

Meeting Notes
Q2 2025 Natural Gas Advisory Committee
April 16, 2025
10:30am – 3:00pm Pacific
Online Only



Attendees:

Kevin Duell – NW Natural
Carlos Limon – Avista
Jackie Goss – Energy Trust

Laney Ralph – NW Natural
Jodie Albert – Cascade Natural Gas
Joshua Dennis – Washington UTC

NEEA Staff: Alisyn Maggiora, Brandon Lindquist, Becky Walker, Ryan Brown, Debbie Driscoll, Emily Moore, Deborah Sunada, Dave Hammond, Noe Contreras, Jason Jones, Neil Grigsby, Melissa Mejía, Stephanie Quinn.

Resources

- **Agenda packet on NEEA.org:** <https://neea.org/committee-documents/q2-2025-ngac-agenda-packet>
- **Master slide deck on NEEA.org:** <https://neea.org/committee-documents/q2-2025-ngac-meeting-slides>

Welcome and Introductions

Round Robin

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

- A. Joshua Dennis (UTC)
 - Hiring energy planning positions with regulatory analysts and should be fully staffed by the end of the year.
- B. Jackie Goss (ETO)
 - Hiring a new senior-level engineer and having trouble with recruiting. For the position, looking for residential HVAC experience, or at least regulated-utility industry experience.
- C. Kevin Duell (NW Natural)
 - Working on pilots for commercial gas heat pumps in collaboration with NEEA; looking to supplement that work and have a parallel initiative of our own as well. The Technical Advisory Group is still in deliberations.
- D. Carlos Limon (Avista)
 - Interested in what others are seeing with uptake in gas furnaces. Avista seeing need to get more creative with incentives and anything else to make those appealing. Not sure what the cause is. Savings are dwindling from RTF and we're not sure why. Switching to mid-stream has yielded less savings. Working on conservation reports; getting a new Conservation Potential Assessment vendor.
- E. Laney Ralph (NW Natural)
 - Have seen decline in uptake for furnaces. The Energy Trust team is working on tweaking the measure, but it's not an apples to apples comparison with Avista. Integrated Resource Plan is due this summer. Working on Conservation Potential Assessment and drafts should be done this week. Working on Annual report for Washington.
- F. Jodie Albert (Cascade)

- Evaluation, Measurement and Verification (EM&V) results on residential envelope measures were presented at the CAG. Almost done with Conservation Potential Assessment, sending to CAG May 1. Finishing behavioral pilot on home energy reports (also doing EM&V on that).

Discussion

Debbie Driscoll (NEEA): Carlos, NEEA can send Washington furnace sales trends from our collection of region-wide sales data directly from the distributors.

Carlos Limon (Avista): I will let our analyst know. Thank you.

Gas Savings Portfolio Update and Dual fuel Measurement Guidelines (Slides [9-21](#), Packet [p. 3](#))

Ryan Brown (RBrown@neea.org), Manager of Market Analytics & Planning, presented on the Gas Portfolio Savings. First Ryan offered an overview of the current gas portfolio at NEEA, followed by a discussion of the 2024 co-created therm savings. The number of therm savings for efficient rooftop units increased significantly with most savings still coming from codes and standards. As expected, Cycle 6 savings will come in below the business plan range due to the unforeseen changes in the Washington Energy Code. The Cycle 7 forecast currently has a large amount of variance due to a number of factors including uncertainty around local, state, and federal drivers of fuel choice. Ryan then briefed the Advisory Committee on recent Dual Fuel Measurement Workgroup activities including the current working draft for decision-making.

Action Item: Ryan Brown to provide Carlos Limon a breakdown of the estimated Cycle 7 savings by technology and/or program.

Dual Fuel Residential HVAC Concept Development Update and High-Performance HVAC Program Overview (Slides [24-39](#), Packet [4-6](#))

Emily Moore (EMoore@neea.org), Director of Market Strategy & Execution, briefly teed up the next two topics and speakers by providing valuable context and emphasizing the need to balance near-term and long-term opportunities with the gas portfolio. Emily also provided the 2025 potential program advancement schedule. Deborah Sunada (DSunada@neea.org), Senior Program Manager for the Dual Fuel Residential HVAC potential program, presented on the savings benefits of the technology. Deborah discussed the reasoning behind pursuing dual fuel residential HVAC in the current climate as well as the barriers and opportunities associated and NEEA's role therewithin. Deborah also touched on the mid-to-long-term possibilities of expanded demand response capabilities. The milestone vote for Dual Fuel Residential HVAC will be on September 10, 2025. Importantly, the two questions Deborah is looking for feedback for from the Advisory Committee are "What questions do you have about the proposed Dual Fuel program concept?" and "Any concerns that we should be aware of as we develop the milestone documentation?"

