



## **Southeast Conference Energy Committee Meeting**

### **Thursday, November 30, 2023**

#### **Minutes:**

**Call to Order/Opening Remarks:** Chair Jason Custer opened the meeting at 1:00pm via Zoom with more than 24 participants, including Nils Andreassen, Misty Hull, Tim Leach, Duff Mitchell, Brij Hall-Potnis, Trisha Sims, Michael Rovito, Devon Kibby, Andy Romanoff, Audrey Alstrom, Jodi "T'seiltin" Mitchell, Erin Reinders, Clay Good, Michael Rovito, Aaron Morrison, and SEC staff Robert Venables, Jon Bolling, and Angie Mendbayar.

The agenda was approved by unanimous consent.

Brij Hall-Potnis introduced the Energyshed project, a Launch Alaska and AML program, funded by the DOE, to develop private sector energy projects in remote Alaska. Twelve Alaskan communities will be chosen, six in NW Arctic Borough and six from SE to participate in inventorying existing energy infrastructure and submitting proposals for clean energy projects. Nils Andreassen with AML added this opportunity will give selected communities analytical data and support for potential funding opportunities that could be game-changers. Communities should submit letters of interest. Andreassen stressed that, at this point, communities didn't need concrete projects but potential. Jodi Mitchell with IPEC shared that they have two hydro-projects that are shovel ready- Thayer Creek in Angoon and Watersupply creek for Hoonah. Both projects are in the process of getting funding. After these projects are funded, IPEC would start looking at solar projects and currently, THC is interested in a solar project for Hoonah.

Andreassen added that the committee should save the date for the Rural Energy Conference, October 2-4, 2024 in Fairbanks.

Venables introduced Audrey Alstrom with AEA to discuss NEVI (National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure) program. The program grants \$50 million over the next five year to build out alternative fuel corridor between Anchorage and Fairbanks and then move onto the remaining national highway including AMHS, hub communities, and other destinations. and then helps communities and other destinations as funding allows. VW funds are being used to install and operate EV chargers between Homer and Fairbanks. Some funds were held back, designated for Southeast AK and other rural parts of the state. SEC is working in partnership to plan and install charging stations in SE communities. An additional \$1.6 million was received for more EV charging stations, some of which will be in SE Alaska. Jason Custer added that ferry terminals would be a great spot for EV chargers and for the last 3 years, AP&T has had an incentive program offering \$1000 to Municipalities, tribes or ANCs for installing EV chargers and no one has taken advantage of it. Devon Kibby added that home EV chargers run about \$500 while commercial chargers are anywhere from \$1000-\$5000. He advised to consider central locations for charger placement.

The chair turned to Venables for a biomass update. He updated the committee on the biomass conference in October. Said that the conference was successful with site visits and a special training on sawmills. The Alaska Wood Energy task forces continues to work with communities across the state to install and provide support for biomass systems. Southeast Conference has many partners state-wide with USDA, and the Nature Conservancy, among others and is working to get a pellet mill up and running in Ketchikan.

Jon Bolling and Tim Leach introduced the Clean Cities Coalition, a program with the Department of Energy's Vehicle Technology Office. SEC is working with Launch Alaska and others to establish the first Clean Cities Coalition in Alaska. Obtaining this designation will allow Alaska to access funds.

Misty Hull with USDA reported that the REAP program is accepting applications on a quarterly basis, with anywhere from \$400,000 to \$1 million in funding per quarter and are 50% matching.

Michael Rovito announced the APA State Legislative Conference January 31 to February 1, 2024, in Juneau. The expectation is that there will be a lot of legislative interest in matching federal energy funding and the Energy Task Force results.

The Energy Security Task Force concluded its work on November 20th and the recommendations will be sent to the Governor by December 1. There are many strategies and priority actions toward the goal of aggressively lowering the cost of energy for Alaskans.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 2:02pm.