

Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change

Task Force Member Meeting

October 7, 2020, 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM

Online via Zoom

Meeting Notes

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Opening Remarks, Maria Redmond

Welcome, everyone. This is a member meeting of the Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change. This is a public meeting. Thank you all for joining us today.

Introduction, Lt. Governor Mandela Barnes

Good afternoon. Thank you for taking time to join us. We have a special guest today! Please welcome Governor Tony Evers.

Opening Remarks, Governor Tony Evers

Good afternoon, folks! I wanted to express my deep gratitude to each of you for serving on this Task Force. You have given energy, thoughtfulness, expertise and passion for making Wisconsin a leader in battling the climate crisis.

I said unequivocally that climate change is not only real but an imminent threat to our State, economy and future generations. All in Wisconsin have experienced this crisis, but especially disproportionate affects are felt by our low-income and disadvantaged socioeconomic groups. Indigenous communities, the original stewards of this land, have had to change centuries of tradition because we have failed to preserve natural resources. I am so glad that you answered the call to join our fight against climate change. I know that despite the COVID challenges, you recognized that this work cannot wait, and continued to meet.

You have even conducted virtual listening sessions so the will of the people will be reflected. We need solutions that are equitable and sustainable. I am aware that working as a collective Task Force is not easy, and I am happy you will have a solid set of recommendations in front of me at the end of October. Shout out to Lieutenant Governor Barnes for his passion and leadership on this issue. Thank you to the staff and state employees who made this a success. This will lay the foundation for a resilient State and for everyone to thrive.

The work will have just begun when the report comes to my desk. I look forward to incorporating your recommendations into the State legislature and budget. Your impact will be felt for years to come! I look forward to seeing the recommendations.

Roll Call (those in bold confirmed in attendance)

August Ball

Amber Meyer Smith, Clean Wisconsin
Anna Haines, Professor, UW-Stevens Point
Bill Hogseth, WI Farmer's Union
Bob Stone, International Brotherhood Electrical Workers
Chris Pollack
Doug Rebut, WI Corn Growers
Daryl Williams, WI Emergency Management
Dylan Jennings
Jeffrey Crawford
Carrie Schuman, WI Conservation Voters
Kirsten Shead, Milwaukee Water Commons
Kris Canto
Krystal Westfahl
Mark Stoering, Xcel Energy
Paul Graham
Sec. Randy Romanski
Rep. Greta Neubauer, Rep. 66th dis
Rep. Mike Kuglitsch, Rep. 82nd dis
Rob Palmberg, Dairyland Power Coop
Robert Garvin
Robert Nigh
Sec. Caleb Frostman
Sec. Preston Cole
Senator Mark Miller, WI State Senate
Stacey Craig, Environmental Stewardship
Stephanie Salgado
Katie McGinty, VP Johnson Controls
Mike Peters, WPPI
Jeff Rafn
Sheri Johnson

Remarks of Appreciation, Lt. Governor Barnes

Thank you for being here at our last Task Force meeting. You have held over 27 meetings, 5 virtual listening sessions, and spent hours of your personal time to read, research, write and provide feedback. This Task Force has done amazing work! Everyone should be proud of themselves.

Policy and Final Report Discussion, Wenona Wolf

Draft Report

Here is a draft of what the final report will look like. It will include all the recommendations that had been thoroughly drafted by Task Force members. The majority of the recommendations are in Tier 1 and are those with the majority of Task Force member support. A second tier, Tier 2, includes recommendations that have strong opposition within the Task Force.

The goal was to have a report with every member's name expressing general support, so that all recommendations could move forward. We wanted all names to be on the report because there is power in having a diverse Task Force.

We knew the challenge would be that we would not have agreement on all topics. The real goal is that we have some tangible recommendations that we can put forward, realizing that in the past eight years this has not been done. This is how we will move forward with the final report.

Comments

- **Stoering:** How many recommendations are in each tier?
- **Redmond:** There are 48 recommendations in Tier 1 and 8 recommendations in Tier 2.
- **Neubauer:** There are a lot of great things on this list that I am proud of and excited about. But there are a number of items in Tier 2 that are important, that we heard a lot of public support for, that I think we need to move forward on as a State. I hope that legislative and policy-wise, the conversation does not stop here.
- **Shed:** I second what Greta said. There are challenging items in Tier 2. We said we were going to center on science and environmental justice, and a lot of items in Tier 2 do just that. From the public listening sessions, especially communities of color, we know it is a high priority that we take bold action. I hope that in our next step, implementation, we make that happen. There might be disagreement among the Task Force, but there is solid agreement from the public on Tier 2 issues.

Signatory Language

Signatory language will be included in the report. Staff reviewed other task force reports that have such language. Do Task Force members have feedback on this language? Staff is happy to have conversations about this and will share draft language with the Task Force.

Comments

- **Williams:** I have no issues with that language.

Layout

Staff is working with graphic designers and writers to determine what the final report looks like. The memos will take on a new format. The report will include a narrative section that includes letters of support, highlights from leaders who presented, highlights from advocacy voices, as well as background, an executive summary, science, research and the need for these recommendations. All tiers of recommendations will be included.

Our goal is to show the public, agencies and legislature all the hard work this Task Force has put forth. We want it to be a report that is enjoyable, easy, and readable by people across the State. It will include charts and graphs to make it visually appealing.

