Natural Gas Advisory Committee
Q4 2026 Meeting Notes

October 22, 2026
9:30am – 12:00pm Pacific
Online Only

Meeting Attendees

Committee Members:
Jodie Albert (Cascade Natural Gas)
Jackie Goss (Energy Trust of Oregon)
Paul Koenig (Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission)
Carlos Limon (Avista)
Laney Ralph (NW Natural)
Michelle Wildie (Puget Sound Energy)

Guests: None

NEEA Staff: Alisyn Maggiora, Becky Walker, Brandon Lindquist, Chuck Karras, Dave Hammond, Deborah Sunada, Emily Moore, Jason Jones, Mark Rehley, Neil Grigsby, Noe Contreras, Ryan Brown, Stephanie Quinn, Suzi Asmus

Resources

- Agenda Packet: Q4 2026 NGAC Webinar Agenda Packet
- Slide Deck: https://neea.org/resource/q4-2026-ngac-webinar-slides/

Welcome, Agenda & Packet Review (Slides 1-8 | Packet 1-2)

Alisyn Maggiora (amaggiora@neea.org) opened with the standing reminder that the Natural Gas Advisory Committee (NGAC) advises on the optimal composition of the Northwest Energy Efficiency Alliance's (NEEA's) natural gas portfolio, including formal milestone votes on program advancement. Much of the meeting prepared the committee for its December vote on Advanced Performance DOAS, or dedicated outside air systems, which is the Tier 1 item in the packet (page 3). The Tier 2 memo on Luminaire Level Lighting Controls (LLLC) plus heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) pilots (page 17) was informational, and Tier 3 resources are on page 2.

Round Robin Updates (Slide 9)

Members gave organizational and program updates against the standard prompts: big changes in programs or personnel; current challenges and lessons learned; how utility activities relate to NEEA's; sharable tools and materials; equity and hard-to-reach markets; and findings, filings and integrated resource plans (IRPs).

> **Carlos Limon (Avista):** Avista is working through feedback on its 2027 annual conservation plan ahead of the November 1 filing. In Idaho, Avista applied to suspend its natural gas efficiency programs because

current and expected avoided costs would not support a cost-effective portfolio, and the commission approved the suspension last month. The Idaho programs continue through December 31 as they transition out. Because Avista carries a positive tariff balance in Idaho, it will keep funding NEEA's natural gas work and low-income funding for community action partners through the end of 2027. It will also honor site-specific pay-for-performance contracts executed before December 31. Avista will reevaluate avoided costs each year to decide when to bring the programs back. Avista held its October Energy Efficiency Advisory Group meeting, with few natural gas items. Avista is expanding its home insulation program after low uptake, raising the existing-insulation eligibility threshold from R-11 insulation to anything under R-19. A pilot of a do-it-yourself home energy audit kit lets customers check out the kit, assess their homes at their own pace and get recommendations, which usually point to weatherization, insulation, air sealing and water heating. In-person audits remain available for customers who prefer them, and the kit helps those who don't want to wait on the waitlist or have someone in their home. Participation dipped during the wildfires but was strong enough to move the pilot into a full program. Carlos estimated that roughly forty percent of customers who requested a kit completed an audit.

Michelle Wildie (Puget Sound Energy): Puget Sound Energy (PSE) is making a concerted effort to offer customer surveys and materials in at least its area's top three languages, and in some cases the top six. That is a heavy lift but better for outreach, and PSE is still working out whether it will extend to all surveys and program evaluations. PSE has uptake statistics from earlier multilanguage efforts for anyone curious. PSE's integrated system plan is due in February, and its rate case filing should wrap up in January. Staff are also finishing evaluation exhibits for the annual filing. There were no major program updates.

Laney Ralph (NW Natural): NW Natural has no major personnel changes and is updating the annual plan for its Washington program. It is finalizing a language access plan that identifies the prevalent languages in its service territory and strategies for reaching those customers through programs. The team leading it presents the plan next week, and Laney offered to share it once final. NW Natural will file its Washington and Oregon IRPs separately, a big change from its last few IRPs, with a new IRP in Washington and an Oregon update this year. NW Natural held an open house for the Washington IRP on October 21, and working groups are kicking off. NW Natural is also still exploring what hybrid systems look like for a gas-only utility and is following NEEA's studies on them.

