the lowest score among all New England states on energy efficiency efforts. In recent years, the state began steadily improving its position due to the NHPUC-approved development of energy efficiency programs. However, in a radical departure from the state's prior stance on energy efficiency, the NHPUC issued an order in November 2021 that cut budgets for utility energy efficiency programs nearly in half by 2023 compared to 2020 levels.
- In August 2021, legislators passed Senate Bill 86 prohibiting any type of restriction on new natural gas hookups.
- The issues under the NHPUC's purview are increasingly interconnected with climate. However, the NHPUC has neither the mandate to act on climate nor any real authority to implement climate mandates. As a result, the NHPUC has proven inconsistent in its framing of environmental responsibilities, hesitant in its regulation of environmental matters, and disinclined to advance and adopt policies without explicit direction from the legislature. In the absence of an assignment of climate responsibility from the legislature, the NHPUC seems unwilling to expand its role beyond that of an economic regulator.
- New Hampshire does not have an official definition of environmental justice or any related policies or laws.
- New Hampshire may also experience issues mentioned in other states such as: lobbying and legislative challenges, a lack of technical support for decision-makers, public awareness and participation in Public Utility Commission proceedings and utility power and influence.

SOURCES AND 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. NH Department of Environmental Services. (2017). Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory. Available at: <https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/greenhouse-gas>.
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6. 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.
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8. RI Department of Environmental Management. (2022). Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory QuickFacts. Available at: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/air/ghg-emissions-inventory.php>.
9. American Council for an Energy Efficiency Economy. August 2020. Energy Efficiency Resource Standards. Available at: <http://www.database.aceee.org/state/energy-efficiency-resource-standards>
10. The State of Connecticut. June 16, 2021. An Act Concerning Energy Storage. Available at: <http://www.cga.ct.gov/2021/ACT/PA/PDF/2021PA-00053-R00SB-00952-PA.PDF>
11. The State of Maine Governor's Energy Office. June 2021. Energy Storage. Available at: <http://www.maine.gov/energy/initiatives/renewable-energy/energy-storage>.
12. Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources. December 12, 2018. Massachusetts Comprehensive Energy Plan. Available at: <http://www.merrimack.edu/live/files/3300-massachusetts-comprehensive-energy-plan-2018pdf>.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Acronym	Name	Definition
DER	Distributed Energy Resource	Technology for generating and managing electricity at the place of consumption
DR	Demand Response	Reducing energy consumption on the consumer side during peak demand
DSM	Demand-Side Management	Managing demand for energy on the consumer side to reduce overall consumption
DSP	Distribution System Planning	Planning for the incorporation of DERs into the grid, oftentimes by improving grid flexibility
FERC	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.
FIT	Feed-In Tariff	A policy guaranteeing a price for each unit of renewable energy generated
ISO	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)
PIM	Performance Incentive Mechanism	A policy that encourages utility performance in areas such as reliability, safety, customer service, and energy efficiency
PTC	Production Tax Credit	Federal tax credit that incentivizes renewable generation
REC	Renewable Energy Certificate	Certificate representing renewable energy generation that utilities must purchase to fulfill RPS requirements
RGGI	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
RPS	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>
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