

Consumer Liaison Group Meeting Summary November 30, 2022

Introduction

The **Consumer Liaison Group (CLG)** is a forum for sharing information between ISO New England (the ISO) 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

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 **November 30, 2022**.

The topic, moderator, and panelists were selected by the Consumer Liaison Group Coordinating Committee (CLGCC). The November 30 meeting did not include a panel discussion, and instead included a discussion with the chair of the ISO board of directors. 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.

November 30: Discussions with Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Commissioner James Danly and ISO New England Board Chair Cheryl LaFleur

Meeting objective: To hear from Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Commissioner James Danly, invite a discussion with Cheryl LaFleur, chair of the ISO New England (ISO-NE) board of directors, receive a regional update from the ISO, and to elect CLGCC members for the next two-year term.

Welcoming Remarks

Elizabeth Mahony, chair, Consumer Liaison Group Coordinating Committee (CLGCC) and assistant attorney general, Energy and Telecommunications Division, Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, offered welcoming remarks and provided background on the CLG and CLGCC. Mahony reminded attendees that there will be a biennial election for CLGCC members at the meeting. She encouraged attendees to ask questions of the speakers and to complete the survey that was sent to participants via email after the meeting.

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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Keynote

FERC Commissioner James Danly gave the keynote address. Elizabeth Mahony introduced Commissioner Danly.

Commissioner Danly began by providing an overview of the authority granted to FERC over the sale of interstate electricity, and noted specifically the responsibility to ensure rates are just and reasonable. Danly then moved on to provide an overview of the current challenges he observes in the ISO New England markets, including those related to resource adequacy and cost. Danly highlighted the specific difficulties related to lack of transmission and natural gas pipeline infrastructure development, particularly during a potential long stretch of cold weather.

Commissioner Danly then provided his perspective on the history that brought the ISO New England wholesale energy markets to their current state. Some key components that he highlighted included the challenges in infrastructure siting in the region; a lack of energy storage; and the regional reliance on natural gas, which is subject to global energy market fluctuations. Danly explained that these factors have contributed to high energy prices and reliability challenges in the region.

Furthering the discussion of the New England regional markets, Danly discussed principles of competitive markets and regulated utilities in relation to public policy decisions of the states and the impact on electricity rates.

Following his remarks, Danly fielded a number of questions from attendees. Topics included public power utilities; how municipal and behind-the-meter renewable energy generation impact the grid system; FERC's role in regard to the impacts of climate change; and the North American Electric Reliability Corporation's (NERC) and FERC's role in setting reliability standards.

CLGCC Elections

Elizabeth Mahony provided an overview of the process for the seventh election of the CLGCC members for the 2023-2024 term. Both in-person and virtual attendees were able to vote, through paper and online ballots, respectively. Mahony explained the process, including reference to the CLGCC bylaws, and instructions were shared with registrants via email prior to the meeting. Mahony recognized members of the CLGCC who are stepping down and not running for re-election including Eric Annes and Dave Thompson of Connecticut. Mahony confirmed the list of nominees prior to opening the vote. The outcome of the election was announced at the end of the meeting (and is covered at the end of this summary).

Discussion

Cheryl LaFleur provided remarks prior to a Q&A discussion with attendees. Cheryl LaFleur was introduced by Elizabeth Mahony.

Cheryl LaFleur began by discussing ISO-NE's [vision statement](#), adopted by the Board of Directors, and explained that through this vision statement the ISO Board acknowledges the role of the ISO in the states' transition to clean energy, noting the need for both ongoing regional collaboration and the development of more resources. LaFleur highlighted the concept of the "four pillars," as presented in the [2022 Regional Electricity Outlook \(REO\)](#), that are necessary for a successful clean energy transition. LaFleur mentioned the open meeting of the ISO Board, [held on November 1](#), and recognized the public comments specifically urging continued action on climate. LaFleur

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highlighted the ISO Board's efforts around diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), including work to finalize a DEI mission for the Board.

LaFleur continued her remarks with a discussion of energy adequacy in the region, including in the forthcoming Winter Outlook (subsequently [released on December 5](#)). She explained the challenges for this winter related to liquefied natural gas (LNG) global market demand and supplies. LaFleur highlighted a number of the ISO's preparations for the winter. She noted that the ISO takes seriously the current high electricity rates, and expanded on the need for building additional resources and transmission infrastructure to help alleviate the high reliance on natural gas. LaFleur also explained the cost of service agreement with the Mystic generation facility.

LaFleur concluded with an overview of the ISO's ongoing [Operational Impacts of Extreme Weather Events](#) project to assess operational energy-security risks associated with extreme weather events.

