VERMONT SYSTEM PLANNING COMMITTEE

Draft Meeting Minutes
April 30, 2025
Rutland, Vermont

The Vermont System Planning Committee held a quarterly meeting on April 30, 2025. Shana Louiselle, VSPC facilitator, called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. Ms. Louiselle reviewed the agenda for the meeting.

Ms. Louiselle asked if there were any corrections or objections to the January meeting minutes. Mr. Munir Kasti requested a clarification on page 2 to specify that the Queen City Transformer serves Green Mountain Power. Ms. Louiselle incorporated the amendment, and with no further objections raised, the minutes were approved as amended.

Introductions

A list of attendees by sector appears at the end of these minutes.

Geographic Targeting Subcommittee Report

The Geographic Targeting (GT) Subcommittee will meet in June to review Vermont utilities' upcoming capital projects. This annual review identifies projects that may be suitable for non-wires alternatives (NWAs), using screening criteria established under Dockets 7081 and 7874. Projects with non-transmission alternative potential will undergo further analysis over the summer to inform the VSPC's November 1 recommendations to the PUC.

Flexible Load Management Working Group Report

Philip Picotte, Utilities Economic Analyst at the Vermont Public Service Department (PSD), reported that the working group met in April to review qualitative comments regarding the roles and responsibilities of the distribution utilities and Efficiency Vermont. A straw proposal summarizing proposed roles and responsibilities will be circulated soon. The next meeting to discuss the proposal is scheduled for May 15. Participants were urged to engage with the proposal to help ensure the group can fully address the Public Commission's questions and bring the effort to a close.

Coordinating Subcommittee

Ms. Louiselle reminded the Committee that the VSPC quarterly meeting schedule:

- July 16, 2025 – Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe
- October 29, 2025 – Killington Grand Hotel, Killington

Ms. Louiselle then proposed the following dates for the 2026 quarterly meeting schedule:

- January 21, 2026 – Delta Hotel, South Burlington
- April 29, 2026 – Kirk Alumni Hall, Middlebury
- July 15, 2026 – Trapp Family Lodge, Stowe
- October 28, 2026 – Killington Grand Hotel, Killington

The Committee had no objections to the proposed dates.

Load Forecasting Subcommittee Report

Hantz Présumé reported that the Load Forecasting Subcommittee met to kick off the 2025 load forecasting cycle. VELCO sent an RFP for forecasting services to six vendors, with three submitting proposals: Itron, Kevala, and Christensen Associates. Itron, which has provided forecasts for VELCO since 2009, submitted the lowest-cost bid and is the provisional front-runner. The committee reviewed the proposals and evaluation process, and provided feedback on Itron's past performance and suggested potential improvements for the upcoming forecast. VELCO will make the final vendor selection in early May.

The upcoming forecast will aim to improve alignment between VELCO's long-range transmission planning and the Distribution Utilities' (DU) Integrated Resource Plans by producing more detailed forecasts, potentially down to the substation level. Itron has indicated willingness to incorporate additional modeling elements, including solar PV, heat pumps, electric vehicles, flexible load management, storage, and dynamic rate structures—provided they receive sufficient data from utilities.

An alternative approach was proposed by Kevala, which received strong interest from subcommittee members. Kevala offers a software-based tool capable of generating granular, feeder-level forecasts using parcel data, census information, and distribution system characteristics. While the approach is promising—particularly for enabling Distribution Utilities to generate their own load forecasts—concerns were raised about the higher cost and the need for broader utility involvement with the software.

Mr. Présumé emphasized that a robust forecast approach depends on strong collaboration and timely data sharing from all stakeholders. Members were encouraged to update their organization's contacts for the Load Forecasting subcommittee roster if needed, and reach out to Shana Louiselle to be added to the distribution list if they wish to participate in the 2026 load forecast effort.

2024 VT Long-Range Transmission Plan – Frequency and Duration Analysis Update

Zakia El Omari, VELCO Senior Transmission Planner presented the final results of a frequency and duration analysis requested by Vermont utilities. The analysis supports the assessment of Non-Transmission Alternatives (NTAs) by quantifying how often and for how long such solutions might be needed during periods of peak system stress. For the Northern Vermont area, the study focused on a worst-case N-1-1 contingency scenario in 2033, identifying thermal overloads and voltage violations above a specific load threshold. Modeling showed that a 75 MW load reduction would be needed to maintain reliability. This threshold would be exceeded on 29 days, with the most severe day requiring two separate five-hour reductions—a total of 10 hours of curtailment. These results highlight winter peaks in January as a key driver of system stress. In Northwestern Vermont, overloads were projected on the West Rutland–Middlebury line and at the Middlebury transformer under summer conditions. The analysis found that an 80 MW load reduction would be required on 11 days, totaling about 30 hours of

reduction, with a maximum of five hours on a single day.

