

Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change

Task Force Member Meeting
September 3, 2020, 1:00 PM – 3:00 PM
Online via Zoom

Meeting Notes

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Opening Remarks, Maria Redmond

Thank you all for being here today. This is an additional meeting of the Governor’s Task Force on Climate Change to review public comments and discuss those that were not included in a recommendation. We will also review the list of additional recommendations brought forth since our last meeting. Lieutenant Governor Barnes wishes he could join us today, but he is occupied with other responsibilities and cannot be here. Members of the public are welcome to listen but the window for submitting public comments has closed. Thank you.

Roll Call (those in bold confirmed in attendance)

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 Rebout, WI Corn Growers
Daryl Williams, WI Emergency Management

Dylan Jennings

Notes provided by Credens LLC

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, Pam representing him

Senator Mark Miller, WI State Senate

Stacey Craig, Environmental Stewardship

Stephanie Salgado

Katie McGinty, VP Johnson Controls

Mike Peters, WPPI

Jeff Rafn

August Ball

Sherry Johnson

[Guiding Principles, Maria Redmond](#)

The guiding principles of this Task Force are to:

- 1) Fulfill our Mission to Make Meaningful Recommendations
- 2) Fulfil our Vision to Reduce Emissions
- 3) Center on Environmental Justice
- 4) Empowering Community Voice
- 5) Factor in Public / Political Will
- 6) Diversity in Implementation
- 7) Uphold the values of the Evers/Barnes administration: Equity and Sustainability

[Public Comments, Wenona Wolf](#)

We are here to have a conversation about the public comments that are not reflected in the current draft recommendations. Most of the public comments are reflected in the recommendations; the Task Force did a great job bringing forth a comprehensive set of recommendations. Do you feel that the public comments have been reflected in the recommendations, or is any tweaking needed?

Energy, Housing and Infrastructure Public Comments

Johnson: Regarding divesting from fossil fuel investments, New York State has an example of this. \

Neubauer: We will include divestment and fossil fuel pipelines in a later discussion. The comments about passenger rail and purchasing local energy could be folded into other recommendations

Kuglitsch: Could the utility folks address this? But, being part of MISO, is this even an option for Wisconsin?

Neubauer: We could do some of this in order to move in this direction more quickly.

Stoering: We are a Midwest company, and the utilities in our region have become more interconnected, not less, lately. We do promote local resources.

[Carol Phelps: What kind of renewable resources do we have in Wisconsin? We are situated better for solar, not wind, for example.]

Stoering: We do not want to limit our sources because our customers have benefited from our import capability.

Peters: I would hesitate to add anything that limits energy purchases to in-state. That has been legislated by other states. We can specify renewables, but we will have issues with interstate commerce for electricity sourcing.

Shead: Broadly, these comments are not weighted. For example, the pipeline and highway expansion came up multiple times in public comments.

Johnson: Pipelines came up a lot.

Wolf: Who wants to create a recommendation that tackles this?

Neubauer: We will work on language regarding the Green Bank and pipeline recommendations.

Kuglitsch: Does the State retirement fund have a fiduciary obligation or responsibility to optimize financial return to policy holders, and would this conflict with that obligation?

Neubauer: Regarding fossil fuel divestment in UW and pension funds, many other university systems, for example, California, have chosen to divest from fossil fuels, with the understanding that those returns will not continue to grow at the same rate. The City of Madison has done so. I can provide more resources on this topic.

Pollack: Is it realistic to believe that wind and solar can take care of all our power needs? Is it realistic to not address nuclear power in our grid?

Stoering: Nuclear is an important part of our base energy load today. We don't have plans to invest in new nuclear stations. Now, more encouraging are the technology advances in small, modular reactors. This is a promising new technology area and is advancing. I don't think we need to be explicit about nuclear as we await new technologies and resources.

Craig: Regarding divestment, I witnessed Northland College go through that process. Twelve years ago, they tried to do so, and it did not go very well. Now, we find that now there are no negative implications for doing so. It's been successful without any negative implications.

Is nuclear fusion still on the horizon? Should we support research into the new nuclear technologies?

