

Consumer Liaison Group Meeting Summary December 6, 2023

Introduction

The **Consumer Liaison Group (CLG)** is a forum for sharing information between ISO New England (the ISO or ISO-NE) and electricity consumers in New England. The CLG meets quarterly and attracts a diverse group of attendees at each meeting. Meetings are free and open to the public. Participants generally include consumers and consumer representatives (including state consumer and ratepayer advocates), state business and industry associations, chambers of commerce, individual businesses, trade groups, nonprofit organizations, and other end users. Several New England Power Pool (NEPOOL) members and state regulators are also regular, active participants in CLG discussions.¹ CLG meetings generally follow the same format:

- **Opening remarks** from the CLG Coordinating Committee Chair;
- **A representative from the ISO**, who provides an update on regional energy issues and initiatives that have or will be taking place at NEPOOL and ISO stakeholder meetings that can have an impact on electricity prices;
- **A keynote speech** typically from an industry or business executive, policymaker, or regulator—who provides a unique perspective on a particular topic or issue;
- **A panel discussion**, often representing industry, the ISO, regulators, and consumer perspectives, facilitated by a moderator; and
- **A community roundtable** hosted by a CLG Coordinating Committee member.

The following is a brief summary of the meeting, which was hosted in a hybrid format – remotely (via WebEx) and in-person in Boston, Massachusetts – on **December 6, 2023**.

The topic and speakers were selected by the Consumer Liaison Group Coordinating Committee (CLGCC). The meeting summary is intended to capture the general discussions that took place at the meeting; it does not necessarily reflect the views of the ISO or the CLGCC.

December 6: A Discussion with Representatives of the ISO New England Board of Directors

Meeting objective: To hear from the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) and host a discussion with representatives from ISO New England’s Board of Directors.

Opening Remarks

Liz Anderson, division chief of the energy and ratepayer advocacy division at the Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General, and CLGCC chair (Massachusetts), welcomed meeting attendees and reflected on the last year of the CLG and recent efforts of the CLGCC. Anderson introduced Rev. Mariama White-Hammond for the community welcome.

Rev. Mariama White-Hammond, chief of environment, energy, and open space for the City of Boston, provided a community welcome. White-Hammond discussed environmental justice broadly and spoke specifically to environmental justice efforts of the City of Boston. White-Hammond expressed the desire to move the energy system forward in a way that is reliable, resilient, and affordable, and centers those most cost-sensitive and those who have historically carried the

¹ NEPOOL is a group formed in 1971 by the region’s private and municipal utilities to foster cooperation and coordination among the utilities in the six-state region for ensuring a dependable supply of electricity. Today, NEPOOL members are ISO stakeholders and market participants. More information is available at www.nepool.com.

Consumer Liaison Group Meeting Summary December 6, 2023

burden of environmental impacts. White-Hammond discussed the Boston community-choice electricity program, clean energy and grid infrastructure development, and energy burden.

Keynote Address

Matt Christiansen, general counsel at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) provided the keynote address. Christiansen began by explaining FERC's jurisdiction and critical roles, particularly as relates to the transition to a clean energy future driven by state and federal policies. Christiansen clarified that FERC is not an environmental regulator and does not choose the resource mix for the electric grid. He further explained that while FERC has a role in the clean energy transition, specifically regarding reliability and affordability, the states and other federal agencies, like the Environmental Protection Agency, have more direct authority over environmental and clean energy initiatives. Christiansen noted the challenges associated with this transition and the need to continue to ensure reliable and affordable electricity, and highlighted a number of relevant FERC proceedings. Christiansen discussed the topics of these proceedings, including electric transmission infrastructure, grid enhancing technologies, and market mechanisms to address the need for reliability throughout this transition.

A question and answer period followed the keynote opening remarks. Christiansen addressed questions regarding FERC's authority as relates to reliability and the interrelated natural gas and electric systems; the role of FERC in regulating ISO/RTO governance structure; FERC's jurisdiction as relates to fuel neutrality; FERC's role in the clean energy transition; the speed of the clean energy transition; including sustainability as a focus along with reliability and affordability; and the interaction of state and FERC jurisdiction as relates to environmental permits.