Region	Required Load Reduction	Year	Frequency: Days with load above critical level	Duration: Longest daily reduction	Total reduction hours
Northern VT	~75 MW	2033	29 days	5 hours (twice per day)	2x5 hours on worst day
NW VT	~80 MW	2033	11 days	5 hours (once per day)	~30 hours total

This analysis provides critical input for the NTA design, helping planners understand the scale, frequency, and duration of potential demand-side solutions.

2024 VT Long-Range Transmission Plan – NTA Analysis Update

Kamran Hassan from Green Mountain Power shared the recent VELCO analysis has provided a clearer problem statement for the NTA analysis, and would like to evaluate the lower bound of the worst case scenario by incorporating additional sensitivities such as EV charging control and the implementation of adjusted ambient air ratings (AAR) being mandated by FERC Order 881. Mr. Hassan noted that AARs could meaningfully reduce winter peaking in the northern areas and affect the duration of need.

GMP will convene a NTA study group to define and evaluate NTA solutions. This group will be facilitated by GMP, with VELCO playing a supporting role. The goal is to start convening this group over the summer, once additional analysis is complete, and the problem statement is clearly defined.

PUC Case No. 24-3351 Update

Mary Jo Krolewski with the Vermont Public Utility Commission shared the Commission is considering the potential for scheduling a workshop related to Case 24-3351. She emphasized the need to coordinate this workshop without delaying the NTA process and highlighted the importance of informing future planning cycles. The Department of Public Service agreed that efforts to improve coordination and planning should proceed in parallel with the current NTA work. The goal is to support timely completion of the next long-range transmission plan while laying groundwork for improved processes in future planning cycles.

ISO-New England Update

Eric Johnson from ISO-New England provided updates across markets, operations, and system planning. He noted that colder weather in February led to higher demand and elevated energy prices. While oil and coal resources were used during that period, the resource mix in March and April returned to typical patterns, with an 18% year-over-year increase in grid-connected solar and a 7% rise in wind generation. Wholesale market costs for energy rose slightly compared to 2023, as shown in ISO's COO reports.

Johnson also discussed a backstop mechanism filed with FERC in February to address potential federal import tariffs on electricity, though no tariffs are currently in effect. The mechanism would only be

implemented if the region receives a bill, and ISO-NE continues to argue that such tariffs should not apply to electricity imports.

On system planning, Johnson highlighted the launch of Phase II of the 2050 Transmission Study process, enabling states to request ISO-NE to run RFPs for transmission projects tied to state policy goals. The first such RFP was released on March 31, with proposals due in September. Unlike traditional reliability planning, ISO's role will be to evaluate proposals rather than plan solutions directly.

Forecasting updates in the upcoming 2025 CELT Report include a shift to incorporating energy efficiency directly into the base forecast rather than as a separate category. Lower-than-expected EV and heat pump adoption rates—particularly in Massachusetts and Connecticut—have resulted in a downward adjustment of electrification forecasts.

On interconnection reforms, Johnson explained that FERC's Order 2023 has led ISO-NE to transition from a serial queue process to a first-ready, first-served cluster approach. This change aims to prioritize more viable projects by increasing financial requirements for queue entry. Currently, the interconnection queue holds over 36,000 MW, though this number is expected to decline as speculative projects are filtered out.

Finally, Johnson shared that ISO-NE CEO Gordon van Welie recently testified before Congress on reliability, stating that the near-term outlook is stable, but long-term reliability will depend heavily on the pace of electrification, retirements, and the development of new resources.

The full presentation is available here.

Asset condition management update & Power BI demonstration

Frank Ettori, Director of ISO-New England Relations at VELCO, shared that aging transmission infrastructure across New England is driving a sharp rise in asset condition investments, with a regional five-year forecast of approximately $1.4 billion annually. Projects such as Eversource's large-scale cable replacements in Boston and Hartford have drawn regional attention, prompting growing concerns over transparency and cost prudency. In response, the New England Transmission Owners (NETOs) have developed several tools and processes to improve consistency and oversight, including a standardized structure rating system, shared project templates, and a regional asset condition guidance document.

