

Just Transition Working Group, Meeting 7
February 23rd, 2021
9am-11pm

Attendance:

Working Group Member Attendees

Roberta Reardon, Co-Chair
Doreen M. Harris, Co-Chair
Vincent Albanese
Omar Freilla
Patrick Jackson
Gary LaBarbera
Michael Padgett
Brian Raley
John B. Rhodes
James Shillitto
Maritza Silva-Farrell
Lara Skinner
Theodore J. Skerpon
Candis Tolliver
Randy Wolken

Other Attendees

Adele Ferranti
Carl Mas
Chris Pinheiro
David Quickenton
Don Applyrs
Jamie Dickerson
Jane Thompson
John Williams
Kara Allen
Kate Muller
Mark Coleman
Tania Allard
Yvonne Martinez
Adam Ruder
Alex Pozdnyakov
Arianna Menzelos
Carolyn Ryan
Chris Hall
Elgie Holstein
Kendra Hems
Kerene Tayloe
Paul Allen
Paul Beyer
Ron Epstein
Tania Allard

Meeting Summary:

Introduction, Roll Call, and Member Updates

- Commissioner Reardon kicked off the meeting, called the roll, and walked through the meeting agenda. See slide 2 for additional details.
- Commissioner Reardon invited working group members to share recent highlights and other updates.
 - *No major updates were provided.*

Recap of Public Engagement Session and Public Comment & Working Group Reflections

- Commissioner Reardon provided a recap of the overall public and stakeholder input process and a summary of key topics raised in the public engagement session. See slides 5-6 for additional details.

- President Harris then provided a summary of key topics raised in written comments. See slide 7 for additional details.
- President Harris then welcomed members to offer their reflection on the public engagement session and the public comments.
- While working group members considered their thoughts, President Harris announced that Chair Rhodes will be departing from the Public Service Commission (PSC).
 - **Chair Rhodes:** *Notes that his term is up in February and he'll be leaving the PSC. Notes it has been a privilege to work on this clean energy agenda with these colleagues. The clean energy transition is also a jobs transition, and everything is better when you plan ahead and are mindful. With respect to the workforces employed in facilities whose future is uncertain, it's critical to do our best job of planning for the workers and the communities. Plan well for the transition and organize the services to do it collectively with partners.*
- **Discussion:**
 - **Randy Wolken:** *Regarding the public engagement session, he was glad to see a focus on building pathways to future work through apprenticeship.*
 - **Omar Freilla:** *Was reflecting on the comments and a few stressed a reframing of what we typically think of with the transition. At least one person mentioned not prioritizing some to the exclusion of others. Not just focusing on those who are in the existing industries that are to be cleaned up or prioritizing them over others. Also, in terms of what we heard about the demographics of the industries; they are disproportionately white. He sees part of the transition as a transition away from a segregated workforce and away from opportunities that aren't accessible by all. We can create opportunities for others who want to get into the industry, such as people from communities of color.*
 - **James Shillitto:** *Wanted to thank Chair Rhodes for his comments. He knows we need to focus on minorities and disadvantaged communities, but does feel strongly that people in the current industry do need to be considered on how they'll transition, whether it's into retirement or other jobs. Not the sole focus, but the primary focus as they're the ones providing the power now and will be in the future.*
 - **Commissioner Reardon:** *Thanks the members for their thoughtful contributions. It will be a difficult task to balance everyone's concerns, but we cannot disadvantage one group over another. Thanks John Rhodes and notes she values his thoughtfulness and that he's an important part of this conversation.*

Workforce Training & Development

- President Harris introduces the next section of the meeting, which focuses on some of the workforce training and development considerations for initiatives and ideas discussed by the Working Group.
- Adele Ferranti provides an overview of demand side workforce initiatives and considerations, supply-side workforce initiatives and considerations, just transition considerations, and general considerations. See slide 10-19 for additional details.
- **Discussion:**
 - **Maritza Silva-Farrell:** *Really appreciates the thoughtfulness of thinking about workforce opportunities. Wants to raise a few concerns she has in terms of how to move implementation of CLCPA in a way that does not undermine opportunities. She wanted to raise concern about a budget line that has been discussed at the state level that could undermine jobs in energy efficiency. To make folks aware, there is a Part R of the*

Transportation, Economic Development, and Environmental Conservation (TED) Bill that will prevent NYC Local Law 97 from being fully implemented because it expands the market of renewable energy credits (RECs) to large buildings. She is concerned about the market and the loss of opportunity by allowing this to happen. We could be creating energy efficiency jobs and workforce development is key, but we need to create the market or else there won't be jobs.

