

Transmission Corridors Work Group

MEETING #1 (SEPTEMBER 22, 2021) SUMMARY

Opening

Kathleen Drew, Chair of Washington Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council (EFSEC), opened the Transmission Corridor Work Group (TCWG) meeting by sharing that the TCWG was established as a part of the Clean Energy Transformation Act and EFSEC was charged with leading the effort due to its siting and permitting expertise. Drew commented that part of achieving clean energy goals is ensuring that enough transmission is transported from where it is generated to where it used. However, with transmission not governed by a single entity, the process is neither straightforward nor easy. Drew further highlighted that the labor and renewable energy industry are not listed as required members of this workgroup, but that both sectors will contribute greatly to the collective understanding of transmissions issues and will be included going forward. By bringing in the labor and renewable energy industry and identifying needs, challenges, opportunities, and pathways to the future, the working group will help to achieve these energy goals.

Following Drew's introduction, Anna Lising, who serves as a Senior Energy Policy Advisor in the Governor's Office, emphasized the need to put collective thought towards achieving 100% clean energy and the importance of transmission in this process. Through the bipartisan infrastructure framework, Washington is working to get funding to build new transmission and authority to manage multi-state corridors to accelerate transmission build out and clean energy goals.

Rob Willis, Ross Strategic facilitator, further welcomed members and provided an overview of the meeting objectives and agenda. Willis shared that the meeting would be [livestreamed](#) for public participants. Following the opening remarks, committee members provided self-introductions. The complete roster of TCWG members and the record of their attendance can be found in [Appendix A](#). Further meeting materials, including an agenda and speaker presentations, are available on the [EFSEC website](#).

The objectives guiding the meeting included clarifying expectations around TCWG goals, establishing a common understanding of the transmissions system in Washington, and identifying what information is needed for future meetings.

Charter Review

Willis provided an overview of the legislative charge, approach, and scope for the TCWG. Facilitated discussion regarding edits to the draft charter included:

- Outcome #1
 - Define non-emitting generation to clarify renewable generation inclusion
 - Non-emitting electric generation includes electricity from a generating facility that provides electric energy, capacity, or ancillary services to an electric utility and that does not emit greenhouse gases as a by-product of energy generation

- Establish a timeframe for new electricity transmission decisions to establish an understanding of priorities
 - What are the resource needs for achieving 2030 and 2045 targets?
 - Are there reliability and congestion drivers that will affect the need for immediate transmission upgrades?
- Clarify the distinction between transmission lines and distribution lines
- Outcome #2
 - Identify the types of upgrades needed in the system, beginning with BPA analysis
 - Analyze energy, capacity, and flexibility needs
 - What is the intersection with upgrades needs and what are the implications?
 - Include consultation with tribes for pathways of proposed energy projects
 - Understand geographic implications for habitat and species
 - Consider the impact of out-of-state transmission lines and new line construction in terms of cost and timing
- Outcome #3
 - Develop full understanding of environmental review needs, including bringing in natural and cultural resources

In discussion regarding TCWG operations, Drew further raised the legal requirement to consider input from public review.

Level-Setting

The Transmission Corridor Working Group invited hosted representatives from Department of Commerce, Bonneville Power Administration, and the Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council to establish a common understanding of the transmission system in Washington. Presentations shared during level-setting can be found [here](#).

Washington State Energy Strategy and Clean Electricity Standard - Glenn Blackmon, Department of Commerce

Work group member Glenn Blackmon, manager of the Energy Policy Office at the Department of Commerce, provided an overview of the 2019 Clean Energy Transformation Act (CETA), which provides for clean, affordable, reliable, and equitable electricity services for the state of Washington. Blackmon detailed CETA’s requirements to transition to 100% clean electricity by over the coming 25 years. Blackmon also provided a detailed review of the energy modeling used to develop the 2021 Washington State Energy Strategy and the electricity-related recommendations in that strategy. The strategy recommends that Washington accelerate development of renewable generating resources and the bulk power transmission system, in anticipation of new demands for electricity to replace fossil fuels in transportation, buildings, and industry.

