

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

April 16, 2024 – 3:00pm to 4:30pm ET

The 21st Century Energy Workforce Advisory Board (EWAB) was convened for its 7th meeting, via WebEx Live, at 3:00pm ET on April 16, 2024. In accordance with Public Law 92-463, the meeting was open to the public from 3:00pm ET to 4:30pm ET.

EWAB members present:

- Amanda Cage, National Fund for Workforce Solutions
- Allison Ziogas, ORSTED Americas, Inc.
- Dr. Daniel (Dan) Marshall, Institute of Public Policy, George Washington University
- Sarita Gupta, Ford Foundation
- 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
- Chris Levesque, TerraPower
- Maureen Conway, Aspen Institute
- Deanna Ahmed, PhD, Our Next Energy

* EWAB Chairperson

DOE staff presenting and/or supporting the meeting:

- Maya Goodwin, Senior Advisor, Workforce and Economic Opportunity Policy and EWAB Designated Federal Official (DFO), Office of Energy Jobs
- Angelica Zamora-Duran, AAAS Science & Technology Policy Fellow, Office of Energy Jobs
- Francisco Arzu, Contractor Support, U.C. Berkeley's Labor Center
- Pam Egan, Contractor Support, U.C. Berkeley's Labor Center

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

- Andrew Reamer
- Jack Karsten
- Maria Race
- Jennifer Fletcher
- Jessica Suda
- Josie Cardwell
- Megan Evans
- Susannah Howieson

Meeting Summary

Subcommittee Report-Outs and Discussion

Maya Goodwin, DFO, opened the meeting, noting the Webex was being recorded and would be posted to the EWAB's public website. Ms. Goodwin 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 Department of Energy (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 provide an update on the report timeline and revision process and allow the board to discuss unique strengths that the DOE has in supporting workforce development, the feedback on the report from the DOE’s internal Energy Workforce Strategy Council (EWSC), and any further items/recommendations that should be incorporated into a future report. The Chairperson acknowledged the formal resignation of Anne McMonigle from the board. A public comment periods was included after the Board’s discussion.

Report Production Timeline

The Berkeley Labor Center Team noted that they have been working to incorporate feedback from each of the subcommittees as well as the EWSC. The Berkeley Labor Center Team also mentioned that they are working to improve the readability of the report and adjusting the language to include actionable recommendations, with a final draft to be sent out to the Board on May 6th, in which the Board will have one week to provide feedback. The Berkeley Team encouraged the Board members to continue to send high-level feedback that they feel is missing from the report as well as additional information that is beyond the scope of this report, but that could be suitable for an iteration of a future report from the EWAB.

Remarks on DOE’s Unique Strengths to Support Workforce Development

The Board highlighted the DOE’s unique position to lead in the workforce development space, as the Department commands critical resources to implement a 21st Century Energy Workforce Strategy. The Board acknowledged the technical leadership in supporting the energy transition. These unique strengths include most notably:

- Best-in-class STEM education infrastructure and reputation;
- Research and development investment that catalyzes emerging and critical technology and science education through the National Lab complex;
- A developing suite of trade and technical energy workforce programs and technical assistance;
- An Office of Energy Jobs that 1) is well-positioned to work across the department and with other federal agencies in executing a forward-looking workforce strategy and 2) provide external stakeholders with key information on workforce needs and sector solution opportunities;
- Strong working relationships and the power to convene key stakeholders, including:
 - energy sector employers and trade associations,
 - unions,
 - Tribal governments,
 - research universities,
 - community and technical colleges, HBCUs, TCUs, and MSIs,
 - workforce intermediaries,
 - state and local government agencies, and

- federal agencies (particularly those overseeing the public workforce system, education system, and energy and climate investments);
- An annual analysis of the energy workforce, with national, state and energy sub-sector details (US Energy and Employment Report);
- Deployment of hundreds of billions in federal investments with strong incentives to drive job quality, share the benefits of these investments with communities, and attract, train, and retain a skilled workforce; and
- The combined power of DOE investments, relationships, technical expertise, and “bully pulpit” to shape decisions and investments of energy sector stakeholders, and to inform critical scientific advancement and education.

