DATA CENTER WORKGROUP

MEETING MINUTES

June 23, 2026

ESC Staff

Rob DiVenere- Energy Solutions Center

Leaders

- Joe Calhoun- UGI
- Jessie Howell – 2G Energy

Discussion Summary

1. Utility and Infrastructure Readiness

- Eric Bruski recommended that we assess local electric and natural gas capacity, interconnection constraints, grid reliability, gas transportation capacity, and the potential effect of very large loads on existing customers.
- The group suggested a need to address behind-the-meter generation policies, permitting, incentives, and state or regional “bring your own power” requirements.
- The group suggested we need to clarify how utilities, interstate pipelines, producers, midstream companies, and equipment providers can coordinate to serve projects at data center scale.
- Drew Abbott emphasized collaboration among utilities and midstream partners to improve delivery of energy infrastructure to data center projects.
- Donald Brominski highlighted the need to coordinate utilities with interstate pipelines, producers, and transportation providers so sufficient natural gas supply and capacity are available for generation-scale loads.
- Adam Walburger asked how very large new loads could affect existing natural gas customers and urged utilities to evaluate system impacts before committing capacity.
- Sebastian Weber identified system interconnection and the industry’s regulatory barriers as core readiness issues that utilities need to explain more clearly.
- Ed Schmidt called for practical approaches that enable gas and electric utilities to coordinate rather than work at cross-purposes on data center projects.

2. Technology Applications and Market Trends

- Adam Walburger suggested we provide practical guidance on turbines, reciprocating engines, fuel cells, microgrids, combined heat and power, combined cooling, heat and power, gas cooling, and backup generation.
- Lauren Clary suggested match technology packages to data center size, load profile, reliability requirements, fuel availability, and anticipated load growth. This will likely be a future deliverable.
- Adam Walburger suggested we might want to track equipment lead times, market demand, new product availability, and the growing interest in onsite and behind-the-meter power solutions.

- Eric Bruski recommended developing power packages for both large and smaller data centers, including guidance on the appropriate equipment configuration, project scale, and fuel-delivery requirements.
- James Leidel described growing interest in onsite power and CCHP, referenced a very large data center project with approximately 1.5 GW of power demand, and requested credible CCHP case studies for industry education.
- Branden Zipplinger asked for cost comparisons for CCHP and analysis of the technical challenges created by large and rapidly changing loads.
- Edward Schmidt recommended including microgrid implementation in the group's technical deliverables.
- Donald Williams supported development of practical data center and CHP models based on proven project examples.

3. Regulatory, Community, and Risk Considerations

- Joe Calhoun stated that future deliverables will help members navigate local and state permitting, utility regulation, community concerns, emissions requirements, and infrastructure-development challenges.
- The group expressed an interest to develop fact-based messages for regulators, communities, advocacy organizations, and prospective customers.
- Brian Lennie asked how utilities and project developers are responding to community opposition and differing local and state requirements.
- Eric Burgis would really like to see some sort of risk analysis as to how data centers may or may not impact firm rate payers. He asked what happens when there is no more capacity in the interstate pipelines. He also asked if general C&I customers are going to be impacted by long lead times for smaller CHP systems due to Data Centers buying these up.
- Sebastian Weber reiterated the importance of addressing regulatory challenges as part of any readiness or interconnection guidance.

4. Education, Case Studies, and Member Resources

- It was suggested by Eric Bruski that ESC collect or write case studies on data centers using gas for power generation and make a library of studies available to members. This is currently in the works.
- ESC is to create a dedicated ESC webpage organized around reports and studies, case studies, meeting materials, tools and calculators, and other resources. In the future, ESC will also Develop webinars, ESC training modules, white papers, calculators, siting resources, and utility-specific development tools.
- Eric Bruski stressed that case studies are more persuasive than theoretical models because data center developers generally prefer to follow demonstrated applications rather than become the first adopter.
- Joe Calhoun proposed a utility-customizable playbook or toolkit, supported by webinars and development tools.
- The group recommended organizing the ESC resource area into reports and studies, case studies, meeting materials, tools and calculators, and other resources.

5. Shared Market Positioning

- Joe Calhoun stated that we need to define the gas industry's value proposition for data centers, including reliability, speed to power, resiliency, onsite generation, cooling, combined heat and power, fuel diversity, and infrastructure expertise.
- Joe Calhoun also stated we should identify additional utilities, manufacturers, developers, pipeline companies, regulators, and technical experts who should participate as the workgroup evolves.
- Miguel Spada asked the group to define best practices and a distinctive natural gas value proposition that improves the visibility of gas-based solutions in data center planning.
- Aqeel Zaidi emphasized the need to tell the gas-cooling story, educate the market about natural gas backup generation, and consider how quickly the workgroup could evolve into a broader consortium.
- April Stephens proposed a one-page "Did You Know?" resource explaining natural gas cooling and backup-generation applications, together with a balanced comparison of the benefits and limitations of major energy sources.
- April Stephens also recommended we do a balanced comparison of energy-source advantages and limitations in data center applications.

