
Opportunities for Climate Action by Regulatory Agencies:

Notes from the New Hampshire Stakeholder Workshop

OVERVIEW

On June 23, 2022 representatives from the Brown University Climate and Development Lab, Synapse Energy Economics, and Climable.org convened a stakeholder workshop at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center in Concord, New Hampshire. This New Hampshire workshop was the fourth of 12 that will be conducted around New England in 2022. The purpose of the workshop was to crowdsource insights and discuss ideas from stakeholders in New Hampshire—especially those representing environmental justice communities—regarding the climate actions of the utilities, the regulatory structures that the New Hampshire Public Utility Commission has in place to mitigate climate change, and the opportunities and challenges for implementing lasting and equitable climate and energy solutions.

The insights from each workshop are summarized, distributed to all participants, and posted publicly here: <https://climable.org/brown>. In early 2023, a summary report will present a variety of options that could be pursued to meet climate goals based upon the workshops.

We are incredibly grateful to those who were able to attend and appreciate all the ideas and feedback we received. The following notes are from the New Hampshire workshop and describe key themes that include attracting market-based solutions, combatting misinformation, and broadening networks and messaging.

ATTRACT MARKET-BASED SOLUTIONS

- Market-based solutions may be better received than policy solutions in New Hampshire, so climate action should focus on market drivers and solutions.
- New Hampshire's novel data platform effort provides an opportunity for the state to encourage the market by providing greater transparency and accessibility.

- Third party ownership may be preferable to utility ownership given radical individualism and lack of trust of institutions in the state. Incentives for local residents and businesses may be more palatable than incentives for utilities and their shareholders.
- Additional effort is needed around equity as market-based solutions will not address equity on their own.

COMBAT MISINFORMATION

- The vast number of representatives in New Hampshire and high turnover of these representatives make education challenging. More qualified and knowledgeable personnel should be appointed to leadership positions, including utility commissions.
- School curriculum should include climate science alongside natural and earth sciences. New climate curriculum can also be used in trainings for legislators and staff.
- Storytelling can be used to dispel fears and expose untruths from outside actors using outside money to produce slick marketing materials.
- New Hampshire has great local investigative reporting, great local organizations, and great educational resources. Grassroots organizations should leverage these assets as well as the strong legal protections stemming from the strong affinity for independence in the state. Legal action should be used to discourage dishonorable individuals and institutions from continuing unjust practices in the state.

BROADEN NETWORKS AND MESSAGING

- A lack of bipartisanship and political instability restrict top-down action at the state level. Action is more likely to occur at the local level, potentially through regional planning commissions.
- New alliances need to be forged with organizations that have not previously been involved with the clean energy transition, such as small businesses and non-profit organizations.
- New Hampshire leaders are put off by words like climate change, equity, and subsidy. Alternate terminology is needed to reach leaders and expand networks of supporters in the state.
- Climate solutions need to be reframed to appeal to individuals' needs and interests. For example, climate action can be repositioned as an improvement to the economy, workforce, resilience, independence, self-sufficiency, and housing affordability.
- Distributed energy resources can be positioned to appeal to the preference for decentralization, independence, and small government.