Following Blackmon’s presentation, work group members posed questions about modelling assumptions used in some of modeling work for the “electrification” scenario of the Washington Energy Strategy. Blackmon shared that since the WA Energy Strategy’s release, the Department of Commerce has been involved in some interstate transmission planning discussions. In response to concerns about the effects

of climate change on the power system, Blackmon referred members to recent analysis by the Northwest Power and Conservation Council.

Transmission Overview: How it Works in the State of Washington - Anders Johnson, Bonneville Power Administration

Anders Johnson, with Bonneville Power Administration (BPA), provided an overview of how transmission works within the State of Washington. Johnson shared an introduction to BPA's facilities, depicting the network of 15,000 miles of transmission lines in Washington. Johnson elevated the importance of transmission as it enables end-users to access cost-effective, clean, and diverse supply sources. He also provided an in-depth understanding of transmission benefits, reliability and safety standards, design considerations, and generation interconnections.

Discussion from work group members centered around flow gates and the significance for new generation projects. TCWG members further raised questions regarding expansion and transmission reinforcement. Johnson clarified that reinforcement can often be met with low-cost substation equipment that can mitigate outages and improve electrical performance.

Transmission Line Permitting in Washington State - Joseph Wood, Energy Facility Site Evaluation Council

Joseph Wood provided a high-level overview of transmission line permitting. Wood explained that one of the tasks of the TCWG is to identify environmental options that may be required to complete designation of corridors without compromising environmental protection. Wood provided a general outline of Federal, State, and Local options for transmission line permitting in the state of Washington.

Initial Information Assessment

Susan Hayman, Ross Strategic facilitator, outlined an interactive exercise requesting TCWG members to consider the following questions regarding needs for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution facilities, areas where transmission and distribution facilities may need to be enhanced, and environmental review options and recommendations on ways to expedite reviews.

- What questions do we need to address?
- What information do we think we need?
- Where can we find it?

In responding to the need for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution facilities, TCWG members raised questions regarding state and regional needs, grid reliability issues, and current transmission capacity bottlenecks. Members identified initial assessment of transmission needs from a utility, state, and regional perspective. Recommended sources of information identified included utilities, BPA, renewable energy developers, and regional studies among others.

Key questions to address transmission and distribution facilities enhancements centered around where available capacity was located in the transmission system, current areas of transmission congestion, and reliability problem areas. Further information needed for continued assessment included identifying potential energy sources and location within core areas.

When considering environmental review options and recommendations on ways to expedite the process, TCWG members raised the importance of defining environmental review. Members further highlighted considerations such as tribal consultation, environmental justice, habitat and shoreline impacts, and greenhouse gas emissions tied to transmission corridors. To address these questions, participants requested the identification of critical habitats and other sensitive environmental and cultural areas, as well as the impacts to other energy sources.

Participating members in attendance identified the above via an interactive Mural activity. The Mural results for each focused area can be found in [Appendix B](#).

Willis reminded participants that the activity will be open for a week following the meeting to allow members to continue to participate in the interactive activity and respond to prompts.

Public Comment

Fred Huette, with the NW Energy Coalition (NVEC) provided comment, noting his interest in this process as a stakeholder observer from a Washington Environmental Council task force. Huette explained his role in managing data resources related to transmission planning and assessment and offered NVEC's resources, found [here](#).

Closing

Willis shared that the Transmission Corridor Work Group facilitation team would share EFSEC resources, the Mural activity, and meeting presentations following the session.

