

Maryland Announces Plan for Electric Grid of the Future

Rethinking Maryland's development of distribution system planning is essential for the development of a flexible and customer-centric grid

BALTIMORE, MD, UNITED STATES, February 11, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today marks the conclusion of a two-year initiative hosted by the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners (NARUC) and the National Association of State Energy Officials (NASEO) where Maryland, along with 12 other states, declares our commitment to a more efficient and resilient energy future. Efforts to implement electricity planning innovations that more effectively meet customer needs and state policy goals will be led by the [Maryland Energy Administration \(MEA\)](#) and the [Maryland Public Service Commission \(PSC\)](#).

Maryland has been recognized as a leader in grid modernization, ranking third in the most recent [GridWise](#) grid modernization index. Transforming the Grid Public Conference 44 (PC44) was initiated by the PSC in 2016 to build on a foundation of existing state policies including the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Act and Renewable Portfolio Standard and ensure Maryland ratepayers benefit from grid modernization in a reliable, environmentally-sustainable, and cost-effective manner. PC44 started with five work groups on electric vehicles, energy storage, rate design, competitive markets and customer choice, and interconnection processes. Distribution system planning was named as a potential sixth work group for future consideration.

Building on the knowledge from the Task Force on Comprehensive Electricity Planning, the PSC will consider launching the distribution planning work group, part of the PC44 docket, in order to put the workshop roadmap into practice in Maryland. Last month, the PSC announced that it would convene a technical conference on March 25, 2021 to consider how the findings of the NARUC/NASEO Task Force report align with the objectives of PC44.

"Facilitating a more resilient and reliable electric grid, which can withstand adverse weather events, incorporate technologies needed to allow the state to meet our climate goals, and incorporate changing customer needs; while also balancing ratepayer affordability is complex," explained Dr. Mary Beth Tung, MEA Director. "Maryland, and its partners on the Task Force have explored a broad range of options these past two years that we believe will help Maryland and other states meet that balance successfully."

"The NARUC NASEO Task Force provided Maryland and other states with valuable resources that

we can use when considering distribution system planning in our states,” said Maryland PSC Commissioner Anthony J. O’Donnell, who served as a member of the Task Force. “The importance of thoughtful and transparent planning is imperative to meeting our future energy needs in Maryland, achieving our larger state policies, and ensuring our ratepayers benefit from advancements to the electric grid.”

“Holistic distribution planning is so critical because it provides the foundation to unlock benefits that will complement our existing efforts to fully modernize Maryland’s grid,” said Jason M. Stanek, Chairman of the Maryland PSC.

Maryland has already begun moving to a more resilient, efficient electric grid that encourages distributed energy resources (DERs) and diversified power generation via our policies and grant programs. Maryland is poised to build on our successful DER related MEA programs like Combined Heat and Power, Energy Storage and Resilient Maryland. In addition, the state has well established energy efficiency programs through EmPOWER Maryland and the Renewable Portfolio Standard to ensure efficient energy usage and sustainable supply. The PSC is also overseeing energy storage and electric vehicle pilots through PC44. Creating an optimized grid that ensures more affordable electricity to ratepayers is essential.

The Task Force on Comprehensive Electricity Planning presented findings on how states can lead the way in bringing together utilities and stakeholders to plan the grid of the future, impacting how billions of dollars will be invested on behalf of customers. The U.S. Department of Energy provided key support throughout the initiative.

Established in 2019, the task force members are taking steps to apply the principles and strategies developed based on input from utilities, electricity system stakeholders and technical experts like:

Informing new and existing advisory or working groups to offer dedicated forums for stakeholder input into planning efforts (e.g., Arizona, Hawaii, Maryland, Ohio)

Holding technical conferences or briefings on Task Force results to support state-specific conversations about opportunities to align planning processes (e.g., Hawaii, Maryland, Minnesota, North Carolina)

Promoting a more holistic analysis of both distribution and resource system needs and possible solutions (e.g., Arizona, Hawaii, North Carolina, Puerto Rico)

Exploring opportunities to strategically align electricity planning processes to meet state-specific priorities — such as resilience, decarbonization or renewable energy targets —through docketed proceedings or other initiatives (e.g., California, Colorado, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, Rhode Island, Virginia)

Facilitating the availability of data for improved distribution planning, such as voltage studies, hosting capacity analyses and distributed energy resources siting analyses (e.g., California, Hawaii, Minnesota, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island)

To learn more about the Task Force and access the new resources, visit naruc.org/taskforce.

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The Maryland Energy Administration (MEA) advises the governor and general assembly on all energy matters. MEA develops and administers programs and develops policy to support and expand all sectors of Maryland's economy to the benefit of all Marylanders to implement legislation. For more information about the Maryland Energy Administration, visit www.energy.maryland.gov and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn.

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