

**Cape Light Compact JPE
Governing Board
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, February 19, 2025**

The Cape Light Compact JPE Board of Directors met on Wednesday, February 19, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was held as a hybrid meeting (in-person and through remote participation) through a Zoom videoconference for members of the Board with audio call-in available for members of the public, pursuant to St. 2023, c. 2, which, among other things, extends the temporary provisions pertaining to remote meetings of public bodies under the Open Meeting Law to March 31, 2025.

Participating In-Person Were:

1. Sean Hogan, Barnstable Alternate
2. Robert Schofield, Executive Committee, Bourne
3. Colin Odell, Executive Committee, Brewster
4. Brad Crowell, Dennis
5. Valerie Bell, Harwich
6. David Jacobson, Orleans Alternate
7. Nathaniel Mayo, Provincetown
8. Bob Higgins-Steele, Truro Alternate
9. Suzanne Ryan-Ishkanian, Wellfleet
10. Joyce Flynn, Vice Chair/Executive Committee, Yarmouth

Participating Remotely Were:

1. Bill Doherty, Bourne Alternate
2. Brian Miner, Chatham
3. Gary Senecal, Eastham Alternate
4. Alan Strahler, Edgartown
5. Scott Mueller, Falmouth
6. Wayne Taylor, Mashpee
7. Leanne Drake, Sandwich
8. Russ Hartenstine, Tisbury
9. Nicola Blake, Executive Committee, West Tisbury

Absent Were:

1. Forrest Filler, Aquinnah
2. David Anthony, Secretary/Executive Committee, Barnstable
3. Timothy Carroll, Chilmark
4. Tristan Israel, Dukes County
5. Tom McNellis, Eastham
6. Peter Meleney, Oak Bluffs
7. Martin Culik, Chair/Executive Committee, Orleans
8. Jarrod Cabral, Truro

Legal Counsel Participating Remotely:

Audrey Eidelman Kiernan, Esq., KO Law, P.C.

Staff Participation In-Person:

Dan Schell, Senior Analyst - Retail and Demand Response
Jason Bertrand, Marketing & Communications Coordinator
Mariel Marchand, Power Supply Planner

Staff Participating Remotely:

Angela Hurwitz, Senior IT Services & Data Management Analyst
Anneliese Conklin, Data Services Coordinator
Briana Kane, Implementation Manager
David Maclellan, Senior Analyst
Kate Coleman, Outreach Specialist
Kim Grant, Town Energy Coordinator
Laura Selmer, Energy Efficiency Analyst
Maggie Downey, Chief Administrative Officer
Miranda Skinner, Strategy and Regulatory Analyst
Phil Moffitt, Chief Financial Officer
Stephen McCloskey, Energy Efficiency Analyst

Public Participants:

None.

Joyce Flynn called the meeting to order at 2:00PM.

Public Comment:

No written comments were received in advance of the meeting and no members of the public were present for public comment.

CONTINUED DISCUSSION ON CAPE LIGHT COMPACT POWER SUPPLY OFFERING, MARIEL MARCHAND & JASON BERTRAND:

Mariel Marchand reviewed the Power Supply Marketing PowerPoint. She stated that this is a follow up to last month's Board Meeting discussion. She stated that based on the conversation at the meeting, there were a few follow up questions, mostly around the customers that aren't on our supply, what their load is and what the associated Mil adder revenue would be from serving those customers.

Mariel Marchand presented the current number of customers in the Compact's territory and the estimated number of customers on competitive supply and basic service. For residential customers there is an estimated 30,622 on competitive supply and 17,133 on basic service.

Mariel Marchand reviewed the missing load estimates. She stated that for the residential customers on the Compact's power supply the load is 838,000 MWh and the Mil adder is \$838,000 and for commercial customers the load is 154,000 MWh and the Mil adder is \$154,000. She stated compared to the customers on competitive supply or basic service we can see that the residential load is less, and the commercial load is more. She stated as a reminder it is harder to get commercial customers to join the Compact's power supply because most of them are looking for longer term contracts. She stated therefore it's the residential customer base that presents the biggest area for growth.

Mariel Marchand stated that she worked with NextEra to get industry standard information about customer acquisition costs. She stated that acquiring new customers can be costly and time consuming. According to industry standards, it costs approximately \$25 to \$100 per customer to acquire a new retail electric customer.

She stated that the competitive supply rule of thumb is that customers tend to switch if rates are about 1 cent per kWh below what they are currently paying. However, even with lower rates, customers are generally only switching if they're being aggressively marketed to.

