

CLEAN ENERGY ADVISORY BOARD
Stakeholder Engagement and Marketing Committee Meeting

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

October 14, 2022 (Friday)

9:00-11:30 am

****Meeting was open to the Public ****

CEAB website hosted at energy.virginia.gov, direct link [here](#)

Call to Order

C. Bingham called the meeting to order at 9:03am.

Roll Call

Committee members present: Carmen Bingham, Hannah Coman, Susan Kruse, Katharine Bond

Committee members absent: Kirk Johnson

Virginia Energy staff present: Devyn Keller and Brook Vernon

Utility Consultations Discussion

Purpose of discussion: Per the Code of Virginia, the Board is required to “consult” with utilities for the purpose of determining how the utilities are informing low-income customers of ways to lower their energy usage and bills, and suggest ways for the utilities to further inform their low-income customers ways to lower their energy bills through access to solar power:

"That each investor-owned utility shall consult with the Clean Energy Advisory Board established by Chapter 554 of the acts of Assembly of 2019 in how best to inform low-income customers of opportunities to lower electric bills through access to solar energy."

The utilities have presented to the Board what their marketing and engagement plans have been in the past to engage low-income customers in their energy efficiency programs, and it was shared that at least two of the investor-owned utilities are currently undertaking work with respective consultants to increase engagement of their customers in programs offered by the utilities, and specifically for low-income programs. Additional information about these current processes and what additional efforts are underway at the third IOU need to be ascertained.

Next steps will be for C. Bingham and S. Kruse to develop an outline for a work plan for the committee members to gather information on the current work being undertaken by the IOUs and the cooperatives to further understand and provide recommendations for those specific utility's engagement and marketing plans to their low-income customers. It was also recognized that the information gathered by Virginia Energy staff from developers.

Stakeholder Engagement Plan

Guest speakers: Kajsia Foskey (Utility Organizer at VPLC) and Amber Poron (Outreach Coordinator, focused on statewide outreach in rural Virginia for VPLC)

Open discussion on successes and barriers for Community and individual engagement in southwest Virginia, noting several points common among rural communities: distrust of outsiders, LMI families are in survival mode (not a lot of bandwidth for non-priority needs), ease of access and understandability of the how and why programs, physical isolation, etc.

Discussion also included the disparate system of energy assistance programs, and the complexity of accessing the programs. A recommendation was discussed to develop a position of Virginia Energy Navigator that would be able to guide individuals through the process to find the most appropriate and beneficial energy assistance programs available to that customer. It was determined more information about potential funding sources for such a position needed to be researched and obtained before a full recommendation could be made to the Board.

Next Steps

S. Kruse and C. Bingham will meet to develop a work plan for committee to gather further information and then develop recommendations to the utilities for community engagement plans for the Board to consider.

Further inquiry with Virginia Energy Staff to determine available funding avenues for a Virginia Energy Navigator.

Conclusion

C. Bingham adjourned the meeting at 11:35am.