

Meeting Notes

Q1 2024 Natural Gas Advisory Committee

January 31, 2024

Webinar Only



Attendees:

Kevin Duell – NW Natural

Carlos Limon – Avista

Jackie Goss – Energy Trust

Michelle Wildie – Puget Sound Energy

Frank Wesley – Utilities and Transportation Commission

Laney Ralph – NW Natural

Joshua Dennis – Utilities and Transportation Commission

NEEA Staff: Alisyn Maggiora, Peter Christeleit, Brandon Lindquist, Aaron Winer, Becky Walker, Gloriana York, Tamara Anderson, Jason Jones, Neil Grigsby, Mark Rehley, Noe Contreras, Ryan Brown

Resources

- **Agenda packet on NEEA.org:** [Agenda Packet](#)
- **Master slide deck on NEEA.org:** [Slide Deck](#)
- **Meeting Recordings**
 - **Part 1:** <https://vimeo.com/913077401>
 - **Part 2:** <https://vimeo.com/913079152>

A. Welcome and Introductions

Update on Modulating Gas Dryers ([Slides 5-7](#) | [Packet pg. 3](#))

Noe Contreras (ncontreras@neea.org) presented on modulating gas dryers. The Gas Technology Institute (GTI) did work through a program called the Emerging Technology Program. NEEA staff asked GTI to take a deeper look at this technology through the lens of its feasibility in the Northwest, which was published in 2023 and shared with NGAC. GTI's field testing was in Chicago and Minnesota. For context, a standard commercial gas-fired dryer has only one firing rate. In the later stages of drying clothes, not as much moisture remains in the clothes and not as much heat is needed. This leads to energy being wasted and lost out of the flue. A company called BIO-Therm has a product that changes a single stage gas dryer into a two-stage gas dryer via the installation of a two-stage valve and controller, along with installing a temperature sensor into the dryer exhaust. This is a very simple solution and takes only 30 minutes per dryer.

Energy Trust Shareout on Modulating Gas Dryers ([Slides 8-15](#) | [Packet pg. 3](#))

Jackie Goss presented on Energy Trust's look into two-stage dryer valves. They have a new measure in 2024 and do not have results yet. The measure is limited to commercial-sized gas dryers and was implemented by TRC. Energy Trust looked at the wide range of savings estimated by GTI; weather adjustment was insignificant. After combining baseline information with the savings rate from GTI, on-premise laundry averaged 352 therms of savings annually. This is significantly more than coin-operated laundromats or laundry rooms in multifamily buildings. Energy Trust will be offering a measure for coin-operated laundromats in Washington, but not multifamily buildings.

Discussion

Kevin Duell (NW Natural): In this early stage, are you backchecking the usage and savings?

Jackie Goss (Energy Trust): We will have to wait until we have a lot more data to understand if our expectations are correct.

Carlos Limon (Avista): You don't have a distributor quite yet in the service territory, correct? You are also taking GTI's estimated install cost and see how it plays out?

Jackie Goss (Energy Trust): Correct. Noe has put us in touch with the distributor who makes this equipment and our program delivery partner, TRC, is working with them. Yes, to the GTI estimated install cost.

Round Robin

Utility members and NEEA program staff shared updates since the last quarterly meeting.

- A. Joshua Dennis (UTC)
 - The UTC has recently completed their biennial conservation plans and we're getting ready for generate rate cases coming in. Fully staffed.
- B. Carlos Limon (Avista)
 - Working on RFP for next biennium, started next CPA process at the end of 2023. Scheduling advisory group meetings. Working on dual fuel pilot, some of that may lead to equity barriers, including cost of equipment. On second year of pilot will do weatherization piece and looking at the equity impact there. Also running into situation where we can fund 100% on electric measures for named communities fund but can't on gas. Having to lean on CAP agencies and may encounter dissatisfaction from customers as a result. There is some ambiguity of code and clean buildings performance standards and its impact to low-income customers. Has been interesting trying to navigate that, with making recommendations and whether to electrify. One residential customer had a perceived increased bill.
- C. Michelle Wildie (PSE)
 - Working on Annual Plan. In midst of CPA process. Hybrid heating program had 76 installs done between June and December. 13 had a new furnace installed. Most installs costed ten to twenty thousand dollars, with some outliers. Have noticed for equity-based programs that low income agencies are very busy. In-person discussions with customers are still preferred even if running into issues with language and translation. PSE has it's bill discount program going on as well as a behavioral demand response program in effect this winter season.
- D. Ralph Laney (NW Natural)
 - Low-income equity needs assessment started a couple years ago, next one will be "energy burden assessment" and collaborate more with Oregon electric utilities to provide a more comprehensive look. Bill discount program went into effect January 1 and about three thousand customers auto-enrolled. There is also a behavioral energy efficient pilot in Washington. An advisory group encouraged specific language for low-income customers and we're looking to improve how to target that. Also kicking off evaluation work.
- E. Kevin Duell (NW Natural)
 - Have a gas heat pump pilot waiting to kick off and are waiting on lab units. Having challenges with equity. There is a lot of resource, but not a lot of uptake and a lot of friction in the programs. Would like to get gas heat pumps involved.
- F. Jackie Goss (ETO)
 - Dual fuel pilot is just now getting started with finding customers and installs. Equity-focused gas measures for standard gas furnaces.

