

**Summary Minutes of the
U.S. Department of Energy (DOE)
Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB)
Public Meeting**

Advisory Board Members:

In attendance: Arun Majumdar, Chair; Madelyn Creedon, Vice-Chair; Trenton Allen; Norman Bay; Kerry Duggan; Bryan Garcia; Phil Giudice; Paula Gold-Williams; Kate Gordon; Denise Gray; Shirley Ann Jackson; Maria Pope; Adrianna Quintero; Suzanne Singer; and Christopher Smith.

Date and Time: October 16, 2024, 10:30 a.m.-11:45 a.m. EDT

Location: Virtual Meeting – Webinar via Webex

Purpose: Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB) Meeting

SEAB Staff: David Borak, Designated Federal Officer (DFO) and Director of the Office of Secretarial Boards and Councils (acting); Alyssa Petit, Office of Secretarial Boards and Councils.

Meeting summary

This is the 13th Secretary of Energy Advisory Board (SEAB) convened under Secretary of Energy Jennifer M. Granholm. The meeting was conducted virtually via Webex. The meeting was called to order at approximately 10:30 a.m. EDT. It was attended by members of Secretary Granholm’s staff, 14 SEAB members, approximately 43 members of the public and the press. A presentation was made on the final report of the Tribal and Community Benefits Working Group (TCBWG), dated October 14, 2024, to support the DOE in its goal of ensuring the benefits of historic federal clean energy investments successfully reach communities across the U.S to foster across-the-board access to clean sources of energy. That is, the meeting was convened to hear the report of the TCBWG’s findings, results, and recommendations with respect to DOE’s efforts, struggles, and successes in furtherance of facilitating the historic clean energy investments driven by landmark bipartisan legislation such as the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (“IIJA”) of 2021 and the Inflation Reduction Act (“IRA”) of 2022. The TCBWG’s presentation was followed by SEAB discussion, public comment, and a SEAB vote on whether to approve the report for presentation to the Secretary and DOE.

Public Meeting

Designated Federal Officer (DFO) David Borak Mr. Borak opened the meeting by addressing housekeeping and logistical items attendant to the meeting. To save time since Secretary Granholm would have to leave the SEAB meeting early, Mr. Borak used the webinar’s meeting attendance data to ascertain and announce that a quorum of attendees was present. Mr. Borak then thanked Chair Majumdar, the SEAB members, and the public in attendance and introduced Dr. Arun Majumdar, the SEAB Chair, for meeting direction.

Chair Dr. Majumdar thanked David Borak for his efforts in coordinating the SEAB and welcomed everyone in attendance. The Chair summarized the meeting agenda highlighting the efforts of the TCBWG and indicating the item to be voted on at this meeting. The Chair then introduced Secretary Granholm, who had asked to provide some opening comments.

Secretary Jennifer M. Granholm thanked Chair Majumdar for his leadership, the SEAB members for their time and talent to improve DOE's mission, then began her remarks by recognizing the work of the TCBWG, as well as others in DOE as critical DOE's successes in fostering the goals of moving the country towards a clean energy future. Toward that end, she took a few minutes "taking stock" in the successes in greatly increasing the reliance on solar and wind power sources and corresponding reductions in coal for the generation of electricity across the nation's grid. In addition, she noted that the need to increase the nation's power storage capabilities to enable minimizing adverse impacts from natural disasters and other threats to the grid's availability. Secretary Granholm cited the fact that these clean energy successes include improvements in areas such as home heating, nuclear factories operation, and increases in the generation of clean energy jobs. She noted that these 2024 successes already constitute a record-setting year for such critical transition achievements and that, with the end-of-year projections, 2024 will potentially double any prior year's accomplishments. The Secretary reiterated her appreciation for the SEAB and TCBWG, in particular, for their efforts and leadership in significantly contributing to achieving the very impressive accomplishments she had cited.

Secretary Granholm specifically recognized that many of the underserved communities and Tribal nation locations, which the TCBWG had been created to focus upon, have been the site of significant successes. However, she also noted that, for all the successes, many underserved communities and Tribal nations have proven to be very difficult and remain to be reached with the benefits of place-based renewable energy availability. Thus, she applauded the TCBWG's great successes and thanked them for this record of success, but also encouraged that the efforts must continue due to the criticality of their specific mission purpose – to ensure the availability of renewable energy to underserved communities and Tribal nations.