Agreements and Direction

- The workgroup will operate on a bimonthly meeting schedule.
- Smaller subgroups may be formed to develop individual resources and report progress to the full workgroup.

- The next workgroup meeting is scheduled for August 25, 2026.

Potential Deliverables

Deliverable	Purpose	Timing
Data Center Readiness Playbook	A customizable framework utilities can adapt to local markets, covering load assessment, infrastructure, interconnection, fuel supply, permitting, technology options, risk, and customer engagement.	ESC will be looking into contractors to start this work over the next few weeks.
One-Page Natural Gas Fact Sheet	A concise customer-facing resource explaining natural gas applications for onsite power, cooling, combined heat and power, backup generation, and resiliency.	ESC will be looking into contractors to start this work over the next few weeks.
CCHP for Data Centers White Paper	This white paper will examine how combined cooling, heat, and power (CCHP) systems can help data centers improve energy resilience, efficiency, and operating cost performance.	The CHP group is actively looking for contractors to start this work.
Rate Payer Impact White Paper	This white paper will assess the potential financial and operational risks that large data center loads may create for firm utility ratepayers.	ESC will be looking into contractors to start this work over the next few weeks.
Technology Selection Guide	A practical comparison of turbines, reciprocating engines, fuel cells, microgrids, CHP/CCHP, and cooling technologies by project size and operating need.	ESC will be looking into contractors to start this work over the next few weeks.
Conversion Rate Cheat Sheet	This cheat sheet will provide quick-reference formulas and common unit conversions used in data center energy planning, including electrical capacity, energy consumption, natural gas use, cooling loads, heat rates, and equipment efficiency.	ESC will be looking into contractors to start this work over the next few weeks.
Energy Source Benefits Table	This sheet will provide a balanced comparison of the major power options available to data centers, including utility electricity, natural gas, nuclear energy, renewable energy, fuel cells, onsite generation, and energy storage.	ESC will be looking into contractors to start this work over the next few weeks.

Case Study Library	Documented projects with credible performance, cost, schedule, emissions, and reliability information, including data center CHP/CCHP and onsite-generation examples. This will include natural gas for cooling and backup generation.	ESC will be looking into contractors to start this work over the next few weeks.

Action Items

Owner	Action	Timing
ESC staff	Distribute a short member survey to rank proposed deliverables and identify volunteers or subject-matter experts.	Before the next meeting
ESC staff	Begin structuring a dedicated data center resource area on the ESC website.	Before the next meeting
Workgroup members	Submit relevant case studies, white papers, tools, calculators, training resources, and examples of successful deployments.	Ongoing

Attendance

Name	Company	Email
Drew Abbott	Black Hills Energy	Drew.Abbott@blackhillscorp.com
Joseph Rollie Bailey	Southern Company Gas	JOSBAILE@SOUTHERNCO.COM
Bill Barnes	Southern Company Gas	bbarnes@southernco.com
Andrew Barrowman	Hope Gas	Andrew.B.Barrowman@hopegas.com
Matthew Bertrand	Southern Company Gas	mbertran@southernco.com
Patrick Bloomfield	Spire	Patrick.Bloomfield@spireenergy.com
Donald A Brominski	UGI Utilities	DBrominski@ugi.com
Sam Brothwell	MCR Performance Solutions	sbrothwell@mcr-group.com
Ryan C. Browning	ONE Gas	Ryan.Browning@onegas.com
Eric Bruski	DTE Energy	eric.bruski@dteenergy.com
Eric Burgis	Energy Solutions Center	EBurgis@escenter.org
Joseph Calhoun	UGI Utilities	calhounj@ugi.com
David Carrell	Southern California Gas Company	DCarrell@socalgas.com
Tucker W. Chadd	ONE Gas	Tucker.Chadd@onegas.com
Jeet Chanda	New Jersey Natural Gas	PChanda@NJNG.com
Lauren R. Clary	ONE Gas	Lauren.Clary@onegas.com
Justin James Coles	NiSource	JColes@nisource.com
Lynn Dalton	Atmos Energy	Ronald.Dalton@atmosenergy.com
John-Charles McMillen Danhires	NiSource	JDanhires@nisource.com
Brent Davis	Company not identified	Not provided
Joshua Davis	Enbridge	joshua.davis@enbridge.com
Liz Disepolo	Enbridge	Liz.Disepolo@enbridge.com