Housekeeping and Looking Ahead ([Slides 20-39](#) | [Packet p.4-11](#))

- A. Cycle 7 Business Plan Update
 - a. Board is voting on the business plan on March 12. It is available online and includes a natural gas section. Currently working on contracting as it takes a long time and NEEA won't know the final funding until more contracting happens. Expecting an improved, more accurate business plan soon.
- B. Product Council Updates

- a. Recently had a Product Council topic of multifamily central heat pump water heaters.
 - b. Another Product Council topic was ventilation requirements for residential buildings in cold climates. This was based on work done by the Integrated Design Lab. The work was mostly around indoor air quality, but wanted to see what could be done without increasing energy consumption, especially with indoor air ventilation becoming a prominent topic in the COVID era.
- C. Condensing Water Heater Research
 - a. Aaron Winer and Anu Teja are looking for people who have purchased a condensing gas storage water heater in the last year to test a hypothesis that the condensing storage market could be a proxy for an early gas heat pump water heater residential market. If an NGAC member has access to customers (either through rebate applicants, trade ally partners, or other means), would they be open reaching out to them and directing them towards a compensated focus groups? This is a needle in the haystack search, so any help is appreciated. NEEA can provide, with the help of a contractor, a short blurb to funders to explain the proposal. Hoping to begin in April. Typically the compensation is should run roughly \$100 to \$150 dollars per customer via a Visa gift card. No PII information will be exchanged or transmitted.
- D. Workgroups Update
 - a. For the RPAC Federal Workgroup. Had a couple of meetings in 2023. Working on an agenda for late February, likely on home rebate programs and energy audit trainings.
 - b. The NGAC Dual Fuel Product Workgroup had a lot of discussion around field demonstrations that are in the planning process. PSE is getting interesting cost data. Will schedule another for April.
 - c. The CEAC Dual Fuel Workgroup had its third meeting in January. Talked about the current NEEA board policy around natural gas and a statement around fuel switching and are planning on getting more clarification on those policies. Working to get a final draft of operation policy document in late Q2 or early Q3. There will be a review period for this draft. Next meeting has not yet been determined.
- E. Reminder: Vicot Field Demo
 - a. This is the commercial sized gas heat pump that was tested at the GTI facility and worked great. If you have a site that would be good for deployment, let NEEA know soon.
- F. Notes and Action Items from October 22 and December 7
- G. Annual Charter Check-In
- H. Looking Ahead
 - a. Savings Reporting
 - i. Will do a review of key assumptions for savings reporting on March 6. Another, full-day, meeting will be on April 30 with a much larger agenda covering more assumptions and savings topics.
 - b. ERTU Measure Development
 - i. Jason Jones will be reaching out to funders on the phone to discuss plans around efficient rooftop units. Do you have any? Do you have measures? Do you need data or help?
 - c. Upcoming Stakeholder Engagements
 - i. Satisfaction survey was due February 9
 - ii. In-person stakeholder visits will be happening in 2024 to solicit feedback and continue to socialize the new business plan, as well as understand stakeholder needs.
 - d. Efficiency Exchange May 14-15
 - e. Upcoming Meetings and Events

Portfolio Update ([Slides 42-50](#) | [Packet pg. 12-22](#))

Natural Gas Portfolio Manager Peter Christeleit (pchristeleit@nea.org) and the gas team gave an overview of the current NEEA Gas portfolio. Currently, the portfolio is rolling up underbudget and the

2023 financials should reflect that. Peter gave a brief overview of NEEA's ILC Lifecycle stages and where each gas effort in the 2023 portfolio fit in. Peter also went through possible changes to the portfolio and how the gas team was adaptively managing the gas portfolio with a one to two-year outlook for activities and options. Noe Contreras (ncontreras@neea.org) then spoke on the current scanning work for combi units, dual fuel work, commercial dryers, HVAC, and commercial gas water heating. Mark Rehley (mrehley@neea.org) went through codes and standards updates. In the third quarter of 2023, NEEA staff submitted one comment letter to a request from the Department of Energy on consumer boilers. Mark discussed Washington Commercial and Residential energy code updates.

Washington Code was finished the public process last year, and then considering the 9th Circuit Court's ruling regarding the Berkeley gas ban, Washington initiated a smaller code process where with a technical advisory group and specifically targeted code updates. This has carved out a use for gas in residential and commercial use. Idaho code has largely remained intact after the Governor's Executive Order. The IECC 2024 development process was nearly completed in Q4 of 2023 after finishing the final round of reviewing code change proposals. Aaron Winer (awiner@neea.org) then discussed the ongoing North American Gas Heat Pump Collaborative. The Residential Space Heating Committee will be doing TRM workpaper templates in Q2 of 2024. A Commercial Gas Heat Pump Committee was greenlit. Peter Christeleit discussed NEEA staff presenting on dual fuel residential research synthesis. Jason Jones (jjones@neea.org) updated NGAC on the Efficient Rooftop Units program's quarterly progress and Tamara Anderson (tanderson@neea.org) provided an update on the High-Performance Windows program quarterly progress. They also went through the program 2024 goals. Aaron Winer gave an update on the efficient gas water heater program and the program 2024 goals. Program update details can be found in the packet. Neil Grigsby went through the Advanced Commercial Gas Water Heating 2024 goals.

Feedback, Wrap-Up, & Adjourn

A. Action Items

- 1) Jackie Ostroff to send Michelle Wildie an approval document with sources
- 2) Committee members be prepared to advocate for outreach once you hear from Aaron Winer on condensing water heating research. Aaron will then come back to NGAC once the RFP is finalized and update with details for use by utilities in outreach.
- 3) Jason Jones will be doing ERTU outreach via telephone
- 4) Mark will ask Tess Studley to follow up with Carlos Limon about Washington code trainings and resources.