

Evolving CAEECC Working Group Meeting #4 Summary

Meeting Date and Time: November 15, 2023, 9:30am - 11:00am PT

On November 15, 2023, the Evolving CAEECC Working Group (ECWG) met virtually via Zoom. There were twenty-five Evolving CAEECC Working Group Members in attendance and over five non-Working-Group-Members (see [Appendix A](#) for a full list of meeting attendees). This meeting was facilitated by Michelle Vigen Ralston (Ralston) and Suhaila Sikand (Sikand) of Common Spark Consulting and supported by Susan Rivo (Rivo) of Raab Associates.

Supporting meeting materials are available at:
<https://www.caeecc.org/evolving-caeecc-wg-mtg-4>.

Overview

Key Meeting Takeaways:

- The Facilitation Team will no longer host facilitated meetings or huddles for this working group
- **The work of this working group is not ending**, but the format of the working group is shifting.
- There are two optional written opportunities to follow this shift:
 - [Written Opportunity #1](#): Statements for Full CAEECC Quarterly Meeting on 11/29. Statements due 11/22 by 12pm PT via a [Survey](#).
 - [Written Opportunity #2](#): Reflection Compilation due by Jan 31, 2024 at 3pm PT
- Many Members raised a willingness to keep collaborating to develop their written reflections and shared contact information.
- The CPUC Energy Division offered informational sessions with Energy Division staff to provide information on CAEECC, the CPUC, and/or energy efficiency.
- **Please email suhaila@common-spark.com with any questions about this shift. Questions and responses will be posted to:**
<https://www.caeecc.org/ecwg-written-reflections>

The following agenda supported this meeting:

- Intro/Welcome
- Statement by Facilitators: What is happening and why and next steps
- Important details to share with everyone
- Q&A
- Comments/Dialogue

Statement by Facilitators

The following statement was read by Facilitator Ralston during the meeting.

The Evolving CAEECC Working Group made an important pivot at Meeting #3 and this working group process has provided insightful opportunities for improving collaboration. Unfortunately, considering the time and resources provided for this effort, along with unacceptable conduct that has led to a lack of cohesiveness and collaboration across the working group, the Facilitation Team can no longer support sponsoring such a space and process.

This is not an end to the work we are all wanting to do, it's far from it, I'll come back to this later. However, it is a closure of the format of having Working Group meetings and huddles and a facilitated process to pursue consensus recommendations as a Working Group. There will be a transitional shift to the Working Group process after today's Meeting.

First, I need to acknowledge that this process, from its beginning, was going to be extraordinarily challenging due to the conventional constraints of working with and by a system that is inherently exclusionary, is rife with incumbent power dynamics, and has caused chronic and acute trauma to community members. The ECWG was borne out of these dynamics, and would limit the ability of the ECWG to authentically own its own and counter process. You are all courageous to show up to this space, envision and advocate for something different. We have tried and wanted to support this to the greatest extent we can. Yet, the Facilitation Team has also been committed to doing what is possible within the structures given, knowing that good and important work could be done.

Second, ECWG established a set of strong Community Agreements built from Homework B and revised in Meeting #2. Over the last several months, the Facilitation Team has witnessed a deterioration of adherence and embodiment of the Community Agreements. This has been made apparent by evaluation results and Member check-ins that reveal silencing and fear, the unproductive, disrespectful, and aggressive conduct of some members, and the further erosion of trust.

- *Some participants don't feel that they can speak up without backlash or personal attacks.*
- *Many participants feel the need to stay silent, sometimes due to fear of "saying the wrong thing" or feeling discredited by other members because of their background, race, or profession.*
- *Some members feel pushed out by the lack of structure and facilitation during and after Meeting #3.*
- *There's a lot of negativity going around that's making it unproductive and leaving people feeling worthless.*
- *And lastly, trust has been diminished between working group members as well as with this facilitation team.*

We, the Facilitation Team sincerely apologizes for any role we've played in these experiences of working group members; where and how we have been complicit in or not stepped in to stop the erosion of trust. But the level of disrespect and aggressive conduct seen in this group is unacceptable and has contributed to the declining trust and productivity of this Working Group. Ultimately, the Facilitation Team is responsible for supporting a productive working group, and when there are signs of harm and silencing that we've been unable to address, it forces us to make the difficult decision of closing the space.

Lastly, this process is supported by ratepayer funds. The Facilitation Team (and co-chairs) must continually evaluate and advocate for the use of such funds, since we are accountable not just to the ECWG, CAEECC, and the CPUC, but ratepayers that have provided funds for facilitation, platforms for meeting and collaborating, and for some, compensation to support some member's time to contribute to the Working Group. It has become increasingly difficult to justify continuing a process that presently does not have broad support on what to work on (see Meeting #4 Prep Survey results available on the Meeting #4 Webpage), the process to do the work, and, most alarmingly, where some members do not feel they can productively participate and contribute without fear.

