



**NECPUC 78th Symposium Agenda – PLELIMINARY, SUBJECT TO CHANGE**  
Samoset Resort, Rockport, ME  
May 18-20, 2026

Panelists listed in alphabetical order.

Monday, May 18

3:00-6:00 p.m.      ***Registration Desk Open***

5:45 p.m.      ***Pre-Dinner Reception***  
Sponsored by Pierce Atwood LLP, Womble Bond Dickinson LLP, and Day Pitney LLP

7:00 p.m.      ***Dinner***

8:00 p.m.      ***Dessert Reception***  
Sponsored by Hewitt & Hewitt, National Association of Water Companies, and Nuclear Energy Institute

Tuesday, May 19

7:00 a.m.      ***Breakfast***

7:30 a.m.-12:00 p.m. ***Registration Desk Open***

7:45 a.m.      Ethics CLE session (optional)

9:00 a.m.

***Symposium Opens***

Welcoming remarks:

- **Hon. Philip L. Bartlett II**, Chair, Maine Public Utilities Commission, NECPUC President

9:05 a.m.

***Fireside Chat: Hon. David Rosner and Hon. Lindsay See, Commissioners, Federal Energy Regulatory Commission***

Moderator: **Hon. Ronald T. Gerwatowski**, Chair, Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission

10:05 a.m.

***Fireside Chat: Dr. Vamsi Chadalavada, President & CEO, ISO-New England***

Moderator: **Hon. Philip L. Bartlett II**, Chair, Maine Public Utilities Commission

11:00 a.m.

***Break***

Sponsored by Pullman & Comley, LLC, Connecticut Power & Energy Society, and Northeast Energy and Commerce Association

11:15 a.m.

***Concurrent Sessions***

***Achieving Affordable Electricity in New England: What can Regulators and States do to Bend the Curve?***

Moderator: **Hon. Patrick Scully**, Maine Public Utilities Commission

"Affordability" has become the dominant driver of regional and national discussions related to energy regulation and policy. This panel will explore that dynamic from multiple levels, beginning with a high-level review of New England energy cost trends and their drivers. The panelists will discuss ways in which regulators and states can address the pace of electric distribution and transmission rate increases and create incentives for utilities to prioritize affordability, including the impact of natural gas pipeline constraints on wholesale electricity prices and the potential savings that could be realized if those constraints were addressed.

Panelists:

- **Cara Goldenberg**, Principal, RMI
- **Richard Levitan**, President & Principal, Levitan & Associates
- **Johannes Pfeifenberger**, Principal, Brattle Group
- **Ryan Wiser**, Senior Scientist, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

***Dial "A" for Affordability – Harnessing Markets to Lower Telecommunications Costs for Consumers***

Moderator: **Hon. Karen Charles**, Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable

Over the past 30 years, the telecommunications industry has evolved rapidly from highly regulated to largely driven by market forces. Consumers have benefited from this shift as prices have gone down and competition has gone up. This panel will explore how that model evolved, and what lessons it can offer during the current moment when affordability issues are front and center for policymakers.

Panelists:

- **Keefe Clemons**, Partner, Verrill Dana, LLP
- **Mark Vasconi**, President, Vasconi Consulting LLC

12:30 p.m.

***Lunch***

12:30 p.m.

***Concurrent lunch for state and federal agency staff***

1:00-4:00 p.m.

***Registration Desk Open***

1:45 p.m.

***Concurrent Sessions***

***Is it Time Again for Nuclear Development in New England?***

Moderator: **Hon. Mark Dell’Orfano**, Commissioner, New Hampshire Public Utilities Commission

It has been nearly 36 years since the “newest” nuclear generating station in New England, NextEra Energy Seabrook Station, was placed into service at a cost of nearly \$20 billion (in 2025 dollars). But now, New England’s high energy costs, projected regional load growth, and looming base-load generation retirements - including nearly 3.2 GWe of carbon-free Generation II nuclear capacity over the next 25 years - have reopened the dialogue about nuclear energy. For the first time in decades, the region is discussing the potential for nuclear energy development as an emissions-free pathway to reduce energy rates, maintain energy adequacy, and service future electrical load. Given the region’s energy needs, the lack of lower-cost, carbon-free base-load alternatives, the evolution of nuclear technologies, and the nature of New England’s restructured markets, is it time for New England to once again consider new nuclear generation projects as part of our regional supply portfolio? This panel will consider the opportunities and risks of revisiting this technology.