Name	Company	Email
Rob DiVenere	Energy Solutions Center	RDivenere@escenter.org
George A. Faatz	Southern Company Gas	gfaatz@southernco.com
Thomas G. Flanigan	Southern Company Gas	tflaniga@southernco.com
John Frankel	NW Natural	john.frankel@nwnatural.com
Ashley Fry	Summit Utilities	afry@summitutilities.com
Brian Gehlbach	CenterPoint Energy	brian.gehlbach@centerpointenergy.com
Celia Goodwin	Frontier Energy	CGoodwin@frontierenergy.com
Robert Gryczon	TECO Peoples Gas	RGryczon@tecoenergy.com
Lance Haman	Southern Company Gas	LHAMAN@southernco.com
Robert Hanvey	Energy Systems Group	rhanvey@energysystemsgroup.com
Oliver N Harris	Southern California Gas Company	Oharris@socalgas.com
Lloyd E. Hatch	New Mexico Gas Company	lloyd.hatch@nmgco.com
Rhiannon C Hazzard	UGI Utilities	rhazzard@ugi.com
Michael Holy	CenterPoint Energy	michael.holy@centerpointenergy.com
Jessie Howell	2G Energy	J.Howell@2-g.com
Ryan Joseph Hutnick	NiSource	RHutnick@nisource.com
Matt Jacobson	Summit Utilities	MJacobson@summitutilities.com
Diana L. Jenkins	Southern Company Gas	DIJENKIN@southernco.com
Arunachalam Lakshminarayanan	Rolls-Royce Power Systems	Arunachalam.Lakshminarayanan@ps.rolls-royce.com
James A Leidel	DTE Energy	james.leidel@dteenergy.com
Brian Lennie	Enbridge	Brian.Lennie@enbridge.com
Brian Lewis	Company not identified	Not provided
Neill Linebarier	Summit Utilities	mlinebarier@summitutilities.com
Paoyun Liu	Enbridge	PaoYun.Liu@enbridge.com
Laurie Lodge	Summit Utilities	llodge@summitutilities.com
Brody Lynn	Southwest Gas	Brody.Lynn@swgas.com
Tanya Malcolm	Summit Utilities	tmalcolm@summitutilities.com
Phil Marcum	Summit Utilities	pmarcum@summitutilities.com
Stephen Memory	A. O. Smith	smemory@aosmith.com
Rob Meng	Blue Gas Express	Not provided
Crystal Monteleone	Southwest Gas	crystal.monteleone@swgas.com
Jason Morgan	Atmos Energy	Jason.Morgan@atmosenergy.com
Tony Nguyen	Equipment Controls Company	tonynguyen@equipmentcontrols.com
Jennifer M. Noe	Southern Company Gas	jnoe@southernco.com
Olufemi O. Otukoya	New Mexico Gas Company	Olufemi.Otukoya@nmgco.com
Emily Reh	ONE Gas	Emily.Reh@onegas.com
Subhasmita Samal	Enbridge	Subhasmita.Samal@enbridge.com
Nicholas W Schlarb	NiSource	NSchlarb@nisource.com
Edward Schmidt	MCR Performance Solutions	eschmidt@mcr-group.com
Miguel Spada	Rolls-Royce Power Systems	Miguel.Spada@ps.rolls-royce.com
Brent Staheli	Enbridge	brent.staheli@enbridge.com

Name	Company	Email
April Stephens	Enbridge	april.stephens@enbridge.com
Chauncey Taylor	Summit Utilities	ctaylor@summitutilities.com
Elizabeth Torske	Cascade Natural Gas	Elizabeth.Torske@cngc.com
Timothy D Vaughan	NiSource	TVaughan@nisource.com
Gregory Wade	Atmos Energy	Gregory.Wade@atmosenergy.com
Adam Walburger	Frontier Energy	awalburger@frontierenergy.com
John Ware	Summit Utilities	jware@summitutilities.com
Sebastian Weber	NW Natural	Sebastian.Weber@nwnatural.com
Donald Williams	W.W. Williams	dwilliams@wwwilliams.com
Alysa Wiyrick	Avista Utilities	Alysa.Wiyrick@avistacorp.com
Aqeel Zaidi	Enbridge	Aqeel.Zaidi@enbridge.com
Branden Zipplinger	W.W. Williams	bzipplinger@wwwilliams.com