



Affordability, Rate Design, and Electrification: Working for All Customers to Advance Decarbonization

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Biographies of Speakers & Moderators



Dr. Susan Tierney is an expert on economics, regulation, and environmental policy affecting the energy industries. At Analysis Group, she has consulted to a variety of clients including energy companies, state governments, environmental groups, foundations, grid operators, universities, Indian tribes, consumer groups, and others. Previously, she served as the Assistant Secretary for Policy at the U.S. Department of Energy, and in Massachusetts, she was the Secretary of Environmental Affairs, Commissioner at the Department of Public Utilities, and director of the state's Energy Facilities Siting Council. Sue serves on several boards: the Barr Foundation, Resources for the Future, World Resources Institute, the Sloan Foundation, and the Coalition for Green Capital, and is a member of several National Academies' Committees: Accelerating Decarbonization in the United States; and the Role of Net Metering in the Evolving Electric System.

She earned her Ph.D. and M.A. in regional planning at Cornell University and her B.A. at Scripps College. After 35 years in Massachusetts, she and her husband moved to Denver.



Travis Kavulla is vice president for regulatory affairs at NRG, working to ensure that energy markets continue to deliver value for electricity consumers. He joined NRG from the R Street Institute, where he led the think tank's energy program. Previously, Travis served eight years as a commissioner at the Montana Public Service Commission, during which time he served as the President of the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and as a member of the advisory council of the Electric Power Research Institute. He has also served on the governing body of one of North America's largest electricity markets, the Western Energy Imbalance Market.

Travis received his bachelor's degree in history from Harvard University and a master's (also in history), at the University of Cambridge, where he was a Gates Scholar. Travis lives in Maryland with his wife and three children.



Melissa Whited is a senior principal at Synapse Energy Economics, where she specializes in issues related to utility regulation and rate design, particularly in response to fundamental changes in the electricity industry spurred by declining energy use and rapidly increasing penetration of distributed energy resources. She consults on the tools to effectively address these changes, including performance-based regulation, revenue decoupling mechanisms, distribution system planning, and innovative rate design. Melissa has testified before state and provincial public utilities commissions across the U.S. and in Canada, as well as at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

In the rate design arena, Melissa's work focuses on the development of rate designs that effectively balance the fundamental principles of revenue sufficiency, fair apportionment of costs, and efficiency of use. She has authored numerous reports and testimony regarding the impacts of fixed charges and demand charges on low-income customers, customers with distributed generation, and the ability of states to achieve their energy policy goals. Recently, her work has focused on the use of time-varying rates and strategic electrification. She has been an invited panelist at annual meetings of both the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners and the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocate.

Melissa holds two master's degrees from the University of Wisconsin: an MA in Agricultural and Applied Economics and an MS in Environment and Resources.



Harvey Michaels is currently MIT Sloan Sustainability Lecturer, and Principal Investigator of the Clean Heat Transition study for Sloan's System Dynamics Group at MIT. He enjoys being an MIT faculty member focused on Energy and Climate Innovation - while investigating climate initiatives for cities, the state and federal government. While at MIT, he served on faculty teams for several cross-campus energy studies, including Community Energy Innovations, the Future of the Electric Grid, and campus energy planning. Harvey formerly led several energy efficiency software and service enterprises, and clean energy boards including the US DoE Energy Systems Integration Review Committee, Conservation

Services Group, and EMeter/Siemens Digital Grid. He is advisor now to KPay, MassEnergize, Northeast Energy Efficiency Council, Wayland Energy and Climate Committee, several advocacy groups, and on policy formulation for national, state, and city government and climate advocacy groups.

Harvey holds both undergraduate and a master's degrees from MIT in city planning and civil engineering.



Marissa Paslick Gillett is Chairman of Connecticut's Public Utilities Regulatory Authority (PURA). She was nominated by Governor Ned Lamont to serve on the three-member regulatory authority on April 2019. Prior to her appointment, Marissa was the Vice President of External Relations for the Energy Storage Association – the national trade association representing the energy storage industry. In that role, she served on the association's executive team contributing to the organization's overall strategic vision and direction. From 2011 to 2018, Marissa worked at the Maryland Public Service Commission, where she most recently served as the senior advisor to the chairman. Her duties included advising the agency's chairman and other commissioners on technical, legal and policy matters related to offshore wind procurement, statewide energy efficiency programs, advanced metering infrastructure, grid reliability issues and electric vehicles.

