

## Consumer Liaison Group Meeting Summary

### June 4, 2025

#### 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.<sup>1</sup> CLG meetings generally follow the same format:

- **Opening remarks** from a representative of the CLG Coordinating Committee;
- **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; and
- **A panel discussion**, often representing industry, the ISO, regulators, and consumer perspectives, facilitated by a moderator;

The following is a brief summary of the meeting, which was hosted in a hybrid format – remotely (via WebEx) and in-person in Springfield, Massachusetts – on **June 4, 2025**.

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.

#### June 4: Governing Our Electric Grid: Who's in Charge and Why it Matters

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**Meeting objective:** To discuss ISO governance structures and decision-making processes, energy affordability, and public engagement.

##### Opening Remarks

**Regine Spector**, associate professor, University of Massachusetts Department of Political Science and CLGCC co-chair (Massachusetts) welcomed meeting attendees and provided opening remarks. Spector provided an overview of the previous quarter's CLG meeting focused on energy efficiency programs and related incentives, and introduced the concepts of supply and delivery components of a typical electricity bill, regional wholesale electricity markets administered by ISO-NE, state clean energy policies, system planning, asset condition projects, and ISO governance. Spector concluded with an introduction of Zaida Govan for the community welcome.

**Zaida Govan**, Springfield city councilor, provided the community welcome. Govan highlighted aspects of the city of Springfield, discussed sustainability efforts and investments in public infrastructure, and noted the challenge of rising electricity costs.

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<sup>1</sup> 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](http://www.nepool.com).

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#### ISO New England Update

**Anne George**, vice president and chief external affairs and communications officer at ISO New England, provided the [ISO's regional update](#), which focused on the history of the ISO, market administration, grid operation, and system planning.

#### Background on ISO New England

- ISO New England was formed in 1997 under the framework for independent system operators created by Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Order No. 888. With the creation of ISOs, FERC sought to create open access to the transmission system and allow for competition of electricity supply for the benefit of consumers.
- In 2005, ISO-NE became a Regional Transmission Organization (RTO) pursuant to Order No. 2000 (a successor to Order No. 888) that sought to administer transmission grids on a regional basis. While the ISO received FERC's designation as an RTO, it retained the name ISO New England.
- Key features of the ISO's structure and governance include its status as a non-profit corporation (501(c)(3), independent of wholesale electricity market participants, and governed by an independent board of directors.

#### Market Administration Update:

- In May, ISO-NE's Internal Market Monitor (IMM) issued the [2024 Annual Markets Report](#) (AMR); the IMM functions independently of ISO management and reports directly to the ISO Board of Directors.
- The AMR assess the state of competition in wholesale electricity markets administered by the ISO during the most recent operating year.

#### Grid Operation Update:

- In May, the ISO released its [summer outlook](#), which explains that the ISO expects sufficient energy supply to meet consumer demand for electricity this summer.
- Behind-the-meter solar photovoltaic installations are a growing source of energy in the region and predicted to reduce demand by as much as 1,736 MW during the peak on days with normal weather conditions this summer.

#### System Planning Update:

- Issued on May 1, the annual [Capacity, Energy, Loads and Transmission \(CELT\) Report](#) is the primary source for assumptions used in ISO system planning studies
- Overall electricity use is expected to increase 1.2% annually over the 10-year period (2025-2034), driven primarily by electrification of heating and transportation.

To conclude, George noted that the CLG Annual Report is posted to the [CLG webpage](#); the ISO recently published updated [regional and state profiles](#), including Spanish versions; and on June 18 the ISO's Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) is hosting a forum on grid enhancing technologies (GETs).

A question-and-answer period followed. George responded to questions regarding the roles and oversight of NEPOOL as compared to ISO; engagement on interregional planning for transmission with neighboring ISO/RTOs; components of a possible asset condition reviewer role within ISO-NE, including independence of that role, rate recovery, and right-sizing provisions; what it would take to forecast retail demand response and peak shaving initiatives; how demand response participates currently in ISO wholesale electricity markets; how well efforts to mitigate climate change impacts

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work within the existing systems; how the ISO studies and considers reliability impacts of proposed, new large loads; the independence and separation between ISO and NEPOOL and the role of the ISO's Board of Directors in providing oversight; and what the ISO does to plan and address high winter electricity demand.

#### Moderated Discussion

**Joshua Macey**, associate professor of law, Yale Law School, **Charles Hua**, founder and executive director, PowerLines, **Bryndís Woods**, principal analyst, Applied Economics Clinic, and **Anne George** participated in a panel discussion moderated by **Regine Spector**.

Macey [presented](#) on grid governance, including discussion of the voting rights and process within NEPOOL, utility filing rights, and the history behind the creation of the structures for ISO/RTOs. Macey provided an overview of the various roles and structure of entities in New England including the ISO and the ISO Board of Directors, NEPOOL, and the New England States Committee on Electricity (NESCOE). Macey additionally highlighted key FERC Orders related to the establishment of the existing processes, including the voting structures of NEPOOL committees. Macey concluded with discussion of asset condition project processes and related rate recovery.

Hua [presented](#) on wholesale and retail electricity price components, beginning by highlighting the concern with electricity prices throughout the New England region and the resulting engagement from consumers. Related to wholesale electricity, Hua discussed national trends for wholesale electricity prices and highlighted wholesale electricity cost components over the last few years for New England, noting that wholesale prices translate to impacts on retail rates. Hua explained that distribution system costs are additionally resulting in increased electricity bills, that public utility commissions have a role in regulatory oversight, and expressed his views on the need for more proactive and holistic planning on the distribution and transmission systems, including the need for greater coordination across ISOs/RTOs. Hua concluded by reiterating the challenge and concern around energy affordability and consumer engagement.

Woods [presented](#) on a recent report card published by Applied Economics Clinic (AEC) on behalf of Slingshot titled "Assessing US Electric Grid Operators: Transparency, Accessibility, Accountability." Woods noted the impetus for the report card, including both the key role that ISOs/RTOs play in the clean energy transition, and the difficulty in participating and influencing ISOs/RTO processes and decision-making, and explained the analytical approach to assess three categories – transparency, accessibility, and accountability. Woods discussed the overall grades, including ISO-NE's overall grade of "F", and broke down the findings from each of the categories. Overall, Woods noted that there is much room for improvement across all ISOs/RTOs and concluded the discussion of each metric with possible areas for improvement.

A question-and-answer period followed and panelists responded to questions related to high wholesale electricity costs specifically in New England and New York; performance within non-ISO/RTO regions as compared to regions served by ISOs/RTOs; suggestions for improvements to the current NEPOOL voting construct; ways to better engage the public; the process to make changes to the ISO tariff and ways to engage; components of the ISO budget as relates to supporting NEPOOL meetings; the structure and budget of NEPOOL; ISO's response to the AEC Report Card; engagement of consumer advocates in state regulatory activities; what it means for the ISO to be a public utility; and renewable energy generation participation in wholesale electricity markets.

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#### **Closing Remarks**

**Don Kreis**, New Hampshire consumer advocate, CLGCC co-chair (New Hampshire) offered closing remarks and thanked the presenters, organizers of the CLG meeting, the City of Springfield, and the American International College. Kreis invited attendees to attend the remaining CLG meetings, which will be held on September 11 in New Hampshire and December 3 in Boston, Massachusetts.

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