

Gas Transition Subgroup Meeting Notes

Meeting Details:

- 10/5/22, 1:00-2:00

Council Member Participants:

- Rory Christian
- Mario Cilento
- Donna DeCarolis
- Gavin Donohue
- Dennis Elsenbeck
- Bob Howarth
- Roberta Reardon
- Raya Salter
- Paul Shepson

Meeting Agenda/Key Takeaways:

- The subgroup reviewed final suggested revisions of the Scoping Plan Gas System Transition chapter.
 - The subgroup resumed debate over the phrase “downsizing of the fossil gas system.” Subgroup members who support using that phrase contend that it was fully discussed and agreed upon in an open meeting of the Climate Action Council and should not be re-litigated by the subgroup. Some subgroup members expressed concern that the phrase could be taken to imply the physical removal of pipes, which may not be the optimal strategy for reducing use of fossil gas. Some subgroup members cautioned that sections of the system cannot be removed without affecting the system as a whole and incurring significant costs to remaining ratepayers. One member maintained that sections of the system must be dismantled to accommodate lower throughput, or the higher pressure necessary to sustain the system at lower volume will result in increased GHG emissions. Another member clarified that a plan must be developed for how to deal with idle pipeline, but the Climate Action Council is not the right body to develop that plan. The subgroup agreed to modify the phrase to “strategic downsizing of the fossil gas system.”
 - Two subgroup members recommended against including language pertaining to the “potential repurposing of pipelines for uses other than delivering gas to customers” on the grounds that that language is vague and may confuse readers of the Scoping Plan. The subgroup agreed to remove this language.
 - One subgroup member recommended removing the sentence, “Bankruptcy of gas utilities should be avoided,” stating that raising bankruptcy as a potential concern could affect gas utilities’ credit ratings.
 - One subgroup member stated that language referring to in-state and out-of-state emissions should be modified to reflect the limitations of current methods of measuring methane emissions.