Mariel Marchand stated that with the help of NextEra, back in 2017 when we signed that original contract with them, the focus of the campaign was more about the 100% renewable aspect of the product offering than the rates. She stated that it was a six-week campaign with 168 radio spots and about 18,000 direct mailings that cost \$22,000. She stated that NextEra's call center tracked that only 36 customers opted in to the Compact's power supply based on the campaign. She stated that she did look back at the monthly customer numbers over the time frame in which we were running that marketing campaign, and the Compact did gain over 1,500 customers over that time. Therefore, she believes there were more than the 36.

Jason Bertrand continued the review of the PowerPoint. He stated that at the last Board Meeting he presented a lot of different options, and this time staff has narrowed it down to what we thought would be most effective. He stated that for direct mail the cost estimate is \$1 to \$1.50 per piece. He stated that it would cost about \$31,000 to \$46,500 for mailing to competitive supply customers, and about \$17,000 to \$25,500 for mailing to Basic Service customers. He stated that the other option is increasing our presence on local radio. He stated that it would go from April to October and would cost about \$21,000. The cost is based on the energy efficiency marketing campaign that the Compact did in 2023. He stated that it is still a bit expensive but has a wide reach.

Maggie Downey stated that staff are looking for a sense of the Board before bringing back a supplemental budget request for a vote. Robert Schofield stated that the Compact should do the direct mail and do a test market and see what kind of return it gets from customers. Valerie Bell stated that the more targeted we are, the better feedback we are going to get. She stated that she doesn't open most of the mail she gets as most of it is just junk mail. Nate Mayo stated that how it is presented matters. Colin Odell suggested a post card therefore customers would see all the information upfront.

Nate Mayo asked what happens once a customer receives the mailing and decides to switch to the Compact's power supply. Mariel Marchand stated that the customers would have to call NextEra and ask to enroll with the Compact. She stated that the customer needs to have their Eversource electric account number and their service reference number, which is new as of June. Nate Mayo asked if there was an online form. Mariel Marchand stated that there is, but it is just to sign up to receive a phone call from NextEra to set up the account.

Brad Crowell asked if this was in response to the fact that our market share is eroding, or just anecdotal evidence of people getting slammed by competitive suppliers, or both. Mariel Marchand stated that this started because we presented on our rates, and our rates are lower than basic service and continue to be lower than basic service. She stated that at the same time, the number of Compact customers has been slowly declining over the past year or so. She stated that the thinking is that the Compact should market to customers making sure they are aware there may be a lower price option for them.

Brad Crowell stated that he knows people who have ended up in very adverse deals because they've been tricked on the phone. He asked if there is something that the Compact can do with the Attorney General's Office to advocate for better restrictions around some of these operations. Audrey Eidelman Kiernan stated that there have been times in the past where the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) does investigate these issues of competitive supply. She stated that the Compact has been very vocal in those proceedings. She stated that the Compact was involved in a 2014 exercise, and again in 2019 when the DPU looked at rules and regulations for competitive suppliers. She stated that the Compact has participated in those dockets when the DPU brings them up, and in the establishment of the competitive supply website, so that customers can see what all of their options are, including municipal aggregation.

Maggie Downey asked for a sense of the Board. The sense of the Board is that they are interested in taking some form of action on marketing to try and increase the number Compact power supply customers.

Nate Mayo stated that direct mail is expensive. He stated that maybe there is a way to put something out and get some feedback to see whether the Compact should do a larger mailing. Dan Schell stated that his suggestion would be to mail to the customers on basic serve as we know that we have a lower rate. He stated that for the customer on competitive supply, there isn't a guarantee that we would be helping them save on their bill.

Valerie Bell asked if customers on basic service are charged a fee for leaving. Mariel Marchand answered no, they are not. Valerie Bell stated that therefore it would be easy for them to switch. Colin Odell suggested doing 1,000 pieces and splitting it between basic service and competitive supply and see what the response is between the two. Valerie Bell stated that she agrees. Nicola Blake stated that it seems like a good time to do this campaign with rising costs and the Compact being lower than basic service.

Nate Mayo asked if there are legal restrictions on what can be said on the mailings. Maggie Downey stated that we have to comply with DPU regulations. She stated that we can state that we are currently lower than basic service and use historical data. Audrey Eidelman Kiernan stated that that Compact can't state a guarantee of the savings over time.

Valerie Bell stated that since the Compact is already putting ads on the radio, that maybe one of the ads is switched to talk about power supply. She stated that it wouldn't be an extra radio ad, just a different message. Bob Schofield agrees.

The sense of the Board was to have staff bring back the cost of a limited mailing to customers at the March Board meeting.

UPDATE ON CAPE AND VINEYARD SOLAR LOAN PROGRAM, DAN SCHELL:

Dan Schell reviewed the Cape and Vineyard Solar Loan Update PowerPoint. He stated that since the application opened on December 2, 2024, the Compact has received 41 applications. Two are under review and 29 have been approved, 3 denied, 1 withdrawal, and 6 on-hold.

