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[April 1, 2021](#)

[Just Transition Working Group Update](#)

**March 23, 2021**

***By Jeff Jones***

The goal of this meeting was to finalize recommendations the JTWG will be presenting to the Climate Action Council (CAC) at its April 12th meeting. The working group focused on its mandated workforce training recommendations and business impacts identified by two subgroups. The working group also heard a presentation on the future of fossil fuel power plants across the country, including a projected timeline for their decommissioning, by Prof. Emily Grubert of George Tech. Her report was followed by a New York State power plant inventory with a focus on site reuse. The meeting ended with a brief update on the on-going NYSERDA Jobs Study.

The meeting began, however, with an exciting update by NYSERDA Acting President Doreen Harris on the US Dept. of Treasury's announcement earlier in the week that the authority had received the nation's first award under the new federal Social Impact Partnerships to Pay for Results Act. The grant will provide up to \$7.1 million in potential payments to support clean energy career pathway training and placement services to unemployed and low-wage workers and an additional \$1.1 million to evaluate training effectiveness. The award, Harris noted, is a sign of a growing clean energy partnership with the Biden Administration.

As part of its mandate, the JTWG is advising the CAC on relevant opportunities for workforce development and training. These range from identifying opportunities such as job fairs, to more advanced support where facility closures are known ahead of time. One emerging recommendation is to survey workers in existing facilities to determine career status, future interests and timing needs. Training initiatives were evaluated in several categories including targeted incentives for business and labor with an emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion for those seeking careers in the clean energy economy.

Current examples of sectors approached by NYSERDA for the clean energy economy include state workers at the Office of General Services and Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation who have received solar and on-line heat pump training.

Reporting on industry impacts in New York relies on federal data for mining and manufacturing, with little available for the data processing jobs. There are about 2000 jobs in New York in traditional power plants with about 33,000 currently in all aspects of the utility industry. Mining in New York is mostly related to rock quarrying,

Reporting for the Business Impact subgroup, Kara Allen of NYSERDA discussed issues relating to minimizing leakage, that is, the danger of carbon emitters simply moving out of state rather than being reduced as a result of CLCPA implementation. Studies indicate the problem will be less than feared, with leakage in the range of only 5 to 10%. The subgroup focused on the need to provide incentives to industries to become early adopters of carbon reduction strategies, including promotion of low-carbon products.

Emily Grubert, an Assistant Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering at Georgia Tech presented an interactive website that catalogues all power plants in the country demonstrating their expected lifespan. The website can be viewed at: [Emilygrubert.org/energy-transition](http://Emilygrubert.org/energy-transition). This information will help the working group achieve its CLCPA mandate to identify plants in New York that could be closed as well as identifying alternative uses for the sites.

Grubert reported that before 2035, more than 73% of current national power plants will pass their lifespan expectation. The longer plants are there, the less value they have as stranded assets. Communities, Gruber noted, do better the more advance warning they have. Mines, for example, are notorious for not planning ahead, sometimes with only two weeks notice before closing.

Despite the upcoming deadline for reporting to the CAC, the jobs study team will continue to update its report through the calendar year. Working group co-chairs also have the ability to reconvene the panel as necessary in response to questions from the Council.