

Clean Energy Fund Rural Clean Energy Work Group Kickoff Meeting Notes

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The Department of Commerce Energy Division hosted a virtual kick-off meeting for the Rural Clean Energy Work Group on October 13, 2021 to introduce the members of the group, discuss the work group charge and begin brainstorming ideas around how to meet the clean energy needs of rural communities.

ATTENDEES

- Stephen McFadden, Washington Economic Development Association
- Jennifer Harper, Energy Northwest
- Alison Halpern, Washington State Conservation Commission
- Georgine Yorgey, Washington State University Center for Sustaining Agriculture and Natural Resources
- Nick Cusick, Pierce Conservation District
- Scott Kuhta, Washington State Department of Commerce
- Clyde Abrahamson, Spokane Indian Housing Authority
- Mika McLean, USDA Rural Development
- Dever Haffner-Ratliffe, Washington State Department of Natural Resources
- Katie Ware, Renewable Northwest
- Mary Harrington, Washington State Department of Ecology
- Mia Devine, Spark Northwest
- Cody Desautel, Tribes of the Colville Reservation; Intertribal Timber Council
- Brian Young, Washington State Department of Commerce
- Washington State Department of Commerce: Angela LaSalle, Sarah Vorpahl, Jennifer Grove, Hans Berg, Forrest Watkins, Peter Moulton, Aaron Dumas, Altinay Karasapan, Jill Eikenhorst, Kristen Kalbrener, Gerardo Gonzalez-Gomez

PRESENTATION

The meeting commenced with introductions to the Work Group members. Commerce provided a recorded presentation discussing the Work Group's charge, charter and timeline. The presentation also covered the history of Clean Energy Fund programs and discussed gaps in past and current funding as well as future opportunities for rural communities. The recording and slides will be posted to the [Rural Energy program website](#).

The recorded portion of the meeting concluded with a Question & Answer discussion included below.

- Q: With dropping river and reservoir levels, are there any concerns about Washington depending on hydropower?
 - A: Energy strategy is aware of this and focuses on other energy technologies including resilient distributed generation
- Q: How do you evaluate the success of these past programs?
 - A: Measuring success varies by program and is still something Commerce is developing. Commerce always does some sort of after action evaluation. The

Energy and Climate Policy Advisory Committee recommendations were incorporated into many CEF4 and CEF5 programs. The report is available [here](#).

- Is the work group talking about all energy or would you like us to focus on electricity?
 - Because the proviso is broad and includes language on organic waste management and biological sequestration, the Work Group will focus on all energy rather than just electricity.

DISCUSSION

The second part of the meeting was not recorded. During this portion of the meeting, Work Group members began brainstorming the needs of rural communities. Work Group members were broken into four breakout groups where they were asked the following questions.

1. What do rural communities need irrespective of rural energy?
2. How have these needs changed from previous years with impacts from Covid-19?
3. What do you already know about your community partners and their priorities and needs?
4. Whose voice is not in the room?

Results from these discussions were categorized by theme.

REPORTS REFERENCED

Energy Policy Advisory Committee: Report on Clean Energy Fund Recommendations: The Energy Policy Advisory Committee reviewed the historical structure and outcomes of the Clean Energy Fund. The final report focused on recommendations for improvements to the Clean Energy Fund.

Biomass to Biochar: Maximizing the Carbon Value: This report, a collaboration between PNNL, WSU and other stakeholders, includes a year and half's worth of input from over forty biochar stakeholders on different perspectives on the needs for scaling up biochar. The report focuses on the technology, business development, biochar supply and supporting policy. The final report will be posted on the WSU website.