Jodie Albert (Cascade Natural Gas): Cascade Natural Gas is working on its conservation potential assessment and its IRP, and the IRP draft should go out in mid-to-late December. Cascade filed its low-income evaluation, measurement and verification report a few weeks ago, and Jodie shared the link in the chat.

Paul Koenig (Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission): It has been a busy year of filings for the commission's energy planning team. Staff hope to finish the IRPs and other filings by the end of the year, then turn to work beyond filings. Paul invited members to email him with questions.

Jackie Goss (Energy Trust of Oregon): Energy Trust is working with NW Natural on a new hybrid HVAC offering and is otherwise preparing for 2027. This summer it announced a new implementation contractor for its midstream commercial programs. Energy Trust plans to expand significantly the measures it offers through midstream, which amounts to introducing a midstream track that did not exist before. That work will be stood up through 2027, and requests for proposals are out for other program changes in future years.

Discussion

Alisyn Maggiora (NEEA): Carlos, on the do-it-yourself audits, are you using a virtual version? Idaho Power tried one after it was featured at an Efficiency Exchange session, and customers struggled with it or felt the virtual interaction was a little too big brother.

Carlos Limon (Avista): It might be similar. I believe we're working with HomeBoost, and it walks customers through the audit at their own pace.

Jackie Goss (Energy Trust of Oregon): I have a question for several of you, inspired by the evaluation Jodie just shared in the chat. I've had trouble finding evaluations from Washington utilities. Is there a way to search the website they all seem to be saved to, or do your utilities post evaluation reports on your own websites?

Jodie Albert (Cascade Natural Gas): You can search the commission's website by utility. The problem is that it returns every filing for the company unless you search with keywords or the docket number.

Michelle Wildie (Puget Sound Energy): The key is knowing which keywords you need, and that's tricky. It's something I've had to ask about over time, so I'm glad I'm not the only one.

Alisyn Maggiora (NEEA): Are docket numbers easy to come across, say with a quick Google search?

Jodie Albert (Cascade Natural Gas): I don't think so. I know our docket numbers internally, but if I were looking for something from PSE, I'd just search by keyword.

Housekeeping and Looking Ahead (Slides 10-28 | Packet 2)

Alisyn noted the September 9 webinar had no explicit action items; its key topic was the LLLC plus HVAC pilot opportunity. The notes are on neea.org.

Product Council updates

Noe Contreras (ncontreras@neea.org) reminded members that Product Council is under the Collaborate menu on neea.org, where anyone can suggest a topic and find past recordings in the Materials Library. He then summarized four recent sessions. Trane presented HVAC thermal storage for larger buildings, where heat removed during cooling melts stored ice and that energy can later provide backup or supplemental heat, shifting load between times of day. A second session covered regional power generation and resource adequacy as demand grows, along with the Integrated Design Lab (IDL) network NEEA helped establish at five Northwest universities nearly twenty years ago. A third, exploratory session looked at financing structures that would let private capital fund efficiency, storage and virtual power plants. The fourth session covered commercial secondary windows, which cost about a third of full replacement and cut U-factor fifty-nine to sixty-four percent compared to single-pane windows.

Discussion

Michelle Wildie (Puget Sound Energy): We've seen thermal storage used to offset cooling loads. Have you seen anything about offsetting heating loads? That seems to be a tough nut to crack.

Noe Contreras (NEEA): Yes. Heat moved out of the building melts the ice, so the vessel is holding that energy as heat. The presenters talked about using it to offset part of the heating load, so some of the British thermal units (Btus) come from storage and the primary heating source doesn't have to supply that energy. It works almost like a battery.

Michelle Wildie (Puget Sound Energy): So you'd be using the melted ice to offset the heating load?

Noe Contreras (NEEA): Yes. When you draw the heat out of that water and move it into the building, the water turns back to ice, so it cycles between ice and water.

Michelle Wildie (Puget Sound Energy): Okay, so like a thermal loop.

Carlos Limon (Avista): This is more for the committee in general. Going forward, it would help if each Product Council summary said up front whether NEEA reached out to vet the technology or the vendor reached out to you. Some kind of designation that NEEA is interested and sees value for the region, versus a salesperson with a shiny new widget, changes whether I spend resources looking into it now or wait until it's vetted further.

Noe Contreras (NEEA): That's a great question, and I'd like to take it back to the team.