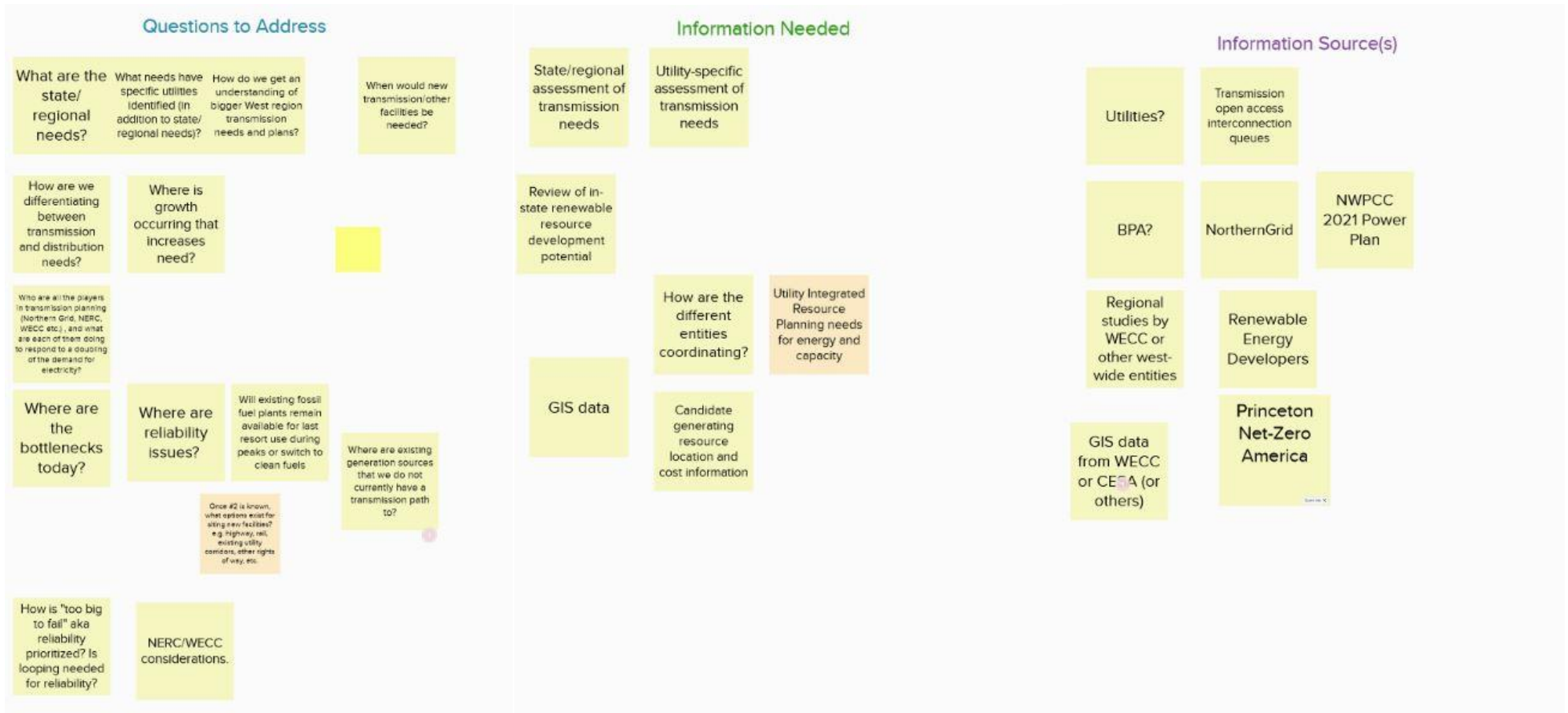
Kathleen Drew thanked participants for their time and sharing their expertise, perspective, and viewpoints to develop a product that is substantive for the legislation.