Dan Schell stated that the approved loan total so far is \$1,146,487 and on hold is \$188,023. This leaves \$865,490 left of the funds. He estimates about 44 days of funding left based on the current rate. Therefore, it should be fully expended by the end of March or early April. He stated that we should be able to fund about 55 loans in total. He stated that we will not know if we will be receiving more funds until after October 1st, 2025.

COMPACT MARKETING UPDATE, JASON BERTRAND:

Jason Bertrand reviewed the Cape Light Compact Marketing and Website PowerPoint. He stated that the Compact's marketing strategies fall under three categories: paid marketing, earned media, and presentations and events.

Jason Bertrand stated that the Compact has a significant paid marketing budget at both the statewide and local level. The total 2024 Mass Save statewide budget was \$4,700,000 and the Compact's share of that was \$302,000. He stated that the 2025 Compact marketing budget is \$750,000 for energy efficiency and \$105,000 for power supply. He stated that the Compact attended 21 community events and did 36 presentations in 2024. He stated that a majority of the presentations this year focused on a general overview of the Compact and our Energy Efficiency Programs.

Jason Bertrand stated that the Compact's press releases are sent to all daily and weekly papers on the Cape and Vineyard, as well as online only publications, radio station, and community organizations and chambers as appropriate. He stated that in 2024 there were three press releases. They were for a Power Supply Rate Announcement, Energy Education Presentation, and the E-Bike Incentive Program. He stated that the Compact is having a press release for the Cape & Vineyard Solar Loan next week on February 28th. He stated that the Board should have received an email about it and are welcome to attend. He stated that some other upcoming press releases are for the Energy Saver Home Loan and the new website launch. He stated that Mass Save Statewide press releases are also sent to papers on the Cape and Vineyard. These cover the larger announcements for our Energy Efficiency programs.

Jason Bertrand stated that development on the Compact's new website has begun. He stated that we are hoping to do final testing and launch in the spring. He stated that the vendor working with the Compact on the new website is Tomo360, they are a digital marketing and web development company based in Lowell, MA. He stated that they have previously worked with other Cape based organizations including Barnstable County and Housing Assistance Corporation.

Jason Bertrand stated that the Compact is looking to modernize the look and feel of the website and optimize for mobile and ensure the website is ADA compliant. He stated that we are looking to redesign program pages to present content more clearly and simplify user journey on the website and best direct customers toward programs that are the best fit for them. Tools would be added to help users find the content that they are looking for. He stated that another goal is to increase the number of translated website pages.

Jason Bertrand stated that staff have started reviewing program pages. Some pages will have to wait until after the three-year plan approval at the end of February. He stated that once the program pages are created, staff will complete a round of reviews and revisions and then the core program pages will be translated into Spanish and Portuguese.

Colin Odell asked if the Board would get a chance to review before the website launches. Jason Bertrand answered yes that the Board would be able to review closer to the launch. Dan Schell stated that we can send a staging link to the Board. He stated that the Board can write down and send any small edits they may have and set aside some time at a future Board Meeting for any larger issues.

OVERVIEW OF COMPACT PARTICIPATION IN MA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES DOCKETS, AUDREY EIDELMAN KIERNAN:

Maggie Downey stated that this is just a quick summary of the DPU dockets that the Compact is currently participating in. She stated that if there are any the Board Members would like more information on, we will bring it back for further discussion at a future Board Meeting.

Audrey Eidelman Kiernan reviewed the Current Cape Light Compact JPE participation and advocacy in DPU Dockets PowerPoint. She stated as a reminder, that the way the DPU numbers its dockets is that the first two numbers are of the year that the docket was opened. Therefore, the Board can see that some of these dockets have been going on a few years, and some have just started.

Audrey Eidelman Kiernan stated that DPU 21-80 is the Eversource Grid Modernization Plan for 2022-2025. She stated that it was adjudicated and approved in 2022, and the parties have engaged in what is called an Advanced Metering Infrastructure Working Group, which filed a report in August of 2024. They are now awaiting guidance from the DPU on the next procedural steps. She stated that the next docket is DPU 23-50

which is the DPU's investigation into modifications to the way basic service is procured and priced particularly to avoid any future failed solicitations by the electric distribution companies. As well as to try and minimize the differences in the way basic service prices occur and are procured across the distribution companies.

Audrey Eidelman Kiernan stated that DPU 23-67 began with an overhaul of the municipal aggregation guidelines. She stated that it is now in the second phase, working through the implementation of alternative low-income community shared solar projects by municipal aggregations. Next is DPU 23-84. She stated that this docket is on the electric vehicle time of use rates. She stated that this stems from the 2022 Clean Energy Act that required the electric distribution companies to propose time of use rates for charging electric vehicles and for electric vehicles supply equipment. She stated that hearings are taking place on the docket next month.

