

Just Transition Working Group, Meeting 10
August 5th, 2021
10am-12pm

Attendance:

Working Group Member Attendees

Roberta Reardon, Co-Chair
Doreen M. Harris, Co-Chair
Vincent Albanese
Henry Garrido
Patrick Jackson
Santos Rodriguez (Representing Gary LaBarbera)
Michael Padgett
Brian Raley
James Shillitto
Theodore Skerpon
Lara Skinner
Randy Wolken
Tom Kaczmarek

Other Attendees

Adele Ferranti
Carl Mas
Frank Ciampa
James Wilcox
Jamie Dickerson
John Williams
Kate Muller
Mark Coleman
Tania Allard
Chris Pinheiro
David Quickenton
Jane Thompson
Yvonne Martinez
Paul Beyer
Sarah Crowell
Alex Pozdnyakov
Josh Williams

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.
 - **Patrick Jackson:** *Shared that on August 2nd, Corning entered six long-term commitments for solar projects in New York State. Thanked President Harris for her support and noted the projects would not have been possible without NYSERDA and NY-Sun. Added that they recently released their corporate sustainability report and submitted a response to CDP in July. Lastly, noted they will support the hosting of a symposium on harmful algal blooms later this year at Hobart and William Smith College.*

Power Plant Site Reuse Planning Update

- President Harris provided an update on the Power Plant Site Reuse Planning Services and Technical Assistance program and detailed how planning support services will be provided. \$5m in grant funding is now available for local communities to apply and express interest in pursuing site reuse planning studies for aging plants in their community. See slides 4-6 for additional details.
- *Discussion*
 - *No questions or comments*

Guest Report: Brownfields Opportunity Area (BOA) Program

- Sarah Crowell (DOS) provides an overview of the BOA program, including details on the program process, program outcomes, and select examples. See slides 7-20 for additional details.
- Discussion
 - **President Harris:** Asked how federal funding may influence the BOA Program.
 - **Sarah Crowell:** Responded that the whole point of BOA is to direct other investments. Added that it can be a critical tool in finding projects for those funds to be invested in that we know are community supported. Noted that the worst thing is to come in with these huge investments and create an uproar or disrupt the community you are trying to support.
 - **Paul Beyer:** Added that he sees the BOA program as the purest form of smart growth in that it truly integrates those three e's we rely on: equity, economy, and environment, and now the fourth "e" of energy. In that respect, it not only contributes to climate change goals, but the equity goals and it empowers communities. Noted it is like creating a grassroots movement, rather than just creating a plan.
 - **James Shillitto:** Noted that these were good examples and asked if they will be provided to communities as an example of what was done in other areas, so they better understand the potential of participating.
 - **Sarah Crowell:** Responded that the best way to start this process is for communities to learn from each other to better understand what the potential is. Added that they are working hard and can sometimes forget to share success but have the examples on the website and can share these more. Noted this is a good idea and that case studies are critically important.
 - **Randy Wolken:** Asked for more information on the best way for communities to engage in this process, as many of these projects are developed by developers. Added that one of the things they've noticed is there are not enough industrial sites for manufacturers.
 - **Sarah Crowell:** Responded that what they've seen with past communities is to encourage them to apply for a grant and provide the resources to develop the plans and partnerships. Added that some approaches they taken include setting up conferences, workshops, and meet and greets where you can bring developers and investors together with communities. Emphasized there is no magic bullet, but it is important to bring everyone to the table to identify all needs and figure out how they can best be met.
 - **Randy Wolken:** Asked if IDAs in particular would be good partners.
 - **Sarah Crowell:** Responded yes and that IDAs are often active partners in BOAs, especially in areas with more industrial uses.
 - **Tom Kaczmarek:** Following up on James' earlier point, asked if there are any opportunities to share best practices with communities to shorten the timeframe to some extent.
 - **Sarah Crowell:** Responded that this is a good point and something they've been working on. They don't yet have a guidebook on the process from start to end but noted that guidance is important and is something they are working on and will hopefully have soon.

- **President Harris:** Added that offering she described earlier and the toolkit they are building through that undertaking could also be a resource for that type of activity, though focused more on power plants.