- **President Harris:** *Notes this is a good point and is happy to speak at any point the topics she is raising. This is one of the most nuanced aspects of our work that we're part of a broader movement here – at the NY and federal level. It is the case that we'll need to figure out the best ways to work together. Specifically related to the changes in Part R, this was a change to align the law to the clean energy standard and for those who are aware, it is providing a temporary approach to the procurement of RECs to offset emissions in those buildings, but strongly emphasizes we are committed to the investments in buildings, efficiency, and the jobs those investments will create.*
- **Omar Freilla:** *To Maritza's point, he isn't familiar with the details of what was discussed but wants to make sure we pay attention to the mechanisms that finance the transition. Would like to learn a little more about that. Related to the presentation, he liked the range of proposals.*
- **Gary LaBarbera:** *Would like to share information on the Governor's proposal on the purchase of RECs. The Governor's intention was that from purchasing RECs, the money will go into the market and will ultimately support the renewable energy marketplace. The intention of Local Law 97 is noble, but he is not certain, based on his conversations with numerous building owners, that Local Law 97 will result in the job creation they're expecting. There isn't much that buildings built in the past 5 years can do. Part R will put money back into the market which makes more sense than paying penalties.*
 - **President Harris:** *The Governor's proposal has brought a healthy dialogue across these issues related to Local Law 97 and the balance of issues with buildings. RECs are an instrument reflecting the environmental attributes related to generation. NYSERDA procures these RECs through long-term contracts. Local Law 97 already allowed for some RECs.*

Discussion: Just Transition & Transportation

- Commissioner Reardon introduces four members of the Climate Action Council's Transportation Advisory Panel, including:
 - Kendra Hems of the Trucking Association of New York
 - Kerene Tayloe of We Act for Environmental Justice
 - Elgie Holstein of the Environmental Defense Fund
 - Paul Allen of MJ Bradley and Associates
- Adam Ruder, NYSERDA's Assistant Director for Clean Transportation, provides a brief overview of the work the Transportation Advisory Panel's work and the four main areas in which they are developing strategies, including:
 - Electrification and cleaner fuels
 - Public transportation
 - Smart growth
 - Financing and market-based programs
- See slides 21-23 for additional details.

- The full group participates in a discussion around the potential impact of these strategies on businesses and workers and how to ensure the elements of a just transition are represented in the panel's approaches.
- Discussion:
 - **Kerene Tayloe:** *Identifies colleague Charles Callaway, and notes their perspective has been on how we provide that training to get people skilled up. The challenge is that people typically hire who they know so we need to break out of those social constructs and relationships that come to job creation.*
 - **Commissioner Reardon:** *At DOL, they have a jobs bank. Asks if this is a community not known to the hiring entity or is there some other barrier they're facing?*
 - **Charles Callaway:** *Has been running training program for last 4-5 years, and they did a great job of training folks in the solar industry. They ended up going to Omar's group – the Green Worker's Cooperative – and they were there for about 6-7 months and trained ten guys. They stood together and they started subbing out as a unit. Ended up working with a guy in Croton and he hired the whole team. Understanding how this works, it was better for them to create their own entity and supply a workforce for a company. Just understanding that the doors are not as open as we'd like to think.*
 - **Kendra Hems:** *When we look at the introduction of zero emissions vehicles into the market, we can bring them to market, but have to consider who is equipped to maintain those vehicles. There are some BCOES trainings and technical schools that provide it, but there is a big focus on diesel engines. There is not enough training to meet what will be needed. She came across a partnership in California between Volvo and a community college where Volvo is working directly with that school to assist in training. This is where we need to go, but how do we get there and how do we develop these partnerships? Oftentimes, the students we see come into these fields didn't necessarily have an interest in the technical fields, but the trades are quickly requiring people be technical and computer savvy.*
 - **Paul Allen:** *Thinks part of what is emerging in the Transportation Advisory Panel is a sense of the timeline and complexity that this transition is going to take. One way to think about it is that this is a generation long evolution of the transportation system and it converges with a couple of other complicated sectors, primarily but not exclusively the electric grid. It'll take 20 years, but in that period of time, the complexity of the skillsets needed for skilled trades jobs is going to change and we need to anticipate this now as this has implications for STEM education and early childhood education. There's an interesting model that New York Power Authority has been engineering to do STEM education in environmental justice vicinities and it's small-scale now, but has shown real promise. We can anticipate today that the future might not be too different in 2-3 years, but will be in 20 years.*
 - **Commissioner Reardon:** *What you're really talking about is transitioning workers from a fossil fuel to green economy. In transportation, that transition is perhaps going to be 20 years long to fully get to the other side, but in that transition we will need workers that can work on both kinds of systems until eventually workers will have rudimentary knowledge about fossil fuel systems and greater knowledge about electric vehicle systems. Educating workers to make that bridge will occur at different velocities in different parts of the sector and in different regions. These workers will have two set of skills, but we will need to determine how we make that transition and have people who supply the workforce participate in that.*

