

Gas Transition Subgroup Meeting Notes

Meeting Details:

- 8/3/22, 3:30-5:00

Council Member Participants:

- Mario Cilento
- Donna DeCarolis
- Gavin Donahue
- Dennis Elsenbeck
- Doreen Harris
- Roberta Reardon
- Raya Salter

Meeting Agenda/Topics Covered:

- Subgroup members reviewed materials pertaining to electric grid system planning and reliability processes in advance of meeting
- Discussion of Framework Key Considerations: Safety & Reliability and Coordination with Electric System Expansion
- Discussion of Next Steps

Key Takeaways:

- Discussion of Framework language describing investments in gas system infrastructure necessary to maintain safety and reliability
 - The subgroup debated whether the Framework should state that such investments “may” or “will” be necessary.
 - The subgroup discussed the language around ensuring investments do not become stranded assets. The subgroup agreed that the issue of stranded assets extends beyond the category of Safety & Reliability and will therefore need to be addressed at multiple points in the Framework.
 - The subgroup agreed that such investments must be subjected to greater scrutiny and that it will be important to define in greater detail what “greater scrutiny” entails. For instance, members suggested that in addition to the Public Service Commission’s evaluation criteria for investments of safety, reliability, and cost impact on customers, gas system investments should also be evaluated for compatibility with CLCPA emissions reduction timelines, as well as the potential to produce stranded assets and increased rate impacts to consumers.
 - The subgroup agreed that the Public Service Commission processes and criteria will play a central role, but that broader interagency processes should also play a role in the development of the statewide gas transition plan.
 - The subgroup raised workforce safety as an important concern to be discussed in greater detail at a subsequent meeting.
- Discussion of coordination of gas system transition with electric system expansion

- The subgroup discussed the need to better tie together gas and electric system planning processes.
- The subgroup raised the possibility of requiring an electric system resource adequacy affirmation before engaging in wholesale electrification of the building and transportation sectors; some subgroup members cautioned that resource adequacy should be evaluated on a local or regional scale as the transition proceeds.
- One subgroup member requested that the Framework recognize that firm, zero-emission, dispatchable electricity technologies will be needed as it transitions away from fossil gas.
- One subgroup member stated that many constraints on electrification exist at the distribution system level. The subgroup agreed that the coordination of gas and electric system transitions must account for locally and regionally specific system constraints. One subgroup member emphasized that these local and regional circumstances are intimately related to economic development issues.
- The subgroup discussed the cost impacts of the gas and electric system transitions on end-users, especially the cost to families of heating and cooling their homes. Subgroup members recognized the potential that fear of higher cost may provoke resistance to State climate goals and the need to better communicate and combat misinformation about the costs and benefits of New York's climate policies. One subgroup member raised the importance of facilitating public engagement in Public Service Commission and other transition planning processes; intervenor compensation is a positive first step but insufficient on its own.
- One subgroup member suggested that a "transition" does not necessarily imply a conversion directly from one thing to another but may require different solutions and technologies in the interim phases.
- Next steps
 - The subgroup will address Equity and Affordability considerations (and additional topics desired by the subgroup) at its next meeting on August 17.