VERMONT SYSTEM PLANNING COMMITTEE

Draft Meeting Minutes
October 29, 2025
Killington, Vermont

The Vermont System Planning Committee held a quarterly meeting on October 29, 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 July meeting minutes. Dave Westman made a motion to approve and Jackie Pratt seconded. The minutes were approved without objection.

Introductions

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

Geographic Targeting Subcommittee Report

Ms. Louiselle reported that the Geographic Targeting Subcommittee met on September 9 and October 27 and reviewed project screenings for VELCO's East Fairfax substation and Washington Electric Cooperative's Mount Knox and Jackson Corner substations. All projects screened out of further analysis, with the VELCO project identified as asset maintenance and the WEC projects falling below the cost threshold. Members also commended the geographic targeting process, highlighting the WEC review as an example of the screening framework working as intended and providing useful clarity for future regulatory filings.

The subcommittee presented its draft 2025 geographic targeting recommendations, including a recommendation to develop a reliability plan for the Northern and Northwestern areas of concern identified in the 2024 Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan. After noting minor date corrections in the revised draft, the committee approved the recommendations for filing with the Public Utility Commission.

John Abbott moved and Taylor Newton seconded approval of the GT recommendations, which were approved without objection.

The recommendations will be filed with the PUC by January 15, 2026.
[Note: the recommendations were filed on November 4, 2025.]

Forecasting Subcommittee Report

Zakia El Omari, VELCO Transmission Planning Engineer, reported that the Forecasting Subcommittee plans to meet in mid-November, with a target date of November 17 at a location to be determined. The meeting will focus on an update from Itron on the development of the load forecast, including historical load trends, comparisons to the 2024 forecast, and key assumptions related to EVs, solar PV, and potential battery storage. Members emphasized the importance of broad stakeholder participation, particularly in person, to support productive discussion and alignment on assumptions that inform the Long-Range Transmission Plan. Efficiency Vermont will provide a brief presentation on its upcoming demand resource plan filing at the November meeting. Materials from Itron will be shared in advance.

Flexible Load Management Working Group Report

Philip Picotte, Utilities Economic Analyst at the Vermont Public Service Department (PSD), reported that a first draft of its report has been circulated and is now in final stages, with comments being incorporated. The working group reached near consensus in support of maintaining the status quo, with distribution utilities retaining responsibility for program leadership and activation, and Efficiency Vermont (EVT) continuing to enable flexible loads in close partnership and at the utilities' direction. A key takeaway was the need for greater coordination among distribution utilities, particularly related to cost allocation as loads are flexed. The group did not select a methodology for quantifying benefits; related work is underway through the EEU Technical Advisory Group and will inform EVT's role, though it will not fully resolve this issue for distribution utilities. A revised draft is expected within about a week, followed by final comments, with the final report to be submitted to the Public Utility Commission in November. No additional FLM Working Group meetings are planned unless requested or directed by the PUC.

Coordinating Subcommittee

Ms. Louiselle reported that the next VSPC quarterly meeting is on January 21, 2026 at the Delta Hotel in South Burlington, VT. The April 29 meeting will not be held at its usual Middlebury College location due to construction and will instead be temporarily located at the Middlebury Inn.

ISO-New England Update

Eric Johnson, Executive Director for External Affairs at ISO New England, joined by Carrie Schliftinger, the State Policy Advisor for Connecticut and Rhode Island provided a regional update. They announced the CEO transition effective January, with Vamsi Chadalavada succeeding the retiring Gordon Van Wheelie. The ISO's annual open board meeting is scheduled for November 5 in Boston, featuring a public comment session on the Regional System Plan (RSP), which guides transmission projects for regional reliability. Market highlights showed typical seasonal shifts in electricity demand and generation, while the 2025 Annual Work Plan outlines key projects including capacity auction reforms and a new asset condition reviewer initiative. Stakeholders are invited to comment on the asset condition reviewer framework through November.

The operations update highlighted the annual report on electric generation air emissions, tracking long-term trends in SOx, NOx, and CO2 reductions due largely to the displacement of coal and oil by natural gas and increasing renewables like wind and solar, which accounted for 7% of 2024 generation. Weather and imports from Quebec impact the emissions profile year to year. The report is available for review, showing periodic emissions increases tied to coal and oil plant operation during extreme weather.

