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[August 9, 2021](#)

[Summaries of the CAC, Advisory Panel and Working Group Meetings](#)

Just Transition Working Group – Thursday, August 5, 2021

By: Anastasia Gordon

The Just Transition Working Group (JTWG) met on August 5 to hear an update on the progress of the jobs study, which will assess the impacts of the transition to clean energy economy on NY's workforce. NYSERDA's President and JTWG co-chair also updated the working group on the recently launched \$5 million [just transition site reuse planning program](#). Sarah Crowell (NY Department of State) then gave an overview of the [Brownfields Opportunity Area Program](#) while state staff highlighted a number of state workforce development initiatives. The JTWG will reconvene in late October.

After opening remarks from Chair Roberta Reardon (NYS Department of Labor) and JTWG member updates, the meeting kicked off with NYSERDA's President and JTWG co-chair also updated the working group on the recently launched \$5 million [just transition site reuse planning program](#). This builds upon work done to develop a [power plant inventory](#), which lists fossil fuel plants that may be closed due the transition, as required by the climate law. Through this program, local governments can access funding and technical planning support services to navigate power plant retirement and site reuse opportunities. An online site reuse toolkit will also be developed as a resource to help other communities do the same.

Next, the Director of Planning, Development & Community Infrastructure, Sarah Crowell then gave an overview of the [Brownfields Opportunity Area \(BOA\) Program](#). The program is designed to empower communities to plan for future development of contaminated sites. To date 61 areas across NYS have been designated as BOAs. Designation unlocks access to resources and benefits to advance a local community's vision/plan to revitalize and redevelop brownfields. These include pre-development and site assessment grants and priority and preference for future state grants while developers/investors get a 'BOA bump-up' brownfield remediation tax credits. State staff is currently working on a guidebook with instructions and best practices to help communities fast track BOA designation process.

This was followed by an update from Josh Williams of the BW Research Partnership, the consultants helping the JTWG conduct the jobs study. Currently, the team is in the process of producing employment model outputs based on scenarios from the

integration analysis of the Climate Action Council advisory [panels' mitigation recommendations](#). As next steps, workforce implications associated with these model outputs, particularly for the energy, building, transportation, industrial, waste and agricultural sectors will be examined. Williams also went over preliminary results using E3's decarbonization pathways scenarios, among other initial model inputs. The final report is expected by December 2021.

JTWG members asked questions concerning the impacts of prevailing wages vs unionized rates as the consultant team considers labor standards in their modeling. Randy Wolken (Manufacturers Association of Central New York and Manufacturers Alliance) also suggested looking at the whole economy rather than by sector noting that in failing to do so, we may not get a complete picture of impacts from policy approaches. In addition, Lara Skinner (Cornell University) recommended modelling workforce implications of manufacturing components in America for the offshore wind sector. In response to using 2019 as a base year in initial modelling, JTWG members also pointed out the shortfalls of employment data collection because of its inability to capture temporary and undocumented workers. While the team acknowledges this issue, Williams reiterated that by connecting activities to costs, this should be reasonably reflective of where employment should be.

Towards the end of the meeting, state staff highlighted several state and federal workforce development initiatives and funding opportunities while President Harris went over several notable legislative updates from the NYS budget. JTWG members expressed the desire to dive deeper into these updates in a subsequent meeting. Over the coming months, the JTWG will focus on finalizing the jobs study and overall workforce recommendations to be presented to the Climate Action Council. The next meeting of the JTWG will be in late October. Materials from this meeting can be found [here](#).

Climate Action Council– Monday, August 2, 2021

By: Anastasia Gordon

NYSERDA held a virtual reliability planning session for members of the Climate Action Council (CAC) on August 2. As the name implies, the purpose of this session was to engage experts on electricity reliability planning considerations as the CAC works to developing the scoping plan to implement NY's climate law, the Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA). These speakers included representatives of the NYS Reliability Council, NYISO, Utility Consultation Group, NYSDPS, Vote Solar, and the NY Department of State Utility Intervention Unit. Topics discussed included the reliability challenges in meeting the CLCPA requirements, planning, and maintaining reliability for a grid in transition, and prioritizing renewables, equity, and consumer protection.

The first panel to present comprised of members of the NYS Reliability Council, which included Mayer Sasson, Stephen Whitley, and Roger Clayton. The panel had one key message for the CAC: with the intermittency of renewables and the electrification of the economy, substantial clean energy and dispatchable resources (some of which are yet to be developed technology), over and above the current capacity of existing fossil fuel resources will be needed to maintain reliability in the transition to meeting the CLCPA requirements. The CLCPA requires renewable energy to account for 70% of NY's electricity by 2030 and 100% zero-emissions electricity by 2040.

NYISO's Zach Smith, who spoke about planning for a grid in transition, further noted that these significant dispatchable, emissions-free resources should be flexible enough to meet rapid, steep ramping needs. Moreover, eliminating fossil fuels resources, which the current system is heavily dependent on to maintain reliability, will require investment in new and replacement infrastructure. Transmission investment will also be necessary to efficiently deliver renewable power to New Yorkers, especially from upstate to downstate NY. Reports and educational materials on system planning can be found on the NYISO's [website](#).

Members of the utility consultation group had the opportunity share their viewpoints on maintaining reliability during the NY clean energy transition. The group is a consortium of NY's gas and electric utilities tasked with providing expertise and perspective to the CAC and its advisory panels. They reiterated that the transition must be orderly and cost effective and underpinned by reliability. In addition, the group emphasized that collaboration with stakeholders is critical to meeting customer needs and asked the CAC to consider all options to reach the CLCPA targets including low carbon solutions.

Tammy Mitchell then gave an overview of the PSC and DPS' oversight of reliability planning including transmission planning efforts aimed towards maintaining system reliability and achieving the CLCPA goals. Stephan Roundtree of Vote Solar pointed out that while reliability is paramount, repowering or perpetuating fossil fuel generation is not necessary to maintain it. He noted that the reliability needs of tomorrow can be met by adding demand flexibility, efficiency and distributed resources including rooftop solar and storage, EVs and microgrids. Lastly, Roundtree emphasized aggressive adoption of a renewables-based grid is a lawful pathway to achieving NY's climate law's decarbonization and equity mandates. The last speaker, Erin Hogan from the NY Department of State Utility Intervention Unit also highlighted the need to contain costs and adapt to issues of reliability as NY transitions to a clean energy economy.

Meeting materials from the reliability planning speaker session can be found on the [Events section](#) of the NY Climate Law [website](#).