Audrey Eidelman Kiernan stated DPU 24-10 is the Eversource electric sector modernization plan. She stated that this also stems from the 2022 Clean Energy Act, where the legislature required electric distribution companies to file these types of plans every five years. She stated that the DPU is currently considering metrics and reporting requirements in this docket for Eversource. Also, the distribution companies are working on developing long term system planning. Next is DPU 24-15, the energy burden investigation. She stated the DPU is exploring how to reduce the energy burden for customers, specifically looking at tiered discount rates and how to address recovery of any revenue shortfalls that come from discount rates. She stated that the DPU is also looking at how to develop a moderate-income customer discount rate.

Audrey Eidelman Kiernan stated DPU 24-104 is on Eversource's own low-income community shared solar program. She stated that it stems from the SMART program and DPU's review of Eversource's SMART tariff. She stated that the next docket is DPU 24-195 and Eversource has asked for midterm modifications to its electric vehicle infrastructure program. She stated that the Compact is monitoring a request from Eversource for a pilot program to consider whether Compact customers could also participate in the program. Lastly there is docket DPU 25-10. She stated that in January the DPU and the Department of Telecommunications and Cable issued a joint order and they're exploring utility pole attachments, conduit access, double poles, a related database, and other similar matters. She stated that the Compact is coordinating internally and with the towns on this to consider double pole issues for comment in this proceeding.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

1. MA DPU 25-10 Update: Double Utility Poles

Maggie Downey stated as Audrey Eidelman Kiernan just stated, a docket opened in January and the DPU sent a letter to all the Massachusetts cities and towns, as well as the utilities. She stated that they are asking very specific questions of the towns. They are seeking input on double poles. She stated that this is an issue that the Compact has commented on in several proceedings. She stated that the DPU has asked cities and towns to coordinate and consolidate comments, if possible. She stated that she presented to the former Select Board and Councilors Association and sent an update to the Town Managers. She stated that Kevin Galligan and Mariel Marchand created a survey that she also sent out. She stated that the survey responses are due back to the Compact on March 4, 2025.

2. Refrigerator Recycling

Maggie Downey stated that the refrigerator recycling program is back. She stated that there is a flyer in the Board packet with the information of the new vendor that customers can reach out to schedule a free home pick up of their working but inefficient refrigerators. Customers would then be eligible for a \$75 rebate.

3. Executive Orders – Potential Impacts to MA Programs

Maggie Downey stated that she wanted to give a quick update on the executive orders coming through at the federal level. She stated that there have been some inquiries from the public. She stated that the Mass Save programs are funded by ratepayers, so they are not impacted. She stated that federal funds such as the HERS and HEAR funds are likely to be impacted. She stated that these are outside funds that we use as leverage to offset ratepayer funds.

4. Multi-Factor Authentication

Maggie Downey stated that Board Members who use a Compact email address will be receiving an email to set up their multi-factor authentication from our vendor Retrofit to set up a time to have someone walk through the process. She stated those with their laptop today can stay and Angela Hurwitz the Compact’s Senior IT Services & Data Management Analyst can walk through Board Members through it after the meeting, or before or after next month’s meeting.

Bill Doherty left the meeting at 3:52PM.

Alan Strahler left the meeting at 3:58PM.

ADJOURNMENT:

Motion to adjourn made at 4:00PM moved by Robert Schofield, seconded by Colin Odell.

Sean	Hogan	Barnstable	Yes
Robert	Schofield	Bourne	Yes
Colin	Odell	Brewster	Yes
Brad	Crowell	Dennis	Yes
Gary	Senecal	Eastham	Yes
Scott	Mueller	Falmouth	Yes
Valerie	Bell	Harwich	Yes
Wayne	Taylor	Mashpee	Yes
David	Jacobson	Orleans	Yes
Nate	Mayo	Provincetown	Yes
Leanne	Drake	Sandwich	Yes
Russ	Hartenstine	Tisbury	Yes
Bob	Higgins-Steele	Truro	Yes
Susan	Ryan-Ishkanian	Wellfleet	Yes
Nicola	Blake	West Tisbury	Yes
Joyce	Flynn	Yarmouth	Yes

Motion carried in the affirmative (16-0-0)

Respectfully submitted,

Melissa Allard

LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND EXHIBITS:

- Meeting Notice/Agenda
- January 8, 2025, Draft Open Session Meeting Minutes
- Power Supply Marketing PowerPoint
- Cape and Vineyard Solar Loan Update PowerPoint
- Cape Light Compact Marketing and Website PowerPoint
- Current Cape Light Compact JPE participation and advocacy in DPU Dockets PowerPoint