To address continuing concerns from regulators and ratepayers, NETOs are advancing the creation of an independent asset condition reviewer for projects exceeding $5 million. ISO New England has agreed to take on this role, with support from NESCO and other stakeholders, to ensure technical justification and transparency for major asset condition expenditures. Frank emphasized that while transparency has improved, further scrutiny is needed around assumptions and replacement thresholds to ensure investments are prudent and equitable across the region.

Brett Huntley, VELCO Asset Maintenance Engineer, and Jarrod Lee VELCO Data Engineer, presented a demonstration of a newly developed Asset Condition Dashboard, a Power BI-based tool designed to consolidate and visualize the health of every transmission structure in VELCO's system. The dashboard integrates data from drone inspections, ground-level pole testing, structural attributes, and criticality scores, creating a cumulative A–D ranking for each structure. The tool is already being used internally to support Transmission Line Refurbishment (TLR) planning and prioritize structure replacements.

While still in development, the dashboard is expected to be fully populated by Q3 2026. Planned

enhancements include factoring in site accessibility, environmental conditions (e.g., proximity to river corridors), and additional data overlays. The tool is not currently public or transferable to other Transmission Owners (TOs), as it is deeply tailored to VELCO's internal systems. However, the concept and framework have been shared in regional forums, and the approach has sparked interest among other TOs and regulators.

Policy and Project Updates

PUC Case No. 25-0339 Resilience Proceeding: Anne Margolis, Deputy Planning Director at the Department of Public Service, reported that following the Department of Public Service's petition in February, the Public Utility Commission officially opened the resilience proceeding in March under case number 25-0339-PET. The initiative stems from the conclusion of Green Mountain Power's Zero Outages Initiative and aims to explore questions surrounding the definition of resilience, how it differs from reliability, and how planning, benefit-cost analysis, and metrics should reflect this distinction.

A kickoff workshop is scheduled for May 15, supported by technical assistance from Lawrence Berkeley National Lab and the University of Texas at Austin. The workshop will review national best practices and present a proposed path forward. It will also lay the foundation for a series of three working groups focused on: planning, valuation, and measurement of resilience. These groups are expected to meet multiple times over the summer and into early fall, with the goal of producing status updates and potential recommendations for Commission action, Department guidance, or legislative consideration.

A scheduling poll will be issued after the workshop to set the first sessions for each working group. Stakeholders interested in participating were asked to hold potential dates in June and early July.

Attendance

* Indicates voting member
** Indicates alternate

Public Sector

*Tim Duggan, Residential representative
**Susan Paruch, Residential representative
*Taylor Newton, Regional Planning Rep
**George Gross, Regional Planning rep
**Steve Crowley, Environmental representative
*Michael Kirick, Commercial representative
**Molly Mahar, Commercial representative

Transmission Utility (VELCO)

*Hantz Présumé, VELCO
**Frank Ettori, VELCO

Distribution Utilities Providing Transmission (GMP, VEC)

*Kamran Hassan, GMP

Large Transmission-Dependent Distribution Utilities (BED, WEC, GF)

*JJ Vandette, WEC
*Munir Kasti, BED
*Jeff Cram, GF Power

Transmission Dependent Distribution Utilities (Municipals)

Heather D'Arcy, VPPSA
John Dasaro, Enosburg Falls Water & Light
Michael Gadway, Village of Ludlow
Jackie Pratt, Stowe Electric
Michael Lazorchak, Stowe Electric
Sarah Braese, Hardwick Electric
Scott Johnstone, Morrisville Water & Electric

Supply & Demand Resources

*Dave Westman, EVT
*Jonathan Dowds, Supply Representative
*Tom Lyle, BED

Non-Voting Members

Lou Cecere, PSD

Staff

Shana Louiselle, VELCO

Guests

Amber Widmayer, BED
Anne Margolis, PSD
Betsy Bloomer, VELCO
Bill Barnes, Encore
Brett Huntley, VELCO
Brian Hall, VEC
Cam Twarog, GMP
Cyril Brunner, VEC
Dan Nelson, VELCO
David Mullet, All Earth Renewables
Deidre Morris, PUC
Garth Dunkel, VPPSA
Jarrod Lee, VELCO
Jay Pilliod, VEIC
John Abbott, VPPSA
Khalid Osman, VELCO
Laura Coriell, LightShift
Lucas Looman, VELCO
Mary Jo Krolewski, PUC
Morgan Casella, DO
Paul Lambert, EVT
Paul Pickna, VEC
Philip Picotte, PSD
Rowan Cornell-Brown, PUC
Salam Baniahmed, VELCO

Tom Dunn, VELCO
Tom Knauer, PUC
Warren Coleman, MMR
William Jerome
Zakia El Omari, VELCO