Mark Rehley (NEEA): It's a good reminder that we can do more to make that clear. Product Councils fall into several categories. Some aren't of interest to NEEA but may be to utilities, especially industrial topics. Others tie to our work and are early-stage things we're exploring, and some are blue sky, like the financing session on general utility industry trends. We'll add a short statement indicating whether a topic is blue sky or something you should act on.

Carlos Limon (Avista): I appreciate that. I find a lot of value in these sessions even when they aren't something NEEA is working on, because they expose us to what's going on in the industry. For this group, it just helps to know whether you see a real natural gas opportunity.

Mark Rehley (NEEA): Going back to Carlos's question, secondary glazing for commercial buildings is something we'd love every utility to be thinking about. It's fuel neutral, and case studies, including one in Clark County, show it saves a lot of energy and dramatically improves comfort. It's a tough business because building owners rarely replace windows wholesale, so we're hoping building performance standards nudge them. If you're interested in commercial projects in your territory, let us know.

Informational memos

Alisyn invited questions on the LLLC plus HVAC pilots memo, and none came up. NEEA seeks to partner with NGAC members on pilots in small commercial sites with LLLC (or planning to install LLLC) and with a thermostat-controlled, single-zone rooftop unit (RTU). Contact Chris Wolgamott (cwolgamott@neea.org) to learn more about partnering on a pilot.

Alisyn re-linked the second quarter (Q2) Market Progress Report, which tracks each program's annual goals quarter by quarter; the third quarter (Q3) report will come with the December 9 materials.

2027 Operations Planning

Feedback on the draft 2027 Operations Plan is due to Alisyn by email by November 2. The plan then goes to the Finance and Audit Committee on November 10 and to a vote at the December 3 Board meeting.

Announcements and reminders

The Leadership in Energy Efficiency Awards are a breakfast event this year, 9:00 to 11:00am on December 4, with registration opening the week of October 26. The 2026 Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey closes Tuesday, October 27. Efficiency Exchange (EFX) 2027 topic ideas are due October 23 at neea.org/EFX, extended by a week. EFX27 is May 18-19 in Wenatchee, Washington.

Upcoming meetings

The last 2026 NGAC meeting is the December 9 webinar, 1:00 to 2:00pm, for the gas Advanced Performance DOAS vote.

The 2027 NGAC dates are final, with no Q3 standing meeting. Alisyn noted that packet page 2 lists the January webinar as January 28 in error; the correct date is January 27.

QUARTER	DAY	DATE	TIME (Pacific)	LOCATION
Webinar	Wed	Jan 27	1-2pm	Virtual
Q1	Thurs	Mar 18	9am-4pm	Virtual
Webinar	Thurs	Apr 15	1-2pm	Virtual
Q2	Tues	June 1	9am-4pm	Hybrid (Seattle)
Webinar	Wed	Sept 22	1-2pm	Virtual
Q4	Thurs	Oct 28	9am-4pm	Virtual
Webinar	Wed	Dec 8	1-2pm	Virtual

Other regional / industry events or announcements: None noted.

Program Advancement Vote Prep: Gas Advanced Performance DOAS (Slides 30-44 | Packet 3-4)

Emily Moore (emoore@neea.org) and Dave Hammond (dhammond@neea.org) previewed the Program Advancement milestone that would expand Advanced Performance DOAS (AP DOAS) into the gas portfolio, adding DOAS units paired with gas heating to the existing electric program. NGAC is the voting committee and the Regional Portfolio Advisory Committee (RPAC) the reviewing committee for this expansion. Members receive the milestone document after this meeting. On October 28, the Cost-Effectiveness and Evaluation Advisory Committee (CEAC) reviews the savings assumptions, market sizing, incremental costs, benefit-cost analysis and funding allocation, a standard step for program advancements. NEEA will hold individual huddles with members October 29 through November 18, feedback is due November 18, and staff will share a summary of questions before the December 9 vote.

AP DOAS pairs a high-efficiency energy or heat recovery ventilator (E/HRV) with high-efficiency heating and cooling and decoupled ventilation. The aim is for commercial energy codes in each Northwest state to require the approach or equivalent efficiency. The electric version, typically with variable refrigerant flow heat pumps, saves forty-eight percent of whole-building energy use intensity (EUI). The gas version uses a condensing gas boiler and electric chiller and saves sixty-nine percent of gas HVAC usage and thirty-nine percent of total HVAC EUI.

NEEA began researching the approach in 2015. The electric program entered Program Development in 2017 and Market Development in 2022, and the gas version entered Concept Assessment in August 2024. A latent load evaluation now underway will help position the program nationally.