Marissa received her BS in Bioengineering from Clemson University in Clemson, South Carolina, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Baltimore School of Law in Baltimore, Maryland



Oliver Sellers-Garcia serves as Boston's first Green New Deal Director and is a cabinet-level Senior Advisor to Boston Mayor Michelle Wu. In this role, he works across city departments to advance climate action through strategies that address social, racial, and economic inequality. Oliver's experience in the public sector includes serving as Director of Resiliency and Equity at the MBTA and Director of Sustainability and Environment in the City of Somerville. In these roles, Oliver was responsible for planning, program management, public administration, and thought leadership in the areas of climate change resilience and mitigation, environmental protection, and people-centered planning in the urban Boston area.

Prior to joining the public sector, Oliver worked as a consultant helping public agencies and cities around the world integrate sustainability into planning and organizational management. The son of Guatemalan and American parents, Oliver grew up in a bicultural environment in the Boston area and is a native bilingual Spanish speaker. He has lived in many neighborhoods of Boston and now calls Roxbury home.

Oliver holds a bachelor's degree in urban studies from Columbia University and a master's in city planning from MIT.



Mary Wambui-Ekop is an affordable housing asset manager for the Planning Office for Urban Affairs (POUA) a non-profit social justice ministry of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Boston. Her expertise ranges from preservation of affordable housing assets through property, and portfolio repositioning to maximizing performance through capital planning, green and sustainable design, rehabilitation, debt restructuring and building stakeholder relationships. Mary also serves the Commonwealth of Massachusetts as Councilor in the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC) a state body that directs the energy efficiency vision for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. She is also a co-chair of the EEAC Energy Equity Working Group. Mary is working towards a truly just transition as evidenced by housing and energy affordability, fair pay and distribution of clean energy jobs, shared ownership, local, renewable, and sustainable energy, democratic control, and participation of all people in energy systems.

Mary holds an undergraduate degree in business education from Kenyatta University in Nairobi, an MS in international community economic development from Southern New Hampshire University, and a master's in public policy from Tufts University



Meg Lusardi is Executive Vice President of PowerOptions, a nonprofit energy consortium dedicated to reducing the costs, carbon and complexity of energy for nonprofits and the public sector. She is responsible for overseeing all general operations including the electricity and natural gas programs, as well as leading the new product area of energy sustainability advisory. Meg is entrusted with the relationships of PowerOptions' largest non-profit, municipality, and state agency Members who depend on her for their overall energy planning and procurement. Meg's 30-plus-year career in the industry has included serving as Acting Commissioner at the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), and prior to that role, as the initial architect, implementer, and eventual leader of DOER's Green Communities Division. Her leadership in our region and in her current role have put her at the forefront of championing for the intersection of energy affordability and decarbonization.

Meg earned her bachelor of science in mechanical engineering from Notre Dame University.



Janet Gail Besser is a nationally recognized energy policy and regulatory strategy expert, with experience as a regulator, clean energy business association leader, utility executive, developer, consultant, and consumer advocate. Most recently, as vice president, she led the Smart Electric Power Alliance's Regulatory and Business Innovation work. Previously, she was executive vice president of the Northeast Clean Energy Council; VP, Regulatory Strategy and Policy at National Grid; Chair and Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities; and an executive and expert at Analysis Group and Lexecon. She also held senior staff roles at the Massachusetts Energy Office and

New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission, was policy director for a national IPP association, and worked for a small hydro developer and low-income consumer advocate. Janet is the recipient of the 2019 Northeast Energy and Commerce Association Vanguard Award and the 2014 Northeast Women in Energy and the Environment Achievement Award. She currently chairs the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine (NASEM) Committee on the role of net metering in the evolving electricity system. She is the chair of the Power Options Board and serves on the VEIC Board, where she chairs the Impact and Evaluation Committee.

Janet has an MPP from the Harvard Kennedy School of Government and a B.A., *magna cum laude*, from Williams College.