Panelists:

- **Michelle Gardner**, Executive Director, Regulatory Affairs – Northeast Region, NextEra Energy Resources
- **Jeremy Hitchcock**, Co-Founder/Chairman, StarCube
- **Zachary Koshgarian**, Analyst, Nuclear Innovation Alliance
- **Chris Maslak**, Advanced Nuclear Market Development Executive, GE Vernova Hitachi Nuclear Energy
- **Melissa Lavinson**, Executive Director, Massachusetts Office of Energy Transformation

***In Team New England We Trust: How Regional Collaboration Delivers Real Value to Customers***

Moderator: **Hon. Kerrick Johnson**, Commissioner, Vermont Department of Public Service

Effective working relationships produce results. Recent, perhaps historic, state regulator and key stakeholder collaboration has produced meaningful outcomes that benefit New England’s customers, community, energy grid and the economy. This panel will explore how collaborative state action is working to advance energy affordability, grid

reliability, and environmental sustainability, why it worked, and what issues or initiatives should next be prioritized for similarly effective collaborative joint action.

Panelists:

- **Hon. Philip L. Bartlett II**, Chair, Maine Public Utilities Commission
- **Hon. Katie Dykes**, Commissioner, Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection
- **Hon. Ronald T. Gerwatowski**, Chairman, Rhode Island Public Utilities Commission
- **Weezie Nuara**, Deputy Secretary for Federal and Regional Energy Affairs, Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- **Daniel T. Phelan**, Regional Policy Director, New Hampshire Department of Energy

3:00 p.m.

***Break***

Sponsored by RTO Insider

5:45 p.m.

***Pre-dinner Reception***

Sponsored by Retail Energy Supply Association, Robinson+Cole, LLP, and Americans for a Clean Energy Grid

7:00 p.m.

***Dinner***

8:00 p.m.

***Dessert Reception***

Sponsored by Edison Electric Institute

9:00 p.m.

***Evening Reception***

Sponsored by New England Connectivity and Telecommunications Association

Wednesday, May 20

7:00 a.m.

**Run/Walk with a Commissioner!**

7:00 a.m.

***Breakfast***

7:30 a.m.

***Concurrent Telecom Breakfast***

*Join Commissioners, staff, and telecommunications professionals in discussing telecommunications issues and developments. Breakfast available starting at 7:30am, program begins at 8:00am.*

8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. ***Registration Desk Open***

9:00 a.m.

***Concurrent Sessions***

***Clean Water Affordably? Hot and Cold Trends in the Water Sector***

Moderator: **Hon. Staci Rubin**, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities

Aging infrastructure, water quality impairment, and petitions for company acquisitions have impacts on costs. Panelists will discuss the latest issues impacting water rates throughout New England and strategies to further affordable water bills.

Panelists:

- **Christina Bilodeau**, Public Engagement Liaison, Maine Public Utilities Commission
- **Joe Dorfler**, Shareholder, Rich May P.C.
- **Matthew Fossum**, Assistant Consumer Advocate and Director of Regional & Federal Affairs, New Hampshire Office of the Consumer Advocate
- **Patrick Kerr**, President & CEO, Baton Rouge Water Works Company

***Is the Finish Line in Sight? BEAD's Role in Getting Closer to the Goal of Universal Broadband, and What Comes Next***

Moderator: **Hon. Karen Charles**, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable

The Broadband Equity Access and Deployment Program (BEAD) is a \$42 billion federal grant program aiming to connect every American to high-speed broadband service. Since the first allocations to states and territories were announced in 2023, substantial progress has been made. This panel will discuss lessons learned from BEAD implementation, and what work still remains, including the final disposition of remaining BEAD funds.

