



Moosehorn National Wildlife Refuge, by Stephanie Griffin

Planning for a Clean Energy Future in Local Communities

Participant's Guide

Maine's electric utilities have launched a series of public meetings across the state to discuss how they can reduce climate pollution from the electric grid.

Central Maine Power (CMP) and Versant Power (Versant) are undertaking this effort because of a [2022 integrated grid planning law](#) that the Natural Resources Council of Maine helped pass to hold utilities accountable to the state's climate and clean energy goals.

Why Does This Matter?

Rapidly transitioning to homegrown clean energy sources while electrifying our transportation and buildings sectors are the two core strategies at the heart of Maine's [Climate Action Plan](#). How quickly, how cheaply, and how equitably we make this transition depends in large part on our electric utilities—the private companies that build, maintain, and operate the poles-and-wires infrastructure that provide power to Maine homes and businesses.

What is Integrated Grid Planning?

A [2022 law](#) required Maine's largest electric utilities to stop operating behind closed doors and engage communities across the state in developing plans to support [an equitable, affordable, and resilient clean energy future](#).

The utilities' integrated grid plans will help us make sure their near-term investments and operations line up with the state's climate and clean energy goals. After a [stakeholder process](#) at the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), regulators issued a planning order in July 2024, and now the ball is in the utilities' court to go out and do the work.

What is Our Vision of a Clean Energy Future?

The clean energy grid of the future must benefit all Maine people. It means creating new good-paying jobs and deploying hundreds of thousands of heat pumps, zero-emission vehicles, and battery energy storage, all fueled by Maine-based clean energy sources like wind and solar.

To connect and use these technologies affordably and efficiently, we need a modern, dynamic, and reliable electric grid that can closely match electricity demand with supply to maximize the benefit for Maine people. Decisions made today by CMP and Versant will affect your access to the kinds of programs that will make this future possible.

What to Expect at the Meeting

A utility representative will present some basic information about their plans and then will open up the meeting for discussion and public input. This is an opportunity to get informed, let CMP and Versant know you want them to be an active partner in the clean energy transition, and help them understand what values and priorities matter to you and your community.

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How Can You Help?

One of the most important things you can do is attend a meeting in person, ask questions, and let your utility know you expect them to be a partner in an affordable and equitable clean energy transition.

Here are Some Points You Could Make:

- We know that technologies, like energy efficiency, solar, storage, and electrification, have been proven to save customers money, while also improving resilience and reducing emissions. How is [Versant/CMP] incorporating – and encouraging – customer adoption of these distributed energy resources in its grid plan?
- How is [Versant/CMP] going to use this planning process to make its grid clean, especially given that in our restructured market, the utility doesn't own the polluting power plants?
- We read about all these new amazing, affordable, advanced technologies – batteries, rooftop solar, microgrids, EVs that can provide back-up power during outages, and smart thermostats and appliances that respond to signals from the grid. Is Maine being left behind? What is [Versant/CMP] doing to make sure Maine customers have every opportunity to take advantage of these technologies?
- The electric grid should be designed to serve its customers. If a person wants to start a business or install heat pumps or put solar panels on their roof, the utility shouldn't be a barrier to those decisions. What is [Versant/CMP] doing to make sure that homes and businesses can connect solar panels and other clean energy technologies like battery storage to the grid easily, quickly, and cheaply?
- We know climate change is happening, and the electric grid is facing the impacts of increasingly extreme weather events. [Versant/CMP] customers are bracing for these impacts, too. What strategies does [Versant/CMP] have to reduce outages and reduce the growing cost of extreme weather events and climate change?