JTWG Jobs Study Update

- Josh Williams (BW Research) provided an overview of the Jobs Study background and workplan, the methodology and structure, as well as next steps. See slides 21-40 for additional details.
- Discussion
 - **Santos Rodriguez:** When you speak about prevailing wage and unionized rates, are you discussing whether there should be prevailing wage or unionized rates implemented within the jobs study scope?
 - **Josh Williams:** Responded that they have built in the best estimate of what we know, but then potentially adding a dial that says, “if we were to increase unionization rates, what impact would that have?”. The idea being, if you institute different policies, what impact would that have. Added that we know in certain industries, if we increase unionization it will have big impacts and in others it will have less of an impact, so it would be able to show this impact.
 - **Santos Rodriguez:** Asked for clarification on what “big impact” means in this context.
 - **Josh Williams:** Responded that if you were to develop a policy with increased unionization requirements, they would put this as a dial for the model to see what impacts this would have on employment.
 - **Santos Rodriguez:** Noted that he applauds everyone for doing this and that it is just as important that when we think about prevailing wage and unionization, that we don’t see investments in people as a cost. Noted that this will raise the standard for people who will be investing in their own communities and he is not sure if this is measured. Added that time and time again, when we talk about prevailing wage and unionization, folks say there is a cost to that, but the cost is not a cost when you think of it as investment in people.
 - **Josh Williams:** Responded that their job is just to show what the impacts are. Added that something they’ve seen in a lot of these jobs studies is they do not spend much time on job quality and prevailing wages, and this is something this study will be showing. The study will show as the jobs change, what prevailing wage and unionization rates look like. Added it’ll be a data point that can be examined while looking at the different scenarios.
 - **Henry Garrido:** Asked if this analysis examined the role of the public sector within the job sectors described.
 - **Josh Williams:** Responded that they have not analyzed any actual scenarios that they are going to be presenting and they have only done dry runs. Noted that the data they have right now, he would call draft or dry runs, and that they are still in the process of getting additional data. Added that there is a portion of the jobs they are looking at that are public sector. They have not yet split up the information enough to show this, but it will include both.
 - **Henry Garrido:** Asked for clarification on the part where Josh mentioned unionization rates as it applies to public sectors. Noted he is particularly concerned about the issue of preemption and that he is concerned it could become a tool that exacerbates the current utilization of industries that have traditionally hurt minorities and people of color or utilize cheap labor as a way of implementing this.

- **Josh Williams:** Agreed and noted the data showed today is an incomplete picture. Added there will be a lot more range in what these employment impacts will be once all sectors are modeled.
 - **Vincent Albanese:** Regarding residential and utility scale projections, noted that these projections look low and asked for additional clarification on where the numbers came from. Added that the construction job numbers seem low. Noted that, especially on the residential side, there are undocumented workers who are doing this work who may not be accounted for, as well as temp agencies. Highlighted that unless we are actually speaking to workers, he does not know that we will get accurate numbers of who and how many people are doing this work.
 - **Josh Williams:** Noted that Vincent is hitting on the key fundamental challenges they are facing. Added that the data they are seeing is old. They ran the scenarios from the Pathway scenario which is from last year. The draft 1 and draft 2 scenarios will reflect more realistic assumptions about where capacity additions will be for the utility scale solar as well as the distributed. They will more accurately reflect what the world looks like today. Regarding the second point, responded that we do need to understand the variation in terms of job quality and different ways that people are employed. That being said, noted that the model is really built on activities. They take activities and translate those activities into cost and see what employment will look like. They should be capturing the variation in employment. There will always be challenges and there will always be people employed that may not fall into different data collection techniques, which are issues they need to be aware of and refine, but moving forward, as long as they can connect the activities to the cost to the employment, it should be reasonably reflected where employment should be.
 - **James Wilcox:** Underscored the point Josh made that the numbers he showed are based on a preliminary illustrative analysis. Added that in the forthcoming analysis they will be making sure they are tracking deployment trajectories that are in line with the most recent procurement and making sure what is finally used in the study is in line with both near-term expectations and a pressure tested long-term view. Added that numbers will change but that is to be expected.

Workforce Training and Development Update: New Funding & Program Initiatives

- Commissioner Reardon provides an overview of JTWG workforce recommendations. See slide 43 for additional details.
- Adele Ferranti and Chris Pinheiro provided workforce development program updates and funding initiatives. See slides 44-45 for additional details.
- *Discussion*
 - *No questions or comments*

Other Updates

- President Harris provided notable and relevant updates from this spring's NY state budget.
- *Discussion:*
 - **Vincent Albanese:** Noted that it would be helpful to do a deeper dive on these items and have a larger conversation.

- **President Harris:** Responded that this can be slotted into a later meeting and, given the cross-cutting nature of these topics, they will want additional agencies/team members to be present.
- **Randy Wolken:** Noted it was great to see both the NY Businesses and Buy American provisions.

Next Steps

- President Harris provided an overview of next steps, summarized below. See additional details on slide 49.
 - JTWG to convene again in the autumn (likely late October; to be confirmed and scheduled).
 - Climate Action Council (CAC) work is ongoing, with a focus on gathering input from the CJWG and updating the integration analysis to reflect recommendations of the advisory panels.