Panelists:

- **David Bresnahan**, Senior Manager, Grants & Programs, Maine Connectivity Authority
- **Anna Lucey**, Executive Vice President for Legislative & External Affairs, New England Connectivity and Telecommunications Association

10:15 a.m.

***Break***

Sponsored by American Petroleum Institute

10:45 a.m.

***Plenary Session***

***Taking Back Control – How Energy Efficiency, Retail Demand Response, and Load Flexibility Programs can Benefit Customers and the Grid***

Moderator: **Hon. Carrie Gilbert**, Commissioner, Maine Public Utilities Commission

Energy efficiency, retail demand response, and load flexibility programs have the potential to provide dual benefits. Participating customers can manage their own costs and simultaneously bring down costs for all grid users. These programs can also serve as a valuable asset for addressing regional resource adequacy needs. This panel will focus on what we can do now to access this important resource.

Panelists:

- **Ian Burnes**, Director of Strategic Initiatives, Efficiency Maine Trust
- **Rebecca Foster**, Chief Executive Officer, VEIC
- **Akhilesh Ramakrishnan**, Managing Energy Associate, Brattle Group
- **Andrew Schneller**, Vice President – Network Strategy & Regulation, National Grid

12:00 p.m.

***Plenary Session***

Remarks: **Charles Dickerson**, President & CEO, Northeast Power Coordinating Council

Remarks: **Hon. Jehmal Hudson**, Commissioner, Virginia State Corporation Commission and First Vice President, NARUC

Announcement of the George Dunn Award for regulatory staff excellence

Invitation to the 2027 NECPUC Symposium

12:30 p.m.

***Lunch***

1:45 p.m.

***Break***

Sponsored by Advanced Energy United

2:00 p.m.

***Concurrent Sessions***

***Is it Time to Rethink Default Service?***

Moderator: **Hon. Jeremy McDiarmid**, Chair, Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities

With affordability concerns rising and evolving energy markets, should New England states consider making radical changes to how Basic Service/Default Service supply needs are met? In restructured states, utilities are often the supplier of last resort and face different (and often more restrictive) rules than competitive suppliers and municipal aggregators). Should policymakers reconsider risk allocation and increase the flexibility for basic supply procurement?

Panelists:

- **Claire Coleman**, Consumer Counsel, Connecticut Office of Consumer Counsel
- **Gretchen Fuhr**, Director of Government Affairs and Market Policy, Constellation
- **Kimberly Harriman**, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Avangrid

- **Patrick Knight**, Vice President, Synapse Energy Economics

***Large Loads and Data Centers: Implications for Grid Planning, Interconnection, and Cost Allocation - Lessons from Early Adopters and Implications for New England***

Moderator: **Hon. Riley Allen**, Commissioner, Vermont Public Utilities Commission

To date, prospective new large loads and data centers remain limited in number and scale in New England. This stands in contrast to trends nationally and in neighboring regions, where the development experience has been rapid and without modern historic precedent. For some, these developments raise significant potential ratepayer concerns related to both system costs and network reliability. For others, they represent an opportunity for increased grid utilization and spreading fixed costs across a larger rate base. In either case, the body of experience is still relatively new. This panel will (1) help frame the experience of other regions and nationally, (2) identify the key ratepayer interests that are potentially challenged (or enhanced), (3) identify potential emerging pathways to protect ratepayer interests and, (4) identify next steps that the region and states (and distribution utilities) can take to encourage sensible development while also protecting ratepayers.

Panelists:

- **Michael Judge**, Undersecretary of Energy, Massachusetts Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
- **Alan McBride**, Vice President System Planning, ISO-New England
- **Natalie Mims Frick**, Energy Policy Researcher, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratories
- **Hon. Jehmal Hudson**, Commissioner, Virginia State Corporation Commission
- **Rachel Wilson**, Energy Market Development, Google

3:15 p.m.

***Symposium program concludes***

Thursday, May 21

7:15 a.m.

***Breakfast***

*Note: Sponsors are independently and directly responsible for their activity. To sponsor an event, a sponsoring entity must not be regulated by or be an affiliate of an entity subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of a NECPUC member. Decisions related to symposium programming are made independently of sponsorship status.*