APPENDIX A: MEMBERS/ALTERNATES IN ATTENDANCE

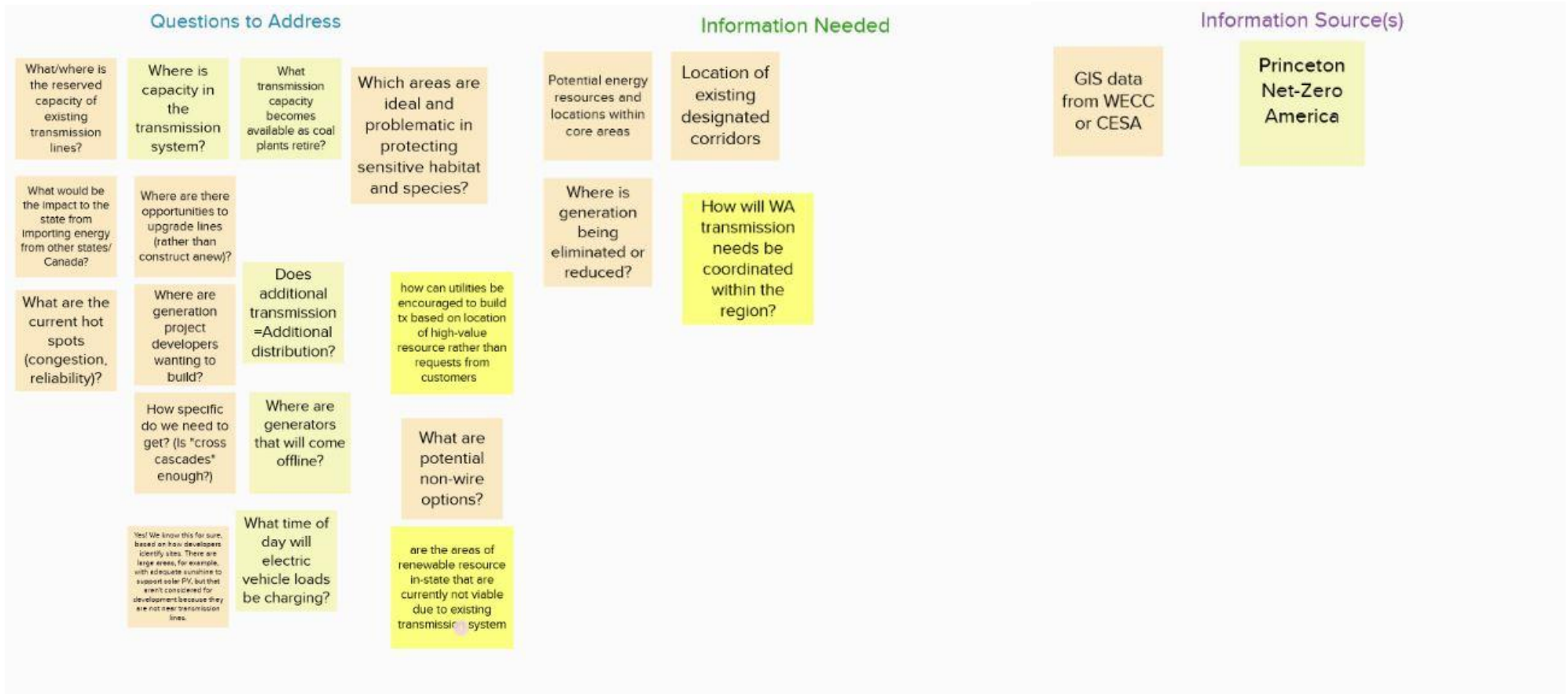
Affiliation	Member Name	Attendance
Department of Commerce	Glenn Blackmon	Y
UTC	Elizabeth O'Connell	Y
Department of Ecology	Brendan McFarland	Y
Department of Fish and Wildlife	Benjamin Blank	Y
Department of Natural Resources	Loren Torgerson	Y
Washington State Department of Transportation	Ahmer Nizam	Y
Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation	Allyson Brooks	Y
Military Department	Bernard (Rick) Jackson	Y
Association of WA Cities	Julie Coppock Clint Whitney	Y Y
Association of WA Counties	Kevin Shetty Lindsey Pollock	Y Y
Public Utility Districts	Nicolas Garcia	Y
Sovereign Tribal Governments	Dana Miller Steven Mullen-Moses	Y N
Affected utility industries	Lorna Luebbe	Y
Statewide environmental organizations	Vlad Gutman-Britten Erin Saylor	Y Y
Bonneville Power Administration	Anders Johnson	Y
US. Department of Defense	Steve Chung	Y

APPENDIX B – MURAL RESULTS

Identify need for upgraded and new electricity transmission and distribution facilities.



Identify areas where transmission and distribution facilities may need to be enhanced or constructed.



Identify environmental review options and recommendations on ways to expedite reviews.

