

Summary Minutes of the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)'s
21st Century Energy Workforce Advisory Board (EWAB)
Public Meeting

January 22, 2024 – 12:30pm to 2:00pm ET

The 21st Century Energy Workforce Advisory Board (EWAB) was convened for its 5th meeting, via WebEx Live, at 12:30pm ET on January 22, 2024. In accordance with Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from 12:30pm ET to 2:00pm ET.

EWAB members present:

- Amanda Cage, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- Becky Ervin, United Auto Workers
- Dr. Daniel (Dan) Marshall, Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University
- Dr. Girard Melancon, National Council for Workforce Education
- Melissa (Missy) Henriksen, Center for Energy Workforce Development*
- Dr. Thomas (Tom) Kriger, North America's Building Trades Unions
- Kay Seven, Co-Chair, Nez Perce Tribe
- Dr. Jermaine Whirl, Augusta Technical College
- Chris Levesque, TerraPower
- Maureen Conway, Aspen Institute
- Deanna Ahmed, PhD, Our Next Energy

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DOE staff presenting and/or supporting the meeting:

- Maya Goodwin, Senior Advisor, Workforce and Economic Opportunity Policy, Office of Energy Jobs
- Piper O'Keefe, Policy Analyst and EWAB Designated Federal Official (DFO), Office of Energy Jobs
- Francisco Arzu, Contractor Support, U.C. Berkeley's Labor Center
- Pam Egan, Contractor Support, U.C. Berkeley's Labor Center
- Damaris Vargas, Contractor Support, Evoke Consulting

Other attendees present for all or a portion of the meeting:

- Andrew Reamer
- Bonnie Krueger
- Hank Webster
- Melody (no last name)
- Miranda Bernard
- Moriah Locklear
- Robert Omwenga

Meeting Summary

Subcommittee Report-Outs and Discussion

Piper O'Keefe, DFO, opened the meeting, noting the Webex was being recorded and would be posted to the EWAB's public website. Ms. O'Keefe then took roll call to ascertain a quorum of Advisory Board members in attendance, noting 11 EWAB members present. Upon completing the roll call, she turned the meeting over to Melissa Henriksen, EWAB Chairperson, for a brief welcome and overview of the meeting agenda.

Ms. Henriksen recapped the EWAB’s mission focus – to develop a strategy for DOE to support and develop a skilled energy workforce to meet the changing needs of the U.S. energy system. She noted the EWAB has been tasked to ensure the strategy will further DOE’s current efforts to create jobs, ensure job quality, and equitable access to energy-related jobs. The EWAB identified four (4) core areas to focus their efforts on – 1) Combatting Barriers to Energy Employment; 2) Measuring and Addressing Job Quality; 3) Scope Prioritization and Industry Targeting; and 4) Effectiveness of Existing DOE Programs – and developed subcommittees to address each.

The purpose of today’s meeting was to shift focus from the research and information gathering phase of the Board’s work to putting together actionable recommendations. Ms. Henriksen asked the subcommittees to present their current findings/progress/recommendations. She asked the Board to identify outstanding research or data/information still required to enable drafting the individual subcommittee reports. Also, the UC Berkeley team will provide specific guidance or direction for writing the final report. She also noted the floor would open for Board members’ comments, after the subcommittees’ presentations, to encourage collaboration amongst the subcommittees.

Combatting Barriers to Energy Employment: This subcommittee summarized their report strategies as delivering transition for workers, diversifying the workforce, and improving job quality measures as new sectors grow, especially for communities that have been traditionally left behind. This means providing real opportunities and removing systemic barriers in rural areas that prevent access to energy-related employment opportunities, such as transportation, childcare, and paid training programs.

The Combatting Barriers to Energy Employment subcommittee members collaborated for several weeks to identify (7) recommendations - 1) To require specific wrap-around services for workers to be a part of Community Benefit Plans, including childcare support, elder care support, transportation assistance, scheduling flexibility, mental health support, and on-site food services; 2) offer ways to allocate subsidies for childcare support, creating funding opportunities for childcare advocacy organizations and creating a repository of organizations that employers form (incentivizing partnership); 3) improving and increasing access to free and low-cost education and training programs, including asynchronous options, paid training programs and on the job training; 4) to increase youth exposure to clean energy learning and career opportunities by integrating energy learning into K-12 curricula and partnering with community organizations and NGO's; 5) to increase awareness of and exposure to energy career pathways for job seekers and provide career services to workers seeking these opportunities; 6) to make the energy workforce more accessible to women and non-binary people, workers with disabilities, and other historically underrepresented groups by prioritizing gender and race-based programs and cohort strategies tailored to the needs of underrepresented populations; and 7) to increase focus on worker retention in energy and infrastructure fields with the focus on developing pathways for career growth.

