Consumer Liaison Group Meeting Summary
June 2, 2026

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 a representative of the CLG Coordinating Committee;
- Community welcome from a member of the local community invited by the Coordinating Committee;
- An ISO regional update by a representative from the ISO, presenting 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 and in-person in Lowell, Massachusetts – on June 2, 2026.

The Consumer Liaison Group Coordinating Committee (CLGCC) selects the topic and speakers. 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.

A recording of the meeting and related presentations can be found on the CLG page on the ISO website.

June 2: Powering Datacenters in New England

Meeting Objective: To hear about the rapid growth of large load demand, particularly the growth in data centers and their implications for the regional power system, communities, and policy frameworks.

[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.

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Opening Remarks
Regine Spector, CLGCC co-chair, opened the meeting and gave an overview of the CLG. After a brief background on the critical roles of the ISO and how the CLG fits into the mission of the ISO, **Spector** introduced the meeting topic and invited **Nathan Phillips,** CLGCC member and faculty member at Boston University, to deliver brief remarks on the environmental impacts of increased use of artificial intelligence (AI), and the role of democracy as these issues become more prevalent over time. **Phillips** polled the audience on their views on AI and then introduced **Jake Fortes** to deliver the community welcome.

Jake Fortes, co-founder of Honest Future for Lowell, delivered the community welcome. Fortes' remarks outlined the rapid development of large-scale data centers and their impacts on local communities. Fortes raised concerns about noise pollution, air emissions, power reliability issues, and the cumulative effects that growing facilities might have on the neighborhoods in which they are sited. He discussed the growth of such facilities in the context of Lowell's industrial history, remarking that the city is on the cusp of a new industrial revolution, and that no matter what the future holds, it is critical that growth on this new industrial frontier remains rooted in sustainability, robust community involvement, and transparency.

Panel Discussion: **Data Centers in Massachusetts and New England**
John Goodhue, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center and **Megan Lim,** Cross Campus Climate Coalition, ; Run on Climate; GreyEdge Group participated in a panel moderated by **Nathan Phillips** that examined lessons learned from past development of current data facilities and discussed strategies for responsible development of future facilities.

Goodhue described the origins and development of the Massachusetts Green High Performance Computing Center, noting that a 2009–2010 study identified the need for shared data center infrastructure to support universities operating on long planning horizons. Holyoke was selected due to its available industrial sites, proximity to hydroelectric resources, municipal utility structure, access to water, and lower system congestion. The project was undertaken in coordination with the local community, including site remediation of a formerly polluted industrial property, installation of underground infrastructure, and expansion of fiber connectivity. Goodhue stated that the project aimed to operate responsibly while contributing to research, education, and local economic development.

Lim discussed the role of collaboration across education, government, and nonprofit sectors, emphasizing challenges in helping individuals understand civic systems and pathways for engagement. Lim highlighted workforce development concerns, including evolving job requirements and the need for skill transfer, as well as opportunities for experiential learning through student-led projects. Lim noted that students often lack familiarity with institutional structures and identified a need for more place-based engagement and cross-sector coordination, particularly through partnerships with schools and community organizations.

During the moderated discussion, panelists addressed opportunities to improve data center sustainability, including the use of battery storage - rather than fossil fuel backup

generators - for load balancing, software-driven efficiency gains, and waste heat recovery for district heating applications. Participants also raised questions about public awareness and access to information, particularly for underserved communities. Panelists responded that outreach remains challenging and uneven, recommending increased local engagement, coalition-building, and use of existing educational and advocacy networks. Additional discussion covered rising electricity demand, the potential for smaller-scale data centers, and the importance of matching development to appropriate locations and community needs.

ISO New England Regional Update

Eric Johnson, executive director of External Affairs at ISO New England, provided a regional grid update covering markets, operations and planning, and highlights of information resources available for the CLG. The regional update highlighted the recent publication of the 2025 CLG Annual Report developed jointly by ISO New England and the CLG Coordinating Committee. The ISO's regional update is posted on the CLG webpage.

