

CORNISH ENERGY COMMITTEE MINUTES

July 6, 2026, 7:00 – 8:30 PM

Cornish Town Offices and via Zoom

ATTENDEES:

In person: CEC members Susanne Haseman, Bill Schmidt and Stuart Foote; Joanna Sharf (Cornish), Tony Newton (Cornish) and Doug Cogan (Clean Energy New Hampshire)

Via Zoom: CEC Members Richard Thompson (scheduling conflict) and Mike Belanger (scheduling conflict); Dick Gendron (Cornish) and Kurt Yuengling (NH Department of Environmental Services).

APPROVAL OF JUNE MEETING MINUTES: Stuart moved adoption of the minutes and Bill seconded. The minutes were approved.

NEW ENGLAND HEAT PUMP ACCELERATOR PROGRAM PRESENTATION: Kurt Yuengling, Community Engagement Specialist at the NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), presented on the New England Heat Pump Accelerator (NEHPA) program. This program emanated from NHDES's efforts in developing a climate action plan for NH. A total of \$450 million has been provided by the US Environmental Protection Agency to five NE states – NH, Maine, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island (Vermont is not participating) – to incentivize distributors and contractors to make more heat pumps available to residents at lower cost. NH is to receive \$45-50 million. The program has two main goals: to make it easier for residents to access rebates and other cost reductions, and to install 500,000 new heat pumps across NE in four years. The Vermont Energy Investment Corporation, a nonprofit organization based in Chittenden County, VT is the regional implementer of the program, and Connecticut is the lead state on the grant. Kurt described the various components of the program, the details of which are available on the accelerator website: <https://www.nehpa.org/>. The program terminates at the end of 2029. Kurt also discussed other clean energy funding programs: the NHDES Climate Pollution Reduction Grants (<https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>), the NH Department of Energy Home Electrification and Appliance Rebates Program (<https://www.des.nh.gov/climate-and-sustainability/climate-change/climate-pollution-reduction-grants>) and NH Saves heat pump rebates (<https://nhsaves.com/residential/electric-heating-cooling-equipment/>). The Committee discussed a possible educational webinar on the accelerator program and these other programs to make residents aware of the opportunities.

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE/CLEAN ENERGY FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES: Doug Cogan from Clean Energy NH provided an update on several pieces of clean energy legislation that have now been signed into law by the Governor:

SB 540, which establishes a legal framework for “plug in” or “balcony” solar. It will not be available/legal until UL establishes safety standards.

SB 440, which allows town select boards to designate CPACER districts without a town meeting vote. CPACER is a private lending program for clean energy and energy efficiency improvements to commercial properties.

HB 1594, which establishes fees for EV vehicles since EV drivers are not paying gasoline taxes.

HB 1733, which prevents default utilities from recouping losses from non-default utility customers, except in “extraordinary circumstances.”

Another bill, SB 538, which would establish 20 year terms for net metering agreements for municipal projects, has passed the legislature but has not been signed into law. Doug then

shared information about various funding opportunities from the NH Department of Energy and NHDES for schools and replacement of non-passenger diesel vehicles. Joanna urged the Committee to remind the Select Board about these programs.

COMMUNITY POWER COALITION OF NH UPDATE: Bill briefed the Committee on the new CPCNH and default utility rates for the period August 1, 2026 through January 31, 2027. CPCNH has set a weighted average rate of approximately 15.2 cents per kWh, which is 7.5 percent lower than Liberty (16 cents) and roughly 7 percent higher than Eversource and the NH Electric Coop. While higher, the CPCNH rate is closer to the Eversource and NHEC rates than during this last rate cycle. Liberty had submitted to the PUC a rate of 21 cents in order to recoup losses, but the Public Utilities Commission reduced it to 16 cents. Similarly, Eversource had submitted a rate of 15 cents, but the PUC reduced it to 14 cents. Over the past two years, Liberty and Eversource have experienced losses of roughly \$48 million. So far, the PUC has allowed them to push recoupment of most of these losses out into the future. Meanwhile, CPCNH is making steady progress in restoring its financial health and rebuilding reserves after last year's losses. The Committee discussed the need for an update on the new rates for Cornish residents. Bill said he could work on something in the next 5-10 days. The Committee welcomed Joanna as the new second alternate (along with Bill) to CPCNH.

PLUG IN/BALCONY SOLAR: Stuart and Tony discussed the current state of plug-in solar, which was recently enabled by a new law in NH. They cautioned that plug-in solar is not legal or safe until installation standards are established by UL (formerly Underwriters Laboratories) in its UL 7300 proceeding, which is underway. Plug-in solar is growing rapidly in Europe, but those countries have residential electricity systems that are quite different from those in the US. Stuart and Tony offered to work on a piece for Connect Cornish that will warn Cornish residents against going out now and buying equipment and plugging it into their homes.

TOWN ENERGY DATA COLLECTION: No update for this meeting. Joanna offered to help out if needed.

CEC WEBSITE UPDATE: Joanna reported that the Select Board is reviewing the new and updated content.

Remaining items on the meeting agenda were deferred to the August meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 8:31 PM

Next meeting: August 3rd, 7:00 – 8:30 PM