A Discussion with Representatives of the ISO New England Board of Directors

Steve Corneli, member of the ISO New England board of directors and **Gordon van Welie**, president and CEO of ISO New England held an open dialogue with CLG attendees. Steve Corneli began with opening remarks and discussed his background and the need for an affordable, reliable, and sustainable electric grid. Corneli discussed the concept of the four pillars needed for a clean energy transition, the differences in jurisdiction of the New England states, the ISO, and FERC, and the need to work together to advance the clean energy transition.

A question and answer period followed the opening remarks. Corneli and van Welie responded to questions regarding the balance of reliability and environmental priorities; carbon pricing; the Forward Capacity Market (FCM) and capacity supply obligations in the FCM; large-scale battery energy storage; the ISO's non-profit structure; consumer engagement in energy conservation and demand response; demand response in wholesale electricity markets; infrastructure siting; and asset condition projects.

Community Roundtable

Nathan Philips, CLGCC member (Massachusetts), explained that the community roundtable, a feature for interaction with attendees that the coordinating committee introduced at the June meeting, would be condensed to allow more time for questions and answers with the speakers. During the networking break four prompts were provided for both in-person and virtual WebEx attendees. Attendees were encouraged to respond to the prompts, and the CLGCC will consider the feedback in planning for future CLG meetings. The community roundtable exercise is intended to continue at CLG meetings moving forward. The CLGCC posed the following questions to meeting participants:

Consumer Liaison Group Meeting Summary December 6, 2023

- Reflect on the comments and discussion we just had with the FERC General Counsel and with ISO Board members. What was particularly interesting or surprising to you?
- Based on what you've heard today, or other questions you came to the meeting with, what would you ask ISO-NE for clarification or for information?
- The CLG coordinating committee is piloting a new educational opportunity as part of the CLG's mission to help communicate in plain language some of the issues related to ISO-NE and our grid. Did you watch the video "who pays for gaining infrastructure" by Don Kreis (asset condition project) that was circulated in advance of the meeting? Did you find that short video useful and educational, and do you have any feedback on that video? Would you like to see more of those produced in the future as part of CLG meetings and what topics are you most interested in?
- The coordinating committee's goal with this CLG meeting was to highlight one theme and have different people speak to the issue. Do you feel like you learned about this issue of aging infrastructure/ asset conditions from the FERC and ISO officials who spoke today?

ISO New England Update

Anne George, vice president and chief external affairs and communications officer at ISO-NE, provided the ISO's regional update. George introduced the external affairs team and noted a change in the format for these regional updates. The regional update will be framed around the ISO's three critical roles: grid operation, market administration, and power system planning.

- Market Administration Update: George provided an update on the monthly wholesale electricity prices and noted that for October 2023 average real-time electricity prices were down significantly compared to last year, primarily driven by a decrease in natural gas prices. Electricity demand in October was higher than last year, but down compared to the prior month which was hotter than usual. George explained that the ISO filed with FERC a request for a one-year delay for Forward Capacity Auction No. 19 (FCA 19), to provide time to explore potential changes to the FCM and time for resource capacity accreditation efforts. The ISO is awaiting a response from FERC on this filing.
- Grid Operation Update: George highlighted the ISO's winter outlook that was published on December 4 and is available on the ISO website.
- System Planning Update: The ISO's 2050 Transmission Study is being finalized, and the next steps include ongoing discussions with the states to facilitate future development of transmission, as requested by the states. George highlighted an upcoming ISO system planning webinar to be held on December 14 intended to provide an overview of system planning.

A question and answer period followed the remarks. George responded to questions regarding ISO's reporting of emissions from electricity generation; the FCA 19 delay filing; resource capacity accreditation; the Regional Energy Shortfall Threshold (REST); the proposal in the ISO's budget for a new position related to environmental justice; calls for conservation; and demand response.

Closing Remarks

Liz Anderson offered closing remarks and thanked everyone who helped to organize the CLG meeting. Anderson specifically thanked ISO's Debi Smith, who has played a vital role in coordinating these meetings since the beginning of the CLG, and is retiring at the end of the year.

A [recording](#) of the meeting can be found on the [CLG page](#) on the ISO website.