Dave Hammond (DHammond@neea.org), Senior Program Manager for the High-Performance HVAC program, next gave an overview of the current state of the High-Performance HVAC program. The program is currently focused on electric heating and cooling systems. There is currently a natural growth hydronic air to water heat pump systems due to VRF systems not fitting the needs of all customers and because of refrigerant changes that are on the way. NEEA is therefore proposing to bring the gas heating system into the fold of the current program. The electric work already done lays a solid foundation for adding a gas component. Dave then walked through the barriers and interventions and next steps to program expansion. The program is currently looking Gas High-Efficiency DOAS field sites.

Discussion

Carlos Limon (Avista): For Dual Fuel Residential HVAC, have you defined a particular type of heat pump?

Deborah Sunada (NEEA): No. It will be the heat pump that is best for what situation the consumer finds themselves in.

Debbie Driscoll (NEEA): Having a range of options will also help with affordability.

Joshua Dennis (UTC): Have you discussed the customer experience with Dual Fuel Residential HVAC? This will be a large behavioral shift.

Deborah Sunada (NEEA): Yes, we acknowledge customer behavior and comfort issues and will continue to research this.

Jackie Goss (ETO): My biggest concern for Dual Fuel Residential HVAC is with customer bills increasing which is the indication from the few pilots that have come up so far.

Deborah Sunada (NEEA): The overall intent is to at some point have grid-enabled controls and infrastructure so that the most energy efficient switchover temperature is set automatically. For now, we must set a switchover temperature manually.

Carlos Limon (Avista): For High-Performance HVAC, I'd like to see something in the future that helps one understand all the groundwork that has already happened since we are skipping an ILC phase.

Jackie Goss (ETO): Have you considered the pros and cons of using a component vs system approach for High-Performance HVAC?

Dave Hammond (NEEA): We recognize that we may not get everything over the finish line at the same time using this approach with all four components but we see encouraging signs. We would be challenged in switching this to a component design since simply promoting a high efficiency DOAS system would not result in sufficient savings. We do have reasons to believe we can influence adoption of the full system design through education/trainings and codes/standards. The Washington State Code has adopted a version of VHE DOAS and specifiers are more adept at communicating the benefits to owners. We are also looking into encouraging incremental steps towards a full VHE DOAS design that compliment the various stages of equipment upgrades (emergency repair, planned replacement, proactive upgrades).

Housekeeping and Looking Ahead (Slides [50-61](#))

- A. Product Council update
 - a. Noe Contreras (NContreras@neea.org), Gas Product Manager, gave an update about the latest Product Council meeting. Low-Load Efficiency Heat Pump Performance was the topic: <https://neea.org/product-council-documents/low-load-efficiency-heat-pump-performance>.
- B. Notes check and action items from previous meetings
 - a. Feb 4: Noe Contreras shared details about refrigerants with Joshua Dennis from the WUTC.
- C. Looking ahead
 - a. NEEA is redesigning its website and looking at a May 2025 launch.
 - b. Upcoming meetings in 2025

- i. NGAC
 - 1. June 5 Interim Webinar
 - 2. No Q3 Meeting
 - 3. September 10 Interim Webinar – Plan to use for Dual Fuel Res HVAC milestone vote (90 min)
 - 4. October 28 Q4 Meeting
 - 5. December 10 Interim Webinar
- ii. Other
 - 1. June 17 Dual Fuel Product Workgroup
 - 2. April 30 and May 1 Cost Effectiveness and Evaluation Committee
 - 3. May 22 Regional Portfolio Advisory Committee
 - 4. June 18 Regional Emerging Technology
 - 5. May 20-21 Efficiency Exchange in Portland, Oregon
- c. NEEA is considering hosting 90-minute NEEA / Market Transformation 101 webinars for alliance members twice per year.

Quarterly Report Highlights (Slides [63-64](#) | Packet [pg. 4](#))

NEEA staff brief the Advisory Committee on recent activities and annual progress for the current Natural Gas Portfolio. Noe Contreras discussed the latest scanning opportunities including commercial water heating and dual fuel residential work. Mark Rehley, Director of Codes and Standards, talked about current items moving through Congress currently that may impede savings from the gas water heater standard that had previously come out. Mark also discussed current code activity in Oregon, Washington, and the 2024 IECC. Idaho and Montana are in the process of considering the 2024 IECC published last year. Neil Grigsby walked through the updates with the North American Gas Heat Pump Collaborative. The RFP selection process for the market characterization work for water heating in commercial buildings has been completed. NEEA has finalized funding commitments for the commercial gas heat pump committee in 2025. Melissa Mejía updated the group on recent events and conferences attended by NEEA gas team members, as well as the Advanced Commercial Gas Water Heating program. Melissa briefed the Advisory Committee on the 2025 goals for the program and explanations for them along with their success metrics; a goal from the original published 2025 Operations Plan has been modified and updated for that program. Jason Jones did likewise for the Efficient Rooftop Units program, there were no modifications from the previously published 2025 Operations Plan for this program.

Feedback, Wrap-Up, & Adjourn

A. Action Items and Feedback

1) Action Items

- a. Ryan Brown to provide Calros Limon a breakdown of the estimated Cycle 7 savings by technology and/or program.

2) Feedback

- a. None