The market is smaller than first initially expected. After weighing cost-effectiveness and the ability to exceed code, the target narrowed from most medium-to-large commercial buildings to large offices and secondary schools, for twenty-year co-created savings of 100,000 to 1,000,000 therms. In Washington, schools using AP DOAS (gas) are expected to meet the Washington State Energy Code (WSEC) through its Fossil Fuel Compliance Pathway, while other commercial buildings would need additional credits, so the program assumes no above-code savings there; Emily noted those savings are reported through NEEA's Codes program.

Dave also cited benefits beyond savings. The region has invested about $8 million in the electric program, and the gas share under a 90/10 split would be $116,500 a year for the rest of the cycle. The expansion removes an unnatural fuel distinction from the program and gives gas-heated Washington buildings assurance of realizing code savings in operation. It also brings indoor air quality and comfort benefits, complements the Advanced Performance RTU program and offers a no-regrets gas option as building performance standards tighten. He asked members to review the proposal, socialize it internally, invite colleagues to their huddles and send questions ahead so NEEA can bring the right people. Alisyn posted the remaining huddle hold times in the chat.

Discussion

> **Michelle Wildie (Puget Sound Energy):** On the PSE side, what we're most interested in hearing about is outreach and engaging the market, since that has been the challenging part for us. If you could bring anyone who can speak to that to our huddle, we'd appreciate it.
>
> **Alisyn Maggiora (NEEA):** Makes sense. Thank you, Michelle.

Portfolio Report Highlights (Slides 45-54 | Packet 5-16)

The report now opens with a Coordination Opportunities summary (page 6). Emily noted that Advanced Commercial Water Heating and Dual-Fuel Residential HVAC both expect Program Advancement milestones in the next twelve to fifteen months.

Advanced Performance Rooftop Units

Jason Jones (jjones@neea.org) reported on Advanced Performance RTUs. At its September meeting, the Consortium for Energy Efficiency (CEE) proposed low-leakage dampers across all of its new unitary equipment tiers, with a vote in January. All three program goals are tracking comfortably to threshold: two new RTU lines are headed to the Compliant Product List, and the market awareness threshold is met. The program still seeks field sites to validate modeling for gas-fired and hybrid units.

Advanced Commercial Water Heating

Stephanie Quinn covered Advanced Commercial Water Heating for Melissa Mejia (mmejia@neea.org). In a multifamily dual-fuel demonstration, the heat pump water heater reached a coefficient of performance (COP) of 3.0 to 3.4 and the plant averaged about 1.4, roughly double gas-only, with about twenty-four percent cost savings including both fuels. Early results point to a 130 degree setpoint in warmer months, and testing runs through mid-2027. The expanded Ecosizer is live, and a gas heat pump sizing tool co-funded with GTI Energy reaches beta in the fourth quarter (Q4). The program seeks a hotel or full-service restaurant using more than 2,000 gallons per day for a 2027 gas heat pump test.

Dual-Fuel Residential HVAC

Deborah Sunada (dsunada@neea.org) reported that the Dual-Fuel Residential HVAC market characterization report is due at year end, pushing some dependent work to early 2027, which is why the program shows a heads-up while tracking to threshold. The Clark Public Utilities and NW Natural demonstration report should be published within about a month. Homes are signing up for the switchover temperature field study, mostly in Oregon and southwest Washington, and the program still needs HVAC contractor partners. Data collection runs through this heating season, so results come in 2027.

Scanning highlights

Chuck Karras gave the scanning update on the Navien NXW700, a fifty-gallon, 120-volt residential water heater that pairs a heat pump with a condensing gas burner in a standard gas water heater footprint. GTI Energy's lab

report is published and was presented at the September 22 Product Council. Field study units arrive in December for a twelve-month study, and NEEA submitted an abstract for the March Hot Water Forum. The product recently won a CEE competition grand prize.

Neil Grigsby (ngrigsby@neea.org), NEEA's representative on the North American Gas Heat Pump Collaborative, said its market characterization will be posted publicly soon, and the Northwest savings assessment is available to members on request. Beckett Commercial Solutions acquired Stone Mountain Technologies (SMTI) and will keep making and supporting its gas heat pump. Seven members are funding North American certification of two Vicot gas heat pumps through the Natural Gas Innovation Fund, expected in 2027. A September 17 CEE workshop in Portland formed teams on first cost, contractor training and industry awareness, and Neil welcomes utility participants.