Chair Dr. Arun Majumdar Chair Majumdar thanked Secretary Granholm for her encouraging comments and echoed her thanks to the members of the TCBWG. He then introduced the co-chairs of the TCBWG to begin the presentation of their report.

TCBWG Co-chair Kate Gordon briefly introduced the TCBWG's slide presentation summarizing the report contents, which would be presented by five of the TCBWG members, beginning with Paula Gold-Williams to present an overview of the TCBWG background, objectives, methodology, findings, and recommendations.

TCBWG Member Paula Gold-Williams presented the overview of the TCBWG presentation and began by introducing the group's eight members. Co-chaired by Bryan Garcia, Kate Gordon, and Suzanne Singer, the group also included Trenton Allen, Roxanne Brown, Kerry Duggan, Paula Gold-William, and Adriana Quintero. The TCBWG had been chartered to support DOE's commitment to ensure that the benefit from IJJA and IRA investments in national energy transition to reach all communities, as well as DOE's profound shift from its historical focus primarily on research, science, and technical feasibility to add in major project

development and implementation as a result of the 2021 IJA. The importance of this shift to new lower-carbon energy projects and programs is because it is not just an environmental issue—it is fundamentally one of economic growth, energy security, and community resilience. With this background, the group’s charter outlined two objectives, one internal and one external:

- Objective 1: Embed equity and economic opportunity across DOE’s policies and programs through the continuous development and implementation of equity action plans, Tribal energy programs, and workforce strategies.
- Objective 2: Advance a place-based approach to equitable clean energy transition for those workers and communities involved in specific DOE-funded projects, through continuous and steadfast commitment to the Department-wide Community Benefits Plan (“CBP”) framework and other complementary approaches.

To achieve these objectives, the TCBWG used methodologies that included 32 stakeholder group interviews, both within DOE and externally, regarding how DOE could best ensure that opportunities and access to gaining the benefits from DOE’s renewable energy investments, including availability both in the immediate/near term and long term. In addition, the working group’s methodologies included the use of two separate AI applications for data collection and analyses, as well as an online collaborative communications tool/process to ensure efficiency, version control, and overall transparency.

The TCBWG efforts and findings fall within three tracks - 1) Expanding Opportunities and Access Within and Across DOE Programs; 2) Implementation of Community Benefit Plans, and 3) Tribal Consultation and Engagement. The group’s recommendations for each of the three tracks include Immediate Actions (within the current Administration) and Long-Term Actions (in the next Administration), as well as a couple of Unique Recommendations.

TCBWG Co-chair Bryan Garcia presented the discussion of the overview, findings, and recommendations regarding **Track 1: Expanding Opportunities and Access Within and Across DOE Programs**. He began with an overview reminder of the IJA-driven profound shift from DOE’s focus mostly on research, science, and technical feasibility to also include a major project development and implementation focus. Three out of several Track 1 findings were highlighted: 1) Inconsistent implementation of program support across DOE offices, 2) Challenges in accessing DOE funding and resources, and 3) a need for more consistent approach to expanding opportunities. The key relevant Immediate Recommended Actions include 1) Create Regional Support Teams, 2) Establish Clear Program Access Guidelines, and 3) Launch Workshops to provide Technical Assistance. Long-term Recommended Actions include: 1) Re-establishment of DOE regional offices, 2) Expansion of Grant Programs to help fund local projects, and 3) Creation of a national database for program participation that supports interagency collaboration, and two AI-based recommendations - tools for equity and for climate resiliency.