Stoering: Yes. We put forth the most aggressive carbon goals in the country. We can get to 80%. The challenge is the final 20%, and the need for new technologies to address that. Nuclear energy has potential to be part of that puzzle. Wisconsin has a rich history of nuclear, especially through UW-Madison. I would endorse nuclear research.

Palmberg: Most utilities support the Electric Power Research Institute. Utilities are thinking about what we need to do to meet the final 20%.

Wolf: What would supporting nuclear look like at the State level?

Miller: Current state policy identifies that primary investments should be in renewables, then non-carbon-based energy, and the lowest priority is carbon fuel. We've already recognized that we will invest in this.

[**Phelps:** We need energy storage solutions and I don't see those here.]

Redmond: This is a member meeting, not open to verbal public comments. Public members can chat their feedback to Maria.

Stoering: We are aggressively going after the 100% carbon-free goal.

Wolf: One recommendation includes incentivizing more technologies, does that cover this?

Stoering: The research costs money, and yes, a recommendation including support for research could include this.

Wolf: We will include language about investing in new technologies.

Wolf: Regarding pipeline expansion and rerouting, are Task Force members in support of including that?

Crawford: This is included in a new recommendation.

Neubauer: Another recommendation is "No new fossil fuel infrastructure" that would include this.

Stoering: We operate a natural gas distribution system, and the pipelines are critical to that. There is existing pipe that might not be environmentally sound and shifting away from that pipe to transport on rail is even more dangerous than upgrading current pipes. Replacing pipeline could be more environmentally sound than moving the pipeline.

Crawford: A new policy states that the PSC should take into account environmental and environmental justice issues.

Shead: These public hearings overlapped with the DNR public hearings; is this a recommendation we want to make to DNR, or other state agencies? The overwhelming public feeling was very negative about pipeline expansion.

Stoering: I would advocate that we be careful here. We do not have a technology to replace natural gas. Natural gas is needed when the sun and wind are not available, especially in the winter. I would be hesitant to ban new natural gas generation or infrastructure.

Neubauer: We cannot build new infrastructure that will last decades. The environmental justice components are too critical. Natural gas is cleaner burning than coal, but it is causing significant impacts where it is being extracted.

Stoering: Our goal is 0% carbon by 2050. Infrastructure would have to be decommissioned if it doesn't meet our goal.

Haines: That is in the additions, #2 under Energy Housing and Infrastructure, pipeline.

Palmberg: Gas is an important bridge fuel. We have developed smaller, modular gas units that are needed. We will need to have a balance of power sources over the next 50 years as we get to carbon-free.

Neubauer: I want us to get carbon-free by 2050. I don't think we're going to get consensus on this topic. How will staff address recommendations when we won't have consensus?

Wolf: Re. Neubauer's concerns are shared by the Lt. Governor. The multiple impacts of pipelines needs to be discussed. We'll need to find balance.

Shead: We hear over and over about pipeline expansions from communities.

Craig: This falls within the social justice component of our Task Force. If we don't take a stand on pipeline expansion, we are not acknowledging the many communities that pipelines impact. This group has an opportunity to take a stand against pipeline expansion.

Healthy Communities and Strong Economy / Land Use and Conservation Public Comments

Rebout: The comments about banning CAFOs, incentivizing family farms and changing subsidies are not on our list. I don't see how we can ban CAFOs, that is part of our agriculture. How do we identify what is a family farm? And as a corn farmer, I would object to changing subsidies.

Hogseth: I echo the CAFOs piece. Our membership would not support a ban on CAFOs. We would support increased oversight, but not a ban. The family farms recommendation gets to the enforcement of anti-trust regulations so there is more competition and family farmers can get fair prices in the marketplace.

Kuglitsch: Changing farm subsidies is in direct conflict with the recommendation of "encourage use of biofuels." We need to make a decision one way or the other

Shead: As a water advocate, we have had severe concerns about watershed and environmental justice issues around CAFOs. We need more oversight of large-scale farms, especially over watershed and water effects.

Hogseth: WI Farmer's Union would support that.

Should we draft a recommendation for increased CAFO regulation?

