



**Connecticut Equity and Environmental Justice Advisory Council
(CEEJAC) Energy & Technology Subcommittee
Meeting Minutes
Wed, March 19, 2025; 3:00-4:30pm**

Link to Meeting Recording:

https://ctdeep.zoom.us/rec/share/6kyu71G0pD2gskNq_TBgtjh3EENczukV_YdlcoUfbBIJHYb2R_lThH460DJgWhEu.nx74Vs4Y3ssdU4Ff

Disclaimer: Please note this is not a word for word translation

I. Welcome

II. Presentation by Office of Consumer Counsel on Public Benefits Charge

Claire Coleman, CT Consumer Counsel and Tom Wiehl, OCC Legal and Regulatory Director

- a. Presentation will cover the role of OCC, public benefits cost, and energy bills
- b. OCC has about 20 employees with a mix of lawyers, economists, accountants, legislative specialists and support staff; and just hired an engineer to help with in-house expertise
- c. Their focus is anything related to utility customers, advocating for consumers in PURA dockets. Our mission is challenging because there are so many components to good utilities.
- d. OCC does advocacy for consumers in PURA dockets, appellate litigation, DEEP Processes (RFP's, Planning documents).
- e. In New England, our energy is pooled and is managed by ISO-NE and there are committees that evaluate transmission. Coordinate with other states, legislative advocacy.
- f. PURA redesigned electric bills a few years ago:
 - i. Supply – actual cost of energy; purchased through utility or energy supplier
 - 1. BFMCC = administrative costs for your services charge
 - ii. Transmission = cost of high voltage interstate delivery from supply source to the grid; regulated by FERC, ISO-NE
 - iii. Local Delivery = costs associated with distribution grid (fixed charge, distribution rate)
 - iv. Public Benefits = NBFMCC and Combined Public Benefits Charge
 - 1. This used to be a part of the “delivery” part of the bill
 - 2. NBFMCC includes a lot of costs that are not federally mandated. Social policy cost to reduce congestion on the grid are recovered here. Between 3-5 cents/kwh; \$23-33/month
- g. **Combined Public Benefits Charge is made of 3 things**
 - i. Systems Benefits Charge – affordability programs; low income discount rate (new; depending on level of income you can get a

discount; cost of discount has to be collected to pay the utilities), funding for Operation Fuel and Energize CT Heating Loan Program

- ii. Hardship uncollectible debt is recovered = fixed amount of money that Eversource can recover every year and they have a right to collect that amount. There is no way to set rates to ensure that Eversource can recover all this money because it depends on the volume of electric usage. They won't recover it if people can't pay their bills.
- iii. C&LM Charge "CAM" - regulated energy efficiency programs; 75% of total funding for these energy efficiency programs. (ie. Energy audits to increase efficiency of your home; partially funded by CAM; work of energy efficiency board passed by the board under leadership of DEEP)
- iv. Renewable Charge – revenue for Green Bank for affordability programs; about 70 cents/month

III. Questions & Answers

Sarah Huang: What is grid congestion?

Tom: Grid Congestion = notion that there is only so much electricity that can flow through the grid; if people want more electricity than grid can serve then it might cause blackouts. Primary focus for companies is to build towards the peak demand to avoid grid congestion. Needing to build the grid to meet that demand. You want to have steady base line energy; want to avoid the big jumps in demand – goal is efficiency.

Sarah Huang: What is Under-Recovery charge?

Tom: Companies are trying to get revenue to cover costs incurred; can ask PURA to up the cost to cover last year's expenses. If company thinks the cost will be \$1.2 million and PURA sets it; then the utility is short; company gets that under-recovery paid back and with interest. Want to reduce under-recovery. So next year rates will cover the back costs and existing costs.

Dr. Mitchell: You started talking about alternative suppliers of energy; do they all have to meet a certain percentage of renewable energy? Are there suppliers that don't meet that level?

Claire: any supplier that participates has to meet the renewable portfolio set by state standards. And efforts to make sure that that money is given back to rate payers.

Dr. Mitchell: how do you respond to "why am i paying other people's bills"? Are Hartford residents paying for bills for rural and suburban area households?

Claire: It's important to have an accurate perspective of who is imposing costs and paying for those costs. We are looking for equitable rate allocation. What class of ratepayers and imposing what costs on the grid. Class rates = residential, commercial/industrial - broken down by time of use. Only one rate class that is agnostic to income or density.

Dr. Mitchell: Electric grid provides electricity to all of New England. CT produces more power than other states, proportionally. Peaker plants can be located in high asthma, EJ communities. Can you talk about why this is being done?

Claire: History of gas Peaker plants pre-dates us, but we do annual rate reviews of costs and revenues required. Forward looking policy; important to think of the environmental requirements and what investments can be made. Statutory authorization for cost-recovery for Peaker plants. CT is exporting more into New England grid than we are consuming. Highest points of grid demand is when the Peaker plants kick in and those were developed at times when existing technologies weren't ready.

- General statutes 16-243u

Jayson: Peaker plants placed in EJ communities, whose responsibility is it to ensure that Peaker plants running are needed at those times?

Tom: Peaker plants run when iso-NE makes based on grid congestion needs.

Jayson: Have there been active alerts sent out for Peaker plants?

- Peaker plant dockets: 25-06-02; 25-06-03.

Jayson: What topics should folks in EJ communities be paying attention to?

Claire: One of the goals of this new proceeding to engage communities is to figure out how to make regulatory framework more accessible and understandable. Performance based rate making process – equity goals that are being developed.

Sarah Huang: What is Community Choice Aggregation and do we have that in CT?

Claire: There was a meeting Energy & Technology committee, community choice aggregation has been considered in CT and is live; there are benefits and challenges to rolling this out. OCC has sought to be an educator on benefits and challenges for current standard customers. We've wanted to protect things that CT protects for hardship customers engaged in third-party supplies; hardship customers are able to keep the lower rates to talk about how to maintain those protections for those consumers.

Resources:

- [EASE Public Meeting March 20.pdf](#)
- OCC Contact Info: [Contact Us](#)

List of Participants:

Joseph DeNicola	Aaron Goode	Stephanie Barrera
Diane Lauricella	Lissette Andino	Danielle Petretta
Doris Johnson	Kate Rayner	Tom Wiehl (OCC)
Allison Pilcher	Leslie Obrien	Katherine Bennett
Sarah Huang	Jonathan Ferrigno	Claire Coleman
Theresa Hopkins-Staten	Ray Collins	Jayson Velazquez
Marisa Paruta	Dianalys Bonilla	Kendall Keelen
Doug Horton	Jonathan Harris	Megan Granato
Paula Pineda	Kathy Fay	Brooke Parker

Mark Mitchell MD

Aziz Dehkan

Adrienne Houel

Adrian Huq

Cecelia Drayton

Terry Adams

Brenda Geer