

NJBPU Energy Master Plan 2025 Update

Docket # : QO24020126

Re: NJBPU Energy Master Plan 2025 Update Comment – EMP Transformation Program.

Dear President, Commissioners and Energy Master Plan Leadership,

I have been following, commenting and engaging wherever possible on the New Jersey Energy Master Plan since 2019. I was stunned to hear in the 2024 update that NJBPU was starting all over again on the Energy Master Plan. Throughout this entire time, I have been urging NJBPU in all departments and expertise and the Commissioners to create a Program Management Transformation Team that provides quarterly updates to the commissioners and the public.

In Project Management terms, we can't afford continual churn and thrashing on timeline, deliverables and priorities. That is where a Program Management Team can really help New Jersey Board of Public Utilities lead New Jersey through this tough transition.

With the new presidential administration in 2025, it has raised the stakes for New Jersey to continue this transformation with little to no support from the federal government. It is even possible that the federal government agents might lash out at New Jersey since it is a largely 'Blue State'. We have seen that line crossed with California and other states. It is urgent that the NJBPU formalize the transformation using a Program Management team that publishes monthly dashboard for NBPU departments and other agencies contributing to the energy transformation in addition to the quarterly program updates. This keeps all staff and agencies on the same page, same priorities and with urgency on the tasks that need to be achieved.

We also need real metrics published quarterly for the public and Commissioners. I have been advocating this to NJBPU since 2019, but somehow, I have not seen any indication of real project management and Program Management being practiced on such a large task – the Energy Master Plan Transformation. I realize many of the projects and goals take time, but keeping the teams on the projects updated, and the public updated quarterly, enables better transparency, accountability and deliverability. What I mean by deliverability is that public acceptance to change is only enabled through communication, engagement and actions accomplished.

Another observation. The 7 strategies are too complex. When we look at energy, it comes down to the 1. Energy Grid; 2. Transportation; and 3. Buildings and Construction. Everything else falls under those three categories. When looking at a Program Management view of the energy source transformation of these three Categories, the following Program comes to mind:

NJBPU Energy Master Plan Transformation Program

1. Energy Grid
2. Transportation
3. Buildings and Construction
4. Program management
5. Governance

For Energy Grid, Transportation and Buildings and Construction; the objectives become clear for each category (grid, transportation, buildings): **Transition** away from fossil fuels, **enable** distributed clean energy supply and storage; and increase **efficiencies** (grid, transportation, buildings). Program Management is the team that drives the Transformation Program. Governance includes the Commissioners and leadership ensuring that programs and projects are effectively reaching all New Jersey residents equitably, maintaining costs and effectiveness of the transition program while ensuring we are steadily moving forward regardless of any changes in management from NJBPU, Governor Office or any other office.

Simplifying the 7 strategies down to the 3 fundamental components of New Jersey's Energy creates a more succinct direction. Wind would fall under Energy Grid, as would storage, solar and any other new generation categories.

In some companies I have worked at, the project managers would sit on the side weekly passively asking for updates. However, I have built Programs and project managers that require project managers to be actively engaged, working through issues, conflicts, awareness and funding challenges. If you have unengaged project managers, that isn't what I am talking about. NJBPU can have a highly adaptive and engaged program management team with project leads/managers and even engineers tasked to each track/project and working **with** staff, agencies and businesses to work through and mitigate disruptions within each project. It is the only way New Jersey is going to see this transformation program achieved.

I hope you consider these suggestions. I know we have made progress in New Jersey energy transition, but it quickly becomes muddy and unclear. I think that has a lot to do with not having a formalized Transformation Program managed by a Program Management Team. Believe me, when a good Program Management team is put in place, it will be very rewarding despite the challenges and hardships that continue to come up. When I see some NJ Legislators make false statements regarding this transformation, I see it as a deficiency of communication and awareness – a fundamental project track within the Program Management Team.

Sincerely,

Kirk Frost