On system planning, the 2024 economic study is in its reporting phase, analyzing how the resource mix must evolve to meet future reliability and emissions goals. Key findings include: achieving up to 85% of state emissions reduction targets is feasible, but costs rise steeply beyond that; electrification will increase demand significantly after the 2040s; land-based wind and solar PV are economically viable resources; shifting peak demand hours, especially through managed electric vehicle (EV) charging, can reduce costs; deep decarbonization will cause renewable curtailments, which managed charging can help mitigate; and dispatchable resources remain critical to reducing overall system build-out needs.

ISO's longer term transmission planning efforts include a study projecting doubled, winter-peaking demand by 2050, necessitating major investments, particularly to move over 1,000 MW of Maine wind power southward. A 2025 RFP received six proposals, now under evaluation, with updates forthcoming via the Planning Advisory Committee.

Regarding interconnection, the ISO discussed FERC Order 2023, which changes the interconnection study process from a "first-come, first-served" to a "first-ready, first-served" approach and raises entry requirements to reduce speculative projects. New England has been using cluster studies for interconnection since before the order, and a transitional cluster study phase began in October 2025, expected to continue through most of 2026. An interim report is anticipated mid-2026, with a full report by year-end.

On capacity market reforms, the ISO is proposing significant changes, including shifting from a forward auction held three years ahead to a prompt auction closer to the delivery year, with the next auction planned for 2028. Future plans include transitioning from annual to seasonal auctions to better align with resource capabilities and refining resource accreditation to more accurately value reliability contributions. These reforms are ongoing, with continued stakeholder engagement expected through 2026.

2024 Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan Update

2024 NTA Analysis Update: Cam Twarog, System Planning Engineer at GMP, reported that the NTA Working Group has focused on quantifying existing flexible resources on the system, including approximately 100 MW of EV charging in the northern zone and about 20–30 MW of storage capacity managed by GMP and other utilities. The study group is working to allocate these loads and resources by utility to assess how current demand management and storage programs impact the NTA solutions needed to address system deficiencies.

Ongoing analysis includes applying assumptions based on utility-specific EV charging programs and existing storage resources functioning as peak load reducers during critical periods. Biweekly meetings will continue until agreement on assumptions and analysis is reached, with draft project-specific action plans for the northern and northwest zones targeted for January 2026.

The study group highlighted the need to update the baseline problem from the Long-Range Transmission Plan by incorporating VELCO's duration and frequency analysis and existing resources. The Geographic Targeting Subcommittee will review these assumptions in November to align stakeholders and determine any remaining resource needs.

PUC investigation – 2024 Vermont Long-Range Transmission Plan PUC update: Mary Jo Krolewski from Public Utility Commission provided an update on the October 9 workshop, which covered filings and

information requests in the ongoing proceeding. The PUC is reviewing workshop input and preparing a draft order to summarize key takeaways, which may also include additional requests for information. The anticipated order will focus on clarifying lessons learned—particularly around solar coordination, the use of adjusters, and whether updates to the 7081 process are needed. While the current planning cycle is already underway, the goal is to develop staff recommendations to the Commission to inform future NTA analyses and planning processes.

Champlain Hudson Power Express & New England Clean Power Link update

Representatives from Transmission Developers, Inc. (TDI), including Josh Bagnato, Senior Vice President of Development, and Tom Vaccaro, Vice President of Business Development, provided an overview of TDI's transmission development work, with a focus on the Champlain Hudson Power Express (CHPE) project and the New England Clean Power Link (NECPL). They introduced CHPE as a fully underground and underwater HVDC transmission project delivering Hydro-Québec power to New York City, now approximately 85–90% complete and expected to be operational by May 2026. The project, developed under a NYSERDA Tier 4 solicitation, required extensive permitting, land agreements, and construction across multiple jurisdictions and water bodies.

The presentation then shifted to NECPL, a permitted HVDC project connecting Québec to Vermont, which TDI is now proposing as a bi-directional line to function as a "green battery" for New England by leveraging Hydro-Québec's reservoir storage. TDI and Hydro-Québec commissioned modeling that found significant regional benefits, including avoided construction of more than 3 GW of new generation creating $11B in net present value of ratepayer savings, reduced renewable curtailment, and improved reliability during extreme weather events. The analysis showed complementarities between Québec and New England load and generation profiles, supporting the value of bi-directional transmission as long-duration energy storage.