Upon reviewing the recommendations of the Barrier subcommittee, the advisory board members provided valuable feedback. One board member emphasized the need to improve access for all underserved and underrepresented communities, addressing the shortage of workers in clean energy jobs. Another member highlighted the potential benefits of collaborating with tribal nations on or near energy projects, particularly about recommendation #6.

Effectiveness of Existing DOE Programs: This subcommittee’s members detailed (5) recommendations to improve the effectiveness of existing DOE programs – 1) to ensure the presence of a workforce development component; 2) design and implement a national campaign strategy to highlight countrywide clean energy jobs; 3) continuous funding for targeted populations; 4) developing a workforce development metric; and 5) evaluating inter- and intra-agency collaborations around workforce development.

Measuring and Addressing Job Quality: This subcommittee’s members identified (4) recommendations to measure and address job quality – 1) raising awareness of energy jobs to try to address a workforce shortage while simultaneously prioritizing the quality of those jobs; 2) developing a baseline understanding of job quality that aligns with the DOE’s definition of a good job; 3) creating a process for job quality assessment standards and accountability mechanisms; and 4) develop low-burden methods for collecting data to assess performance against job quality standards.

Scope Prioritization and Industry Targeting Needs: This subcommittee identified (3) recommendations/highlights with incorporations from the other subcommittees – 1) investing in training and related infrastructure to meet the energy and workforce demand and broaden the talent pipeline and supporting skills 2) facilitating relationships between energy and workforce development stakeholders, and 3) measure and ensure equitable access and success for the broadest set of workers, organizations and/or community-based organizations in an effort to gather diverse input.

The commonality across the advisory board is improving the messaging strategy, finding good data on job quality, and improving the workforce retention strategies.

Public Comment Section

This meeting had one public commenter. The public commenter expressed that they considered the recommendations that were presented in this meeting from each subcommittee as a set of principles, rather than a strategy for change. The commenter encouraged the subcommittees to deeply examine the charge, understand efforts elsewhere in DOE and other federal agencies, and consider what DOE can do to produce better outcomes and strategies. They recommended utilizing the DOL tools and National Training and Workforce Surveys for existing data to aid with the report findings.

The Chairperson expressed gratitude to the public commenter for their comments, informing them that this was a structured meeting and due to time constraints, each group presented only a summary of the EWAB’s strategic recommendations.

Next Steps

The UC Berkeley Team provided specific guidance and direction for writing the final report. They stated that the next step was to provide the teams with an initial draft report encompassing the recommendations. The first draft is planned for February 1st with responses to be submitted by February 9th, no later than February 14th.

After the feedback from the 1st round is incorporated, a full board meeting will be scheduled for February 23rd. This meeting will provide another opportunity for a deep discussion about submission, formatting, and another round of edits. The Berkeley team proposes to disburse the 2nd draft on February 23rd with a response deadline of March 1st. The final draft and presentation to the Secretary will be held in the upcoming months. The Berkeley team will support the development of the slide deck for that meeting and schedule a February meeting regarding that process. The Berkeley team outlined the effective feedback process of having each subcommittee chair provide synthesized comments from their subcommittee members but encouraged members to communicate their priorities on topics outside of their subcommittees as well.

The Berkeley team noted that they will continue to monitor email submissions for feedback and acknowledged that much of the information discussed at today's meeting is included in the first draft. The Chairperson requested any comments by January 26th with the remaining comments to be saved for the first draft discussion.

Meeting Adjourned at approximately 2:00pm Eastern.

Respectfully submitted.

Maya Goodwin
Designated Federal Officer

I hereby certify that these meeting minutes of the January 22, 2024, EWAB meeting are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Melissa (Missy) Henriksen
Chair, EWAB