Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council (CEEJAC)
Energy & Technology Subcommittee Meeting Agenda and Notes

Meeting Recording:
ctvideo.ct.gov/deep/CEEJAC_Energy_Meeting-Jul_16_2025.mp4

Wednesday, July 16, 2025
3:00-4:30 pm

Description
Join the Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council's Energy & Technology Subcommittee to learn about New England's energy grid. ISO-NE is a nonprofit responsible for keeping the region's electricity reliable and flowing. We'll be learning from ISO-NE's staff about how they operate and the role they play in CT's and the region's energy system. So if you've ever heard of ISO-NE or FERC or maybe you've just wondered what a "grid" has to do with your utility bill…then come join us!

Meeting Agenda

Welcome *Jayson Velazquez, Chair of Energy & Technology*	3:00 – 3:10 pm *10 mins*
Presentation from ISO New England 1. *What is a grid?* 2. *What does ISO New England do?* 3. *How does CT's energy fit within a regional energy system?* 4. *How can you be involved? Consumer Liaison Group* **Discussion and Q&A**	3:10 – 4:00 pm *30 mins* *20 mins*
Updates & Announcements	4:00 – 4:10 pm *10 mins*

Notes: ISO New England Overview
Ruben Flores-Marzan – Policy Advisor for Environmental & Community Affairs
Eric Johnson – Executive Director for External Affairs New England

- ISO New England keeps power running
- Early 1990's - Congress wanted to make sure that there was "open access" for national grid

- 1997 ISO New England was formed in response to federal policy, which is implemented by FERC
- ISO = Independent System Operator (Independent and Impartial)
    - Customers benefit from the competition for electricity supply and also not beholden to any power to make determinations
- There are 3 critical roles that ISO-NE plays:
    - Operate the grid – directing the flow of electricity
    - Administer the market – design, run and oversee the markets where wholesale electricity is bought
    - Planning the Power System – studying and analyzing to make sure that New England's electricity needs will be met over the next 10 years
- We don't handle retail electricity or own the power grid infrastructure. ISO does not have control over siting decisions.
- New England is part of "Eastern Interconnection" one of four large power grids; there are 9 ISO's in the US

Questions

- **Is Energy a Right?**
    - We have to manage a grid that is reliable and at a competitive right for folks. We are pursuing our mandate through those three critical roles.
- **How and whether EJ has a role in the determination of how ISO-NE operates? Does ISO take into account the siting of power plants and what facilities operate?**
    - ISO does not do siting – I do add capacity around considerations for Environmental Justice Communities. I do training to our individual units to talk about what that means and what variables have to be considered for each New England state.
    - Created Ruben's role to help build relationships with states and communities to engage in conversations about environmental justice. But when we think about selecting resources or what runs on a day to day basis – we don't have the ability to say that we are going to pick one resource over another; RGGI allows states to make this decision directly. In NE, renewable resources (wind, solar) are the first resources that get dispatched because they don't have fuel cost to be used.
    - State policy makers or DEEP/agencies could make priorities or determine which facilities should not be used. If state said that they want to put a price on carbon emissions – that affects the region. That would constrain fossil resources and promote lower emitting resources.
- **What is imported Energy?**
    - That is mostly Hydropower from Canada; we can also export to those regions, hyrdo-Quebec.
- **Can you talk about brownouts and blackouts? And How does the grid operate during large and intense storms?**

    - Black outs can happen at 2 levels – losing power during a storm where a powerline is knocked down. ISO wouldn't see that in a small isolated area. Large storms, like Super Storm Sandy, where there is a region-wide event; ISO sees that because the demand on the grid is impacted.
    - If we don't have enough power for the region, we could order utilities to disconnect some communities.
    - Brownouts – seeing lights dim in a community or rolling outages; happens at the distribution system.
- **For instance, if an area was impacted by smoke from Western or Canadian fires, could the dispatch be designed to not buy power from gas or oil plants in the area?**
    - Not sure ISO could do that
- **Could you discuss who ISO NE is involved with in planning grid expansion and data centers?**
    - We don't see a lot of data centers happening on bulk transition system. We see individual projects connecting to electric distribution system in CT and MA. They would have to plan for the distribution system. Other parts of the nation we see demand for data centers – like in Texas. Dynamics for this would come from local municipal level.
- **Why are energy prices so high in New England?**
    - Electricity prices are high because we use a lot of electricity in the winter. We see constraints coming into New England. The input price constrains your electricity cost. We are pretty far from the source of fuels, so we have to pay for the transportation costs. Fuel costs are one of the biggest drivers. Wholesale prices are really high right now – if customers could conserve when the grid was stressed, we could reduce costs. We have to meet the demand.
- **Is there an alert system about grid usage?**
    - Utilities would probably run a program like that – utilities send alerts to conserve their usage; most of that would come from your local utility company.
- **Does our power go to Long Island?**
    - New England's power demand today (highest) and we send 3 MW to Long Island – that is coming off the New England Grid through Cross Sound Cable.
- Resources are coming on slower than demand, but most of the queue will be wind, battery, and solar.
- **Data Resources:**
    - A resource for those who might be interested in comparing data across ISOs in the nation: https://www.gridstatus.io/live/isone
    - Live data on grid demand: https://www.iso-ne.com/isoexpress/

State Laws Target Deep Reductions in CO_2 Emissions and Increases in Renewable and Clean Energy

≥80% by 2050	Five states mandate greenhouse gas reductions economy wide: MA, CT, ME, RI, and VT (mostly below 1990 levels)
Net-Zero by 2050 80% by 2050	MA emissions requirement MA clean energy standard
100% by 2035	VT renewable energy requirement
100% by 2050 Carbon-Neutral by 2045	ME renewable energy goal ME emissions requirement
100% by 2040	CT zero-carbon electricity requirement
100% by 2033	RI renewable energy requirement