Miller: Could it be included under the soil health / watershed management recommendation?

Rebout: We need to look at current CAFO regulations.

Walling: Regarding incentivizing family farms, the Land Use and Conservation recommendations provide support for economic incentives for family farms. A few are very specific to smaller farms with more diverse crops or grazing.

Robert, WI Farm Bureau: There are myriad regulations that affect CAFOs which don't affect smaller farms. It is a catch-22: the more regulations we put in, in order to make them cost-justified, the larger the farms have to become to afford the regulations. Could we encourage better protections in cases of accidents? A rainfall event can affect watershed as much as a CAFO would. We need more information on this topic.

Carbon Additions

1. **Carbon, Climate and EJ Audited Energy Infrastructure Review**

Crawford: This did not go through our EHI committee, but rather was written to address the multiple public comments on pipeline rerouting and expansion. This would add a review by PSC/DNR to look at the climate change and environmental justice impacts of new energy infrastructure.

Meyer Smith: This is a good idea.

Schuman: We are glad to see this.

Peters: Question about implementation: there are statutory requirements on this topic, so this would need to go through statute. Instead of executive, this should be legislative and executive.

General agreement: This will require statutory changes.

Crawford: My updated version does include "other legislation."

Peters: Legislation should be first, then rulemaking, for implementation.

2. **State as a Leader Program**

Crawford: We are advocating to move this from the parking lot to the master list. This went through the EHI committee. It has flexibility on implementation. I am not sure why it was removed from the list. It is straightforward and implementable.

Meyer Smith: It is important that the State be looked at as a leader. It would be great for the Task Force to acknowledge the State as a leader. This was a strong recommendation out of the Task Force ten years ago. It can be specific or general; it is about setting the tone in support of climate change.

Miller: I endorse this as a recommendation.

Energy Additions

1. **Maximizing co-benefits and related financial value from clean energy projects**

Crawford: We would like this moved from the parking lot. This went through the EHI committee and was recommended. It is about making DNR and DATCP encourage additional solar and biodigester projects. It would make adding a green energy project energy easier and includes information sharing. It ties in with multiple other recommendations.

Walling: This is in line with what we are already doing. We need to recognize that there are efforts already underway in these areas. This feeds into broader Land Use and Conservation recommendations.

Redmond: is this a standalone recommendation, or should it be rolled into others?

Hogseth: I haven't had a chance to think this through fully so I'm not sure yet how it would interact with other recommendations. How would these all work together?

2. **Cost Effective Appliance Efficiency Standards**

Crawford: We would like this moved from the parking lot. It would require legislation to set specific appliance standards before they could be sold in WI. I am bringing it here for reconsideration.

Shed: How does that intersect with Focus on Energy and access to more efficient appliances?

Sometimes efficiency is expensive.

Crawford: This would ban inefficient but cheap appliances.

Kuglitsch: I am concerned about requiring more expensive appliances. Is it environmentally just to price people out of certain products?

Crawford: Some could be addressed through Focus on Energy.

To qualify for Focus on Energy, the appliance already has to have an efficiency rating.

Crawford: This is trying to remove some products from Wisconsin.

Shead: We need to offer constituents more options. We want to ensure that efficient products can get to those who need them.

3. State and Local Fossil Fuel Divestment

Neubauer: These need to be fleshed out further. I added them back in because we heard so much about them from the public. I am available to talk offline about details. We need more information and for this topic to be built out more.

Salgado: This is what students want. UW personnel and administration need some pushback on this.

4. Ban All New Fossil Fuel Infrastructure

5. Facilitating Multi-Unit Green Buildings

Crawford: We would like this moved from the parking lot. This is about the ability to use a master meter so that an apartment building owner can include green energy to benefit the tenants. It applies to new and rehabbed apartment buildings. It would enable solar on a building to benefit all tenants. This is the only recommendation that focuses on apartment buildings.

Peters: This would be a significant change to current regulations. This is legislative action, essentially creating a new form of utility by allowing landlords to create and sell the energy. I don't believe WPPI could support it.

Miller: This is a third-party provider issue. I don't think we should include it in our recommendations.