Policy Updates

FERC Order 901 – Reliability Standards for Frequency and Voltage Protection Settings and Ride-Through for Inverter-Based Resources: Holly Haynes, NERC Compliance Manager at VELCO, reported on the FERC Order 901, issued in October 2023, that directs NERC to address growing grid reliability risks associated with inverter-based resources (IBRs), including both utility-scale and distributed energy resources, through a four-milestone framework extending into the late 2020s. Milestone 1, completed in January 2024, established a comprehensive work plan, definitions, and prioritization framework, including changes to registration thresholds and a multi-phase effort to identify and register previously unregistered IBRs. Milestone 2 focuses on new and revised reliability standards for IBR ride-through performance during disturbances, shifting from capability-based to performance-based requirements, with phased compliance beginning in 2027 and extending to 2030. Milestone 3, now nearing filing, addresses data sharing and model verification and validation, representing a significant change for generator owners, transmission owners, and planners by requiring validated performance data and improved modeling for system studies. Milestone 4, still under development, will establish new standards governing how IBR performance data must be used in planning and operational studies, with details and applicability still evolving. Overall, Order 901 creates new responsibilities for transmission and generator owners centered on accurate data provision, performance monitoring, and coordination, with the goal of ensuring reliable grid operation as IBR penetration continues to grow.

PUC Case No. 25-0339 Resilience investigation of Vermont's electric grid: Anne Margolis with the

Vermont Public Service Department, provided an update on the distribution system resilience proceeding, noting that the effort is nearing completion. The proceeding, led under the auspices of the Public Utility Commission, began with a kickoff workshop in May and included three topical working groups focused on planning, valuation, and measurement. Each working group met three times over the summer and fall, with the final meeting held on October 3. A straw proposal developed by Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and the University of Texas at Austin was issued midway through the process, followed by written comments and additional discussion to inform departmental recommendations. In response to stakeholder feedback, a draft set of recommendations will be shared for informal review in late November before final recommendations are filed with the Commission. Supporting technical partners will continue work through February on additional analyses and resources to accompany the final filing.

Attendance

* Indicates voting member
** Indicates alternate

Public Sector

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

Transmission Utility (VELCO)

*Marc Allen, VELCO
**Frank Ettori, VELCO

Distribution Utilities Providing Transmission (GMP, VEC)

*Kamran Hassan, GMP
**Michael Beaulieu, VEC

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

*JJ Vandette, WEC
*Munir Kasti, BED

Transmission Dependent Distribution Utilities (Municipals)

*Michael Gadway, Village of Ludlow
*John Dasaro, Enosburg Falls
*Jackie Pratt, Stowe Electric
**John Abbott, VPPSA

Supply & Demand Resources

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

Non-Voting Members

Lou Cecere, PSD
TJ Poor, PSD

Staff

Shana Louiselle, VELCO

Guests

Anil Adhikari, National Grid
Anne Margolis, PSD
Barry Ahern, National Grid
Betsy Bloomer, VELCO
Brian Connaughton, VELCO
Bill Barnes, Encore
Brian Hall, VEC
Bradley Williams, BED
Cam Twarog, GMP
Dave Carpenter, DRM
David Mullett, All Earth Renewables
Eric Johnson, ISO-NE
Garth Dunkel, VPPSA
James Weber, VPPSA
Jay Pilliod, EVT
Josh Bagnato, TDI-NE
Kerry Schlichting, ISO-NE
Khalid Osman, VELCO
Laura Coriell, FirstLight
Lucas Looman, VELCO
Marc Allen, VELCO
Mark Sciarrotta, VELCO
Mary Jo Krolewski, PUC
Paul Nadeau, BED
Paul Pikna, BED
Peter Fitzgerald, INS Engineering
Peter Sterling, REV

Philip Picotte, PSD
Tom Dunn, VELCO
Tom Knauer, PUC
Tom Vaccaro, TDI-NE
Zakia El Omari, VELCO