

# Gas Transition Subgroup Meeting Notes

## Meeting Details:

- 9/20/22, 1:30-3:00

## Council Member Participants:

- Mario Cilento
- Donna DeCarolis
- Dennis Elsenbeck
- Bob Howarth
- Peter Iwanowicz
- Roberta Reardon
- Raya Salter
- Paul Shepson

## Meeting Agenda/Key Takeaways:

- Members from the Alternative Fuels subgroup met with the Gas System Transition (GST) subgroup to review the alternative fuels assessment criteria with the GST's framework and discuss how it is addressing the treatment of alternative fuels.
  - One subgroup member discussed how all fuels go through the full assessment criteria, but some questions may not be applicable.
  - One subgroup member suggested that the requirements of CLCPA should be included as overarching criterion in the alternative fuels assessment criteria and to include some language about how various fuels will be treated for clarity.
  - One subgroup member discussed how the alternative fuels assessment subgroup recommended that strategies should prioritize on-site use of biogas whenever feasible.
- Use of alternative fuels in the gas distribution system
  - The subgroup members discussed how alternate fuels are currently being considered in the GST framework.
  - The subgroup members discussed the need to evaluate alternative fuels such as renewable natural gas (RNG) and hydrogen separately as they may have different considerations with regards to affordability, emissions impacts, reliability and safety.
  - Specifically, one subgroup member noted that RNG is expensive and that hydrogen poses a higher safety risk, is expensive, and may pose issues with reliability.
  - Another subgroup member discussed the possible uses and potential available quantities of RNG.
  - Subgroup members discussed the need to make sure the GST framework includes an evaluation of the costs of alternative fuels, safety considerations, and impacts to reliability and energy affordability.
  - One subgroup member expressed concerns with increased GHG emissions from use of these fuels and the potential for use of renewable electricity to produce certain alternative fuels such as green hydrogen to result in prolonged use of fossil gas. Another subgroup member noted that use of RNG in the natural gas distribution system would

increase emissions and that use of heat pumps powered with renewable electricity is more efficient than fossil fuel alternatives.

- One subgroup member suggested that the GST framework should try to avoid continued reliance on fossil fuels and support the movement away from combustion of fossil fuels.
- One subgroup member noted that we should consider the impacts of use of alternative fuels on end use appliances.
- The subgroup members discussed the need to ensure electrification efforts are balanced alongside the gas transition work to ensure the system has sufficient electrical capacity to meet the demand of increased electrification.
- One subgroup member discussed why alternate fuels should be considered as part of gas system planning to meet the heating demands of certain manufacturing and industrial processes where alternative fuels can be used to offset natural gas for heat intensive applications. Another subgroup member agreed noting that RNG is a waste stream that needs to be used, with the focus being for on-site use where feasible.
- One member of the GST subgroup noted the subgroup agreed that transparency and education is needed in the evaluation of these alternative fuels. The subgroup noted the GST framework should note the statewide GST plan include a detailed analysis and discussion so that the public is aware of the various considerations that have to be made and the emissions impacts of the different options.
- One subgroup member discussed the need to ensure no disproportionate impact to disadvantaged communities and the need to prioritize financial and technical assistance to these communities to move to cleaner alternatives, specifically building electrification.
- District thermal energy networks was discussed as another element that should be considered in the gas transition.
- One GST subgroup member inquired about how the alternative fuels criteria considers benefits to in-state economic development. An Alternative Fuels subgroup member noted the inclusion is broad but meant to consider workforce impacts, business retention, reduction of economic leakage, and potential in-state economic benefits.
- Subgroup members discussed the need to include an analysis in the GST framework on what tech will be necessary to maintain safety and reliability of the energy system, including zero-dispatchable generation.