The Chairperson posed questions to the board regarding items that resonated and how to build upon the list presented. One Board member suggested that workforce intermediaries be included in the list of key stakeholders, as there are 150–300 of those organizations that are directly in touch with community organizations and leaders. Another Board member stated that the reason for overlooking workforce intermediaries is potentially due to their broad institutional scope (nonprofits, public agencies, workforce development centers, trade/industry associations, etc.), so it would be important to include them but also strategize how to identify/characterize them. It was suggested that the DOE, in collaboration with the Department of Education, host a conversation or convening with intermediaries, making sure to involve smaller and mid-sized community-based organizations to strategize ways to institutionalize these intermediaries. The idea of completing a systematic study of what States and localities have done in terms of sector strategies to inform a national industrial strategy was posited by the board.

The Board then discussed how the National Labs could be utilized as workforce intermediaries and/or leaders, especially regarding establishing community partnerships, providing education and outreach in the K–12 space, furthering workforce development efforts regionally for critical/emerging technologies especially in partnership with MSIs/HBCUs, community colleges, and CTEs. One board member highlighted that DOE, through the National Labs, has been involved primarily in research and development, and now has billions of dollars of investments in deployment and demonstrations. The board member underscored the need for the DOE to invest in developing the workforce required for these industries, while also prioritizing job quality. It was suggested that DOE complete a comprehensive analysis of workforce development activities performed by the labs to determine their effectiveness. One member suggested that this effort be expanded to including all the DOE investments in workforce development in a real-time map of funded programs/projects. Another member qualified that any efforts to publicize DOE’s workforce development investments should also be transparent about data on the quality of jobs and show how job quality has changed over time.

The idea of adding apprenticeship, including non-union apprenticeship, to the key stakeholders was brought forward by the board. One member suggested that while apprenticeships should be included, they saw them as more of a strategy than an institution to include as a stakeholder. They suggested that apprenticeship falls under unions and community/technical colleges, but that non-union/non-registered apprentices should be considered. The board suggested that a future EWAB paper could analyze, in depth, the variabilities between apprenticeship programs and registered apprenticeship programs in the energy industry. One board member mentioned DOE’s work in advocating for students to pursue STEM degrees could be expanded to apprenticeship programs, in collaboration with the Department of Education and school counselors.

One board member brought up the fact that some jobs within the energy industry require background checks which could serve as an additional barrier to some at-risk workers, for example ex-offenders. The board member suggested that the DOE examine rules and regulations that may serve as structural barriers and to employment.

The growing use of cybersecurity and AI were brought forth as items that had not been expanded upon in the report. One member suggested that the report include different ways that companies use AI and how it influences job quality, while highlighting best practices. Another member stated that employers should be proactive about engaging workers in technology design and adoption, so that they may have input into how AI could be helpful in their jobs. The member suggested that the DOE could bring together stakeholders to determine a sectoral strategy for AI and cybersecurity.

Public Comment Section

This meeting had two public commenters. The first public commenter recommended the DOE leverage the insight of the federal advisory committees (including the joint DOE-DOT Vehicle Working Group and the industry-based committees at the Department of Commerce), and state and local workforce boards to inform demand for a skilled energy workforce, as those committees and boards designate in demand occupation and sectors. The commenter encouraged the EWAB/DOE to utilize the map of in demand energy sectors and occupations produced by the DOL in developing its industrial strategy.

The second public commenter mentioned an analysis that they are in the process of sampling different methodologies that local workforce boards use to identify in demand occupations and offered to send that information to the EWAB for consideration.

The Chairperson expressed gratitude to the public commenters for their comments.

Next Steps

The UC Berkeley Team stated that the next step was to provide the teams with a second draft of the report that had been structurally updated to improve readability and emphasize actionable recommendations from the Board. The draft is planned to be sent out May 1st with an official draft being sent out May 6th that includes feedback from the Board. The Board will then have one week to provide high level feedback to the final draft. After a final report is reviewed and accepted by the EWAB and DOE a full board meeting will be scheduled for the Board to present their recommendations to the Secretary of Energy in person.

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 the information discussed at today's meeting will be included in the upcoming draft.

Meeting Adjourned at approximately 4:30pm Eastern.

Respectfully submitted.

Maya Goodwin
Designated Federal Officer

I hereby certify that these meeting minutes of the April 16, 2024, EWAB meeting are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.



Melissa (Missy) Henriksen
Chair, EWAB