- **Paul Allen:** *That is well said and will have implications for how it all gets paid for. Private capital can finance some of it, but likely cannot finance all of it. There is a public interest here that we address past failings that have created massive disparities. We can do these things but recognize that they're all part of the same ball of wax.*
- **Elgie Holstein:** *With respect to the way we think about and plan the skillset, he finds himself remembering the repeated urgings of Bill Clinton that what we need to plan for is lifelong learning. We should be thinking about continuous and lifelong approaches as opposed to trying to guess the skillsets that will be needed now and hoping the economy moves in that direction. He can understand frustration when people are trained, and companies hire other people for a slew of reasons. Addressing the demand side is one way to overcome this. The clean energy and transportation transition is going to require lots of government subsidies because the cost of this transition is high, and conditions are rapidly evolving. There needs to be continuous thought process on how we attach conditions to these government programs in the design phase.*
- **Kendra Hems:** *This is a great point. Something they're doing currently is trying to build pipelines. This is what we're going to have to look at as we move forward as well as identify employment needs to ensure we are training for those things that are needed.*
- **Kerene Tayloe:** *To Elgie's point on the continuing education piece, how can that be offered in a way that doesn't feel like a burden? Typically, once you begin the trade, are those things already in place? If not, how do we make the case for that and not make it a burden or cost prohibitive? Is it offering these classes for free?*
- **Kendra Hems:** *Within the trucking industry, there are a variety of continuing education opportunities, especially as it relates to technicians. Oftentimes, vendors will come in and train technicians on specific technologies. Oftentimes, the company has those vendors come in and provides this for free to the technicians because the company has an incentive for these technicians to understand these technologies.*
- **Randy Wolken:** *In our experience working with manufacturers, he believes all jobs are becoming technology jobs. They continue to require ongoing learning. What do you do if you're in the industry but can't afford school? You need to be able to learn at the job. We need to create better pathways for new workers to learn these skills. He is a big fan of apprenticeship programs because it's essentially learn and earn. They've been working with schools on career awareness – the reality is you need to continue to have career awareness because you may change employers or careers. Higher education is part of this, but really falls on employers so finding ways to encourage/incentivize employer investment. This is a long-term effort but if you start with demand side and work way back to education, we'll end up with some well thought out pathways.*
- **President Harris:** *This is an issue we at NYSEDA have grappled with for a long time: how to ensure these folks entering the workforce have the necessary skills.*
- **Adele Ferranti:** *As we've been supporting workforce training in the clean energy sector, the trainings they support are all driven by business needs which are informing the curriculum. Completely agree with everything that's been said. It is important to train business needs to new workers. We have provided free/low-cost training and other opportunities to support that worker looking to advance their skills.*
- **President Harris:** *Very appreciative of the time the Transportation Advisory Panel members took to brief JTWG on their thinking.*

Subgroup Updates

- Kara Allen provides an update on the work of the Business Impacts subgroup. See slide 25 for additional details.
- Jamie Dickerson provides an overview of the Power Plan Inventory and Reuse Subgroup. See slide 25 for additional details.

Next Steps

- President Harris provides an overview of next steps including:
 - Climate Action Council Meeting: Friday, February 26, 3-5pm
 - March JTWG Meeting: Wednesday, March 3, 1-3pm
 - March JTWG Meeting: Tuesday, March 23, 1-3pm.