Agriculture Additions

1. Supporting biodigesters

Crawford: We moved this from the parking lot for reconsideration. This is the only standalone policy related to biodigesters. It relates to LUC #10 because biodigesters are a solution for a lot of water runoff issues from the dairy industry. It has the potential for use in urban areas as well.

Hogseth: Our membership has discussed this at length, and we have concerns about the accessibility of biodigesters. I could support this with the inclusion of research focused on biodigesters being profitable, and an addition to exploring community biodigesters.

Pollack: The biggest issue is the size and scale of animal operations that you need to make a biodigester efficient and profitable. For example, the smallest farm in WI with a biodigester is a 2,500 herd. Farms need 5,000+ herd to justify a biodigester. It's not efficient and we need more research into making it efficient. On the list of what we can do to have the greatest gains regarding carbon sequestration, this is not very high.

Crawford: This recommendation does encourage additional research and pilot projects.

Hogseth: I suggest making the research component explicit and connected to smaller-scale farms. Also, include community digesters. The potential that biodigesters are only successful for large-scale operations is an environmental justice concern.

Crawford: Language can be added to address those.

Miller: I support this, provided research into policy changes to make biodigesters operate in the market is included.

Meyer Smith: I am concerned about Focus on Energy funding being used here. Include in the recommendation that increased funding is needed to support the research, so it does not raid Focus on Energy funding.

Porter: Sara and I can work on language here.

2. MISO proposals with focus on enhancing financial value of DERs.

Crawford: This is a new recommendation. It incorporates recommendations from the WEDTI report.

Meyer Smith: There are issues at MISO that need to be addressed, and we need to keep our eye on it as it is critical to reaching our 2050 goals.

Transportation Additions

1. Statewide Electric Transportation Plan

Palmberg: This is very foundational to our carbon goals. It is strongly recommended by RENEW Wisconsin. This would be a public-private partnership.

Meyer Smith: How does this intersect with the utilities presenting transportation plans? Where is the nexus, or are they different?

Stoering: More states have electrification goals in transportation. 1.5 million electric vehicles by 2030, for example. Transportation is a big part of the carbon equation. This is complementary to the utility projects in this area.

2. Allow Direct Electric Vehicle Sales

Crawford: This would allow direct electric vehicle sales on a limited basis. It is recommended by RENEW Wisconsin.

Kuglitsch: This was in the last budget and the Governor vetoed it. Does this contradict Task Force goals?

Meyer Smith: This is complementary to our goals. I hear about this frequently, the lack of being able to get stock or buy Teslas through dealers.

Kuglitsch: I support it.

3. Encourage More Use of Biofuels

Rebut: This is a new recommendation about increasing the use of ethanol. It complements the State as Leader program and follows multiple other recommendations.

Meyer Smith: I have concerns about the way it is written to emphasize ethanol. We need to create a low-carbon fuel standard that is carbon-neutral. Maybe assign a carbon-intensity score. I support a clean fuels approach.

Rebut: I am okay with changing the wording.

Walling: Expanding it to include more biofuels for transportation would tie this into biodigesters.

Meyer Smith: Keep it technology neutral.

Redmond: The State fleet already has a lot of flex fuel vehicles. But we could look at the fleet makeup.

Porter: Secretary Cole likes the idea of expanding this. We support a clean-fuels, technology-neutral approach, not favoring one fuel over another.

Rebut: I am not opposed to that.

Crawford: I support expanding this to Wisconsin-based companies working on converting biodigester gases to other gases for fleet vehicles.

General Agreement: will revisit this and expand to include clean fuels and transportation.

Closing Remarks, Wenona Wolf

I am sorry that the Lieutenant Governor could not be here, he wishes he could. He extends his thanks to you. We appreciate everyone and your ideas, advocacy and recommendations. If your recommendation did not soar forward, we appreciate the thought that went into it, and it will remain in the parking lot and accessible to our office. It could be taken up in the future by our office.

We will put these ideas into a more digestible form, with all the issues that have the ability to move forward. We will connect with you about the list going to the Governor at the end of October and will be in touch about how we will get to the final list. We appreciate your time and hard work.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:02 pm.