

Gas Transition Subgroup Meeting Notes

Meeting Details:

- 6/23/22, 11:00-12:30

Council Member Participants:

- Rory Christian
- Mario Cilento
- Donna DeCarolus
- Gavin Donahue
- Dennis Elsenbeck
- Doreen Harris
- Bob Howarth
- Roberta Reardon
- Raya Salter
- Paul Shepson

Meeting Agenda/Topics Covered:

- Introduction of Mario Cilento, President of NYS AFL-CIO, appointed to Climate Action Council in May 2022
- Review of Workplan
 - Some subgroup members remain concerned that the topics to address are too siloed and recommend integrating gas and electric system planning discussions. Other subgroup members disagree and recommend a narrower focus on gas system issues.
 - Subgroup members remain divided over whether the workplan should refer to the “repurposing” or “decommissioning” of gas system infrastructure.
 - **Action Item:** Invitations will be extended to Utility Consultation Group for July 6 meeting and to Climate Justice Working Group for August 6.
 - **Action Item:** All groups and individuals invited to consult or present will be reminded in advance of CLCPA statutory requirements regarding disadvantaged communities.
- Review of Gas System Transition Subgroup Purpose and Framework Key Considerations
 - Subgroup reviewed key considerations for proposed framework document and suggested edits and refinements.
 - Key consideration: Meet GHG Emission Reduction Targets
 - Framework should emphasize shorter-term strategies to meet 2030 target, in addition to 2050 goals.
 - Discussed inserting mention of alternative fuels and thermal loops under this heading.
 - Key consideration: Affordability
 - Added language regarding mitigating impacts on customers remaining on gas system.

- Discussed need for more detailed analysis of costs of different mitigation strategies and the extent to which these costs are embedded in Integration Analysis.
- Key consideration: Safety and Reliability
 - Discussed including a need to develop safety regulations for alternative fuels within gas infrastructure to ensure use of other fuels doesn't increase leakage rates or related greenhouse gas emissions, as well as to ensure safety of the distribution system is maintained.
 - One subgroup member proposed changing language suggesting that investments in traditional gas infrastructure "may" be necessary to indicate that they "will" be necessary.
- Key consideration: Role of Alternative Fuels and Technologies in Gas System Planning
 - Discussed adopting a broad vs. narrow definition of "hard to electrify," especially in relation to industrial processes, and including gas heat pumps as example of alternative technology.
 - Debated whether this category falls within the scope of this subgroup.
 - Discussed the need to recognize New York has supply and capacity constraints, including on the electric grid that will require significant investment to upgrade, and that non-wires alternatives such as district thermal energy systems and microgrids may play a key role in transitioning to cleaner heating alternatives.
- Key consideration: Coordination with Electric System Expansion
 - Subgroup members agreed that framework should strive to outline a more detailed timeline for the transition and some regional granularity.
- Key Consideration: Just Transition
 - One subgroup member objected to language referring to "closure of fossil gas utilities."
 - Emphasized importance of a clear and deliberate timeline for workforce transition, as well as a focus on workforce development efforts to ensure the workforce is trained to meet the demands and job opportunities of the clean energy industry.
- Key consideration: Equity
 - Concern raised that "cumulative impacts" and "disproportionate burden" should be more thoughtfully considered.
- Key consideration: Communications Strategy and Customer Plan
 - Framework will be updated to include communications as a key consideration.
 - Subgroup members emphasized communication of savings associated with clean energy transition and workforce implications.
- **Action Item:** Framework will be updated to reflect priority of CLCPA statutory requirements regarding disadvantaged communities in relation to each key consideration.