The Task Force communication does not have to end here; as the report comes together, we will circulate a version to Task Force members. We are on an incredibly tight timeline. A skeleton report will go to the Governor on October 30, and the full version will be released to the public in mid-November. We hope you will help us show the great work you have done, and the need to advocate for these recommendations.

Comments

- **Canto:** Will the images and charts associated with research for the memos be included? Or will the memos take a standard form?
- **Miller:** How will online links be handled in the report's digital format? Staff will check with the designer.
- **Shead:** Will the Task Force website remain current; will the communication with this office still happen via the website?
- **Redmond:** Yes, the website will remain current and the report will be posted there. Staff will continue to share news on the website. The Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy will be linked with Task Force recommendations. We will keep the momentum.
- **Wolf:** Continued feedback from Task Force members is always welcome.
- **Rafn:** Will you let us know when legislative and budget actions take place as a result of our recommendations, so we know to advocate for them?
- **Nigh:** The hard work will start after the report. How do we leverage our contacts and research to further our recommendations, so that we do really accomplish something as a group? I am excited we are giving recommendations to the Governor. I am concerned that we left something unfinished if we cannot weigh in and push this forward.
- **Barnes:** This is not the end of the process. There are opportunities for the Task Force and public to continue to provide input.
- **Wolf:** Task Force members have asked how to keep the momentum and organize to ensure that these recommendations go forward. Is there value in us reconvening at the start of the budget process? The executive order does not end this Task Force. You are asked to remain available to create future reports if needed. This opens the door for us to stay connected. We are playing catch-up as a State, and there is a lot to be done as we move forward. We will reconvene in 2021.

- **Stoering:** Will we receive copies of the report in advance of the release, so we are prepared to comment?
- **Wolf:** We will circulate the skeleton report to you before the Governor gets it.

Signatory Language Comments

- **Kuglitsch:** I want to revisit the signature language. I am comfortable with the Tier 1 and Tier 2 language. But, in “All participants agreed to full set of recommendations,” consider removing “all.”
- **Wolf:** This is sample language and still open to edits.
- **Stoering:** A number of recommendations were beyond my area of expertise. Using the word “all” is not fully representative of my deferral to the experts on certain topics.
- **Rafn:** Does this represent the consensus of the group?
- **Williams:** That is how I read it, “input and consensus.”
- **McGinty:** The full set of recommendations should be taken as a package.
- **Shead:** I agree. We did not go through consensus.
- **Craig:** I have similar support. The goals are rigorous, the process is rigorous, yet many young people have said this is not enough. Changes have to happen now in order to reach our 2050 goals. At an early meeting we heard from the energy sector, and we talked about safety, reliability, affordability, and that customers were driving renewable energy. I have heard from constituents that they are ready to go faster. I want to ensure that this is reflected—that we are signing this after a robust process, and that there is a hope that we will be moving aggressively on these, and more.
- **Johnson:** I echo these comments, and about not having expertise on every one. “Comfortable” is not the best word to represent the desire for more urgency that is wanted by public and stakeholders.
- **Rafn:** We need to ensure that we do not diminish the power of what we did as a group. I do not want it to be watered down.
- **Neubauer:** I echo that sentiment. Everyone had an opportunity to weigh in. I hope we can land on something that states we all provided input and are moving forward collectively.
- **Kuglitsch:** “All” was the one word I have issue with. There are folks who do not agree with all. But we shouldn’t wordsmith this now, but rather send recommendations to staff.
- **Jennings:** It is important to show unity, but I think that our strength is in our diverse worldviews. Should we include language about our diversity?

General Comments

- **Palmberg:** Will the Task Force members get a package of information?
- **Wolf:** Yes, we will send you a draft report prior to it going to Governor. We will get the signatory language agreed upon before then.

Closing and Next Steps, Lt. Governor Barnes

Task forces are not easy, and I am forever grateful for the opportunity to convene this one. The work is not easy, the challenges are not easy; we have a lot of people, backgrounds, ideas, and everyone has a vital role in moving the State forward. There are so many ideas, and I do want us to continue to be bold in the ways we address climate change. There are so many reasons that call us to this moment. We are naming hurricanes with the Greek alphabet because we have run out of letters. We see the intensity of storms increasing. I want us to be able to say that we did everything we could do. I see our work over the last 10 months as a significant step in the right direction. There are recommendations here that have not been implemented by any state. A lot has happened in our world, and I commend everyone for the work you've done to remain dedicated to it. Seeing the report brings me joy!

The collective work is coming together, but it is certainly not done. We should reconvene as the budget is being introduced. We need you all to champion these policies and recommendations. If you did not see something that you wanted in the recommendations, do not stop advocating for it, in the budget, legislative process, education, etc. We need you to continue to be present within your industries. We do not want this report to collect dust; let us all agree that we will not let that happen.

There is no sunset date for this Task Force; we are to be available for the Governor if he needs additional reports or support. There are no plans for that currently, but our office will be in touch with Task Force members as needed. My office door is always virtually open. We have our Office of Sustainability and Clean Energy, and Maria has done an incredible job. We should lean on that office. There are a lot of avenues to get the most out of our ideas.

Special shout out to Wenona. Thank you to every other agency that has lent staff to this Task Force. There was a lot of anxiety around going all-virtual, but it allowed us to possibly reach even more people. Thanks to the staff who made that possible. Thank you for making this possible and for all your hard work.

Adjourn, Lt. Governor Barnes

The last meeting of the Governor's Task Force on Climate Change was adjourned at 1:59 pm.