TCBWG Co-chair Kate Gordon presented the discussion of the overview, findings, and recommendations regarding **Track 2: Implementation of community benefit plans (“CBP”s)**. The DOE framework is designed to ensure that federally funded energy projects provide tangible, lasting benefits to the communities in which they are located by involving local communities in project development, ensuring broadly shared economic, environmental, and

social benefits. With this framework as a solid foundation there remain opportunities to enhance the way it is put in place to better meet the needs of diverse regions across the country. The Track 2 findings were: 1) Limited early community involvement in project planning, 2) Inadequate/inconsistent data collection, accountability, and feedback mechanisms, and 3) Inconsistent CBP execution across projects; with some struggling in execution due to limited resources or guidance. A total of five Immediate Recommended Actions were outlined: 1) Clearly state to developers the expectation of early, consistent engagement with local stakeholders, 2) Invest in contract negotiators for speedier, more professional CBP implementation, 3) Standardized data collection for CBP outcome monitoring and reporting, 4) Bring AI tools to the data collection/monitoring process, and 5) Facilitate establishing a series knowledge-sharing forums (e.g., Communities of Practice and DOE working groups). This recommendation was noted to be a potential project of DOE's Foundation for Energy Security and Innovation (FESI). Long-term Recommended Actions include 1) Development of a national framework for enforceable CBPs, 2) Expand DOE's capacity-building training and resources offered to local leaders, 3) Build a knowledge-sharing online repository of best practices, and 4) Focus on CBP enforceability through specific, clear terms and conditions in written agreements.

TCBWG Co-chair Suzanne Singer presented the discussion of the overview, findings and recommendations regarding **Track 3: Tribal consultation and engagement**. While Tribal nations bring unique perspectives and expertise in land management, natural resources, and cultural preservation, potentially greatly enhancing project outcomes, DOE's current consultation practices vary significantly across the DOE and its projects. The resulting challenges regarding trust and collaboration issues can benefit from strengthened and more consistent consultation practices to help ensure improved outcomes in energy projects, benefitting both Tribal nations and the broader public while respecting the Tribal communities. The Track 3 findings were: 1) Inconsistent consultation practices, 2) Barriers to respectfully incorporating Tribal and other cultural knowledge need to be reduced to enable improved Traditional Ecological Knowledge integration into project planning and decision-making, and 3) Focus is on individual projects vs. long-term partnerships. A total of four Immediate Recommended Actions were outlined: 1) Strengthened/standardized Tribal Consultation, 2) Establish working group partnerships with Tribal Nations, 3) Offer training programs for DOE staff, and 4) Create pathways for integrating traditional knowledge. Long-term Recommended Actions include: 1) Create a permanent office for Tribal consultation, 2) Use AI to enhance Tribal engagement, 3) Establish long-term Tribal nation partnerships, and 4) Incorporate cultural and other values-based knowledge into the national energy strategy.

TCBWG Member Kerry Duggan presented to **Unique Recommendations** developed within the TCBWG process. The first Unique Recommendation is that FESI be used as a source for launching the technical assistance workshops and host knowledge sharing forums (see also Track 2, Immediate Recommendation 5), as well as the use of AI to assist and enhance the effectiveness of tools for CBP tracking and reporting, as the base for equity tools, for climate resilience, and to enhance Tribal Engagement.

Secretary Jennifer M. Granholm again thanked Chair Majumdar and the SEAB members for their time and talent to improve DOE's mission, and especially the TCBWG members for their excellent work.

Chair Majumdar then moderated a discussion with the SEAB members following the TCBWG presentation.

David Borak introduced the Public Q&A session as the final part of the SEAB agenda before voting. There was one member of the public that addressed the SEAB.

Public Comment

Marshall Clabeaux stated that he is a participant in the Michigan Mosaic Energy Cooperative and asked for those involved in the DOE renewable/clean energy initiatives to keep in mind Thorium reactors and cited China and a firm in Copenhagen as potential knowledge resources.

David Borak confirmed that there were no other members of the public desiring to comment.

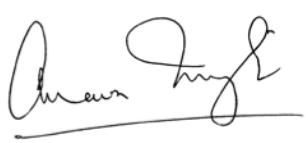
Chair Majumdar indicated there will now be a vote on the TCBWG Final Report (i.e., yes, no, or abstain). **Results:** The result was a unanimous vote of YES by the SEAB members in attendance. Chair Majumdar will forward the report to the Department of Energy. He provided some post-meeting summary remarks and announced that the next SEAB will be on December 10, 2024. Absent any further comments, he then adjourned the meeting at 11:45 am, EDT.

Meeting Adjourned at approximately 11:45 am EDT.

Respectfully Submitted:

David Borak
Designated Federal Officer

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Arun Majumdar", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is cursive and stylized.

Dr. Arun Majumdar
Chair, Secretary of Energy Advisory Board