Discussion

> **Jackie Goss (Energy Trust of Oregon):** You mentioned two reports coming out soon. Can you give us any hints? Do they show promise, more barriers, or something in between?
>
> **Neil Grigsby (NEEA):** The characterization found that gas heat pumps are still relatively nascent across North America, and especially in the Northwest. There's a long way to go on awareness and adoption, and that's informing how Advanced Commercial Water Heating supports gas heat pumps through contractor training and industry awareness. Savings estimates for the Northwest were relatively low, but the assessment does call out the building types with the most opportunity. I'll follow up to make sure you have that report.
>
> **Jackie Goss (Energy Trust of Oregon):** On Beckett acquiring SMTI, you said they'll support existing installations. Does that mean they'll keep manufacturing the product, or is this about winding down?
>
> **Neil Grigsby (NEEA):** More the former. Beckett is picking up SMTI's gas heat pump, will keep manufacturing it and is looking at expansion into more markets. It's also supporting existing installations, including utility demonstrations on the East Coast and in the Midwest. That's good news, because the product left the market when SMTI ran into financial trouble, and Beckett has brought back a very motivated SMTI team.

Codes, standards and new construction

Mark Rehley closed with codes, standards and new construction. Washington's code update is targeted for year end but may slip past the coming legislative session if it isn't finished by the end of November. Oregon has opened its commercial cycle on the American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) 90.1-2025 standard. Idaho will review a bill next week to put all codes into statute, with a vote in early 2027 and a code vote likely in 2028, so any new code likely takes effect no earlier than 2029. Montana adopted a modified 2024 International Energy Conservation Code (IECC), effective around December 2026. The 2027 IECC is on track. A legal challenge over regulating gas appliance venting went to the Supreme Court and is now held in abeyance at the D.C. Circuit, returning the question to the U.S. Department of Energy, which restarted rulemaking in Q2 2026. NEEA published a new Performance Path above-code program template with the Regional Technical Forum.

Check-in on the new report format

Starting in 2027, the Portfolio Report comes out in Q2 and Q4 only.

Discussion

Alisyn Maggiora (NEEA): Take a look at the Coordination Opportunities summary on page 6. Does that format work for you, or do you need more detail before you could pass something along? Would an individual email from the program manager with the actual coordination request be easier to forward?

Carlos Limon (Avista): I personally like having it all on one page, since I can look in one spot and disseminate accordingly. Program staff also do a good job following up by email on specific opportunities, and I appreciate that.

Alisyn Maggiora (NEEA): So maybe a combined approach: we give you the summary and trust you to tell us where you want more.

Jackie Goss (Energy Trust of Oregon): I agree with Carlos. With the volume of email we get, things get lost, so having them all in one place helps make sure we don't miss something. I'd also like a little more detail on what you actually want from our programs. Are you looking for the name of a contractor, or for us to help pay for something? That's an important distinction.

Wrap Up & Adjourn (Slides 55-59)

- Public comment – No members of the public attended.
- Meeting feedback – None offered.
- Action Items

NGAC Members

- **ACTION:** NGAC members send Operations Plan feedback to Alisyn Maggiora by November 2 and complete the Stakeholder Satisfaction Survey by October 27.
- **ACTION:** NGAC members review the AP DOAS (gas) proposal, share it internally and schedule a huddle with NEEA staff between October 29 and November 18. Feedback is due November 18.
- **ACTION:** NGAC members interested in an LLLC plus HVAC pilot contact Chris Wolgamott (cwolgamott@neea.org), and flag interest in other opportunities on the Coordination Opportunities summary. Carried over from September 9.
- **ACTION:** Laney Ralph share NW Natural's language access plan once final.

NEEA Staff

- **ACTION:** NEEA staff note at the start of each Product Council summary whether the topic originated from NEEA or externally, and whether NEEA is actively pursuing it or sharing it for general awareness.
- **ACTION:** NEEA staff add to the Coordination Opportunities summary what each opportunity needs from utilities, such as a contractor name or funding.
- **ACTION:** Neil Grigsby share the gas heat pump market characterization link once posted and follow up with Jackie Goss on the savings assessment.
  - Gas Heat Pump Technology Assessment

- Next meeting
  - December 9, 2026, 1:00 – 2:00pm Pacific - virtual webinar (AP DOAS - Gas milestone vote)