A question and answer period followed LaFleur's remarks. Topics included barriers to renewable energy generation; the future role of hydrogen; the minimum offer price rule (MOPR); energy efficiency and demand response; ISO-NE's role in climate change action; tidal energy; natural gas prices; and system reliability.

ISO New England Update

Anne George, ISO New England vice president of External Affairs and Corporate Communications, provided the ISO's regional update.

George began with a review of the mission and three critical roles of the ISO, and noted specifically that FERC regulates the ISO and we are required to operate within a FERC-approved tariff. She also underscored that the ISO works closely with the New England states to ensure that the markets and operation of the grid take into account the public policy decisions of the states. George then moved on to provide the ISO's regional update.

The ISO participated in [FERC's October 6 Technical Conference on Transmission Planning and Cost Management](#) which was convened to explore measures to ensure sufficient transparency into the cost effectiveness of local and regional transmission management and design. In advance of the conference, ISO submitted [pre-filed comments](#).

In October, the ISO [hosted an exercise](#) designed to demonstrate the region's ability to anticipate, mitigate, and respond to an energy shortfall event. Representatives from the region's utilities joined ISO-NE operations and communications staff. Officials from all six New England states, as well as federal and regional agencies, observed the exercise.

The ISO recently released [Vision in Action: ISO New England's Strategic Plan](#), which provides insight into how the ISO intends to fulfill its three critical roles during the clean energy transition. In addition to discussing the ISO's key goals and initiatives, the plan offers perspectives on trends shaping the power industry.

The ISO hosted a webinar on October 21 to discuss the findings of the [2021 Economic Study: Future Grid Reliability Study Phase 1](#), which was released on July 29, 2022. A recording of the webinar is available [on the ISO website](#). The study, requested by NEPOOL stakeholders, evaluates how a 2040 grid could perform when the system has significantly more renewables and a greater amount of electrification of the transportation and heating sectors.

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FERC issued its [2022-2023 Winter Assessment](#) on October 25. The ISO will release the 2022/2023 Winter Outlook in early December (subsequently [released on December 5](#)). In advance of the release of the outlook, George provided a preview of various scenarios analyzed by the ISO and their impact on system reliability. She also highlighted the actions the ISO takes to prepare for and respond to winter weather and changing system conditions.

In preparation for the winter, the ISO hosted its annual [winter generator readiness seminar](#) on November 14 to give generators an outlook on the coming winter season. The ISO's system operations and market administration team reviewed changes to programs, procedures, and preparations that are in place to strengthen readiness for operations during cold weather in New England. Additionally, on November 29, the ISO hosted its annual [pre-winter communications training for emergency communications contacts](#) to preview the winter outlook and review the ISO's emergency procedures and communications processes.

The ISO is working with the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI) to conduct [a probabilistic energy security study](#) for the New England region in the operational timeframe (10 years) under extreme weather events. The ISO expects to continue discussion of this study in 2023, with final results in Q1 2023.

Finally, George briefly discussed several recent filings the ISO has made to FERC, including: a [compliance filing](#) in response to [FERC's Order](#) regarding the Inventoried Energy Program (IEP); a [report](#) to FERC on Modernizing Wholesale Electricity Market Design; and the [ISO's proposed 2023 Operating and Capital Budgets](#), which was presented to the states for review and comment earlier in the year. She also noted that the ISO is separately proposing changes to the IEP to ensure it better reflects current market conditions.

A brief question and answer period followed, in which George answered questions regarding energy conservation measures for reliability; clean energy; and demand response.

Election Results

Elizabeth Mahony announced the 2023-2024 CLGCC election results. The following twelve individuals were elected to serve a two-year term on the CLGCC.

1. Sonja K. Birthisel (ME)
2. Bill Dornbos (CT)
3. Kendra Ford (NH)
4. August Fromuth (NH)
5. Donald Kreis (NH)
6. Andrew Landry (ME)
7. Elizabeth Mahony (MA)
8. Ian McDonald (CT)
9. Nathan G. Phillips (MA)
10. Jacob Power (VT)
11. Regine A. Spector (MA)
12. Hank Webster (RI)

In addition, Elizabeth thanked outgoing CLGCC members Robert Rio and Mary Smith for their dedicated service on the committee.

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Closing remarks

Elizabeth Mahony offered closing remarks thanking the speakers, attendees, and ISO staff for their participation in the event. In addition, Mahony encouraged attendees to fill out the online survey they would receive via email and encouraged attendees to take part in the 2023 CLG meetings, which are tentatively scheduled to take place on March 30th, June 8th, September 21st, and December 6th. Finally, Mahony encouraged attendees to follow the CLG on Twitter.

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