The monthly markets update provided snapshots of the average real-time electricity prices, average natural gas prices, peak demand, total electricity use, and weather-normalized use for April 2026, all of which were down from March 2026. Natural gas comprised the majority of the generation mix at 54% followed by renewables at 18%, nuclear at 16%, hydro at 12%, and oil and coal, which comprised less than 1% of the generation mix in April 2026. Following questions from attendees on how renewables are categorized, **Johnson** gave a brief overview of the 2025 Annual Markets Report (AMR), issued by ISO New England's Internal Market Monitor (IMM). The report highlights that the total wholesale cost of electricity was $15 billion in 2025, which is up 50% from 2024, and energy market costs were up 77% from 2024, totaling $9.9 billion. Capacity costs were down 16% from 2024 at $1.2 billion. Average real time energy prices were up 67% year over year, while average day-ahead prices were up 73%. Network load costs were up 23% from 2024, at $3.6 billion. **Johnson** noted that weather remains a primary driver of electricity demand, with higher demand occurring during summer and winter months. Cold weather conditions last winter were a key driver of the higher prices last year.

The AMR noted increased supply capability with the commercialization of the New England Clean Energy Connect (NECEC) transmission line connecting Quebec and New England, as well as growth in behind-the-meter solar and offshore wind. Though supply capability increased, net imports declined due to drought conditions in Québec. In 2025, solar and wind generation exceeded net imports for the first time.

The Summer 2026 Outlook highlighted the forecasted summer demand, the level of available resources, and the ISO's operational readiness to handle extreme weather conditions.

Johnson provided updates on the ISO's ongoing consumer engagement efforts, including hosting office hours, an upcoming webinar June 24 related to system forecasting, and a new consumer-focused webpage aimed at providing more plain-language information on technically focused ISO information. Updated State and Regional Profiles are now available in Spanish, and External Affairs continues to update fact sheets and information in both English and Spanish.

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Panel Discussion: Planning for Data Centers and Large Load Demand
Victoria Rojo, supervisor of load forecasting at ISO New England, discussed new components of the 2026 Forecast Report of Capacity, Energy, Loads, and Transmission (CELT), which incorporated new methodologies to forecast the growth in load driven by data centers, increased electrification, and electric vehicles. Rojo noted that while near-term impacts remain relatively modest, uncertainty exists regarding the scale, timing, and operational characteristics of future projects.

Panelists **Cathy Kristofferson** from the Pipe Line Awareness Network for the Northeast and **Rosemary Wesel** from the Berkshire Environmental Action Team (BEAT), identified key challenges including infrastructure constraints, timing mismatches between load growth and system upgrades, and limited visibility into behind-the-meter generation. The discussion also covered emerging models such as "bring your own power" (BYOP), which often rely on natural gas or other on-site energy sources. Additional concerns included the potential for stranded assets, volatility in large load demand, and increased reliance on pipeline infrastructure. Panelists also noted that smaller and incremental project expansions may collectively lead to significant system impacts over time.

Keynote Remarks: Lessons Learned from the Data Center Capital of the World
David Lapp, People's Counsel at the Maryland Office of People's Counsel, delivered the keynote address. Lapp provided insights from the PJM region, where data center growth has been rapid and highly concentrated.[2] This growth has driven substantial increases in transmission investment, capacity market costs, and overall system expenses.

Lapp emphasized that data centers are unprecedented factors to consider in existing regulatory frameworks and in wholesale energy markets. According to Lapp, the traditional regulatory frameworks are not well-suited to manage the scale and concentration of data center demand in such a short period of time. A key takeaway Lapp provided was to treat data centers as a distinct customer class and to ensure that infrastructure costs associated with their development are primarily borne by those facilities rather than existing ratepayers.

Closing Remarks
The meeting concluded with a preview of the next CLG meeting, to be held in Portland, Maine on September 24, 2026. The meeting will focus on energy storage and its role in supporting reliability and integrating renewable resources into the New England power system.

[2] PJM is a regional transmission organization spanning 13 states, including Maryland.