As I mentioned before, this shift is a change to the Working Group, but does not constitute the end to the work and the broader effort we are all trying to pursue. The goal to remake CAEECC into a body that supports greater equity in energy efficiency, to integrate greater inclusivity into and improve effectiveness of energy efficiency policy and programs, is important, and much bigger than a single working group process. This effort will not end here, and I am heartened, in hearing from many of you, that this remains an important priority of yours.

While this Working Group process has had its flaws, we also know that folks have taken the opportunity to do deep thinking and learning, and we want to make sure all of that can be part of whatever the next phase of this work will be.

To that end, there are two ways for Working Group members to convey your thoughts and ideas about a future CAEECC and a future process to continue this work:

First, we invite written statements from Working Group Members to be publicly shared with CAEECC Members in advance of their November Quarterly CAEECC Meeting and posted on the CAEECC Meeting Webpage. In a survey that will follow later today, there will be an opportunity to provide a statement, if you so desire. Due to the limited time on the agenda and the disruptive nature of Working Group member comments at the last meeting, there will not be an opportunity at the Full CAEECC Quarterly Meeting for public or Working Group member comments on Evolving CAEECC Working Group.

Second, in an effort to honor the thoughtfulness, ideas, and creativity of this group, and inspired by Jemez Principle #3: Let People Speak for Themselves, we have come up with a way for everyone's views to be expressed in their own words to CAEECC, CPUC staff and

decision makers, and the public. All working group members, individually, or in groups of your choice, can submit written reflections, ideas, and considerations to be compiled unedited for submission to the CPUC. Submissions will be due on January 31, 2024. We will follow up with instructions on how to have your written reflections submitted for inclusion to the CPUC.

We know this is not what any of us envisioned and many may feel great disappointment and frustration with this. I certainly share some of that. But we hope this will allow everyone an opportunity to be heard, continue to flesh out ideas, and advise the CPUC on what is needed for a successful process in the future. We also hope this will allow everyone to work with the process that works best for them, and ensures ideas are not drowned out or “synthesized” through further Working Group processes.

Compensation Pilot Grantees will be compensated for this work. A budget will be emailed to you shortly.

Lastly, I have to share, this has been one of the most difficult experiences I’ve ever encountered. I saw bravery, courageousness, creativity, and hope; vision and perseverance, but also anger and frustration, disappointment and fear taken out on each other. I have struggled to find a path forward for this group and with many of you, and have found all attempts to only deepen the breakages in this group. I will certainly be reflecting on where I could have done better, done more, and done differently. But in the meantime, I’m mostly just disappointed and sad. Because I was really hopeful being on this journey with you all.

I know that this shift may be challenging, may feel abrupt, and evoke a number of different emotions. It certainly has in me and Suhaila.

I’ll close my comments here. And I want to pass it to Suhaila to share important details that everyone needs to hear. After that, we’ll open up space for questions, respectful comments, discourse, ideally invitations for collaboration or shared appreciations.

Important details to share with everyone

Facilitator Sikand shared the following detailed information about the two written opportunities.

Written Opportunity #1: Statement for Full CAEECC Quarterly Meeting on 11/29

We invite optional written statements by Working Group Members ahead of the Full CAEECC Quarterly Meeting #40. You may write whatever you like within 1500 characters and the Community Agreements (posted on the [Written Reflection Webpage](#)). Any statements that are disrespectful to people or are harmful, will not be posted online and the person who wrote it will be contacted by other members of the Facilitation Team.

Please submit your statement, should you desire to make one, by November 22 at 12pm PT via the survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/mtg-4-eval-ecwg>

These statements will be posted to the [11/29 Full CAEECC Quarterly Meeting Webpage](#) and CAEECC Members and Evolving CAEECC Members will be notified via email from facilitator@caeec.org.

Written Opportunity #2: Reflection Compilation

The Facilitation Team is no longer hosting a joint meeting space for the Evolving CAEECC Working Group.

In an effort to honor the thoughtfulness, ideas, and creativity of this group, and inspired by Jemez Principle #3: Let People Speak for Themselves, we have come up with a way for everyone's views to be expressed in their own words to CAEECC, CPUC staff and decision makers, and the public. All working group members, individually, or in groups of your choice, can submit written reflections, ideas, and considerations to be compiled unedited for submission to the CPUC. The intention of this compilation process is to help inform the Commission on how to move forward. Submissions are due January 31, 2024 by 3pm PT (view Instructions below).

These reflections are encouraged, but completely optional. The Facilitation Team will compile the reflections and will be delivered to the CPUC in a process expected to be led by NRDC.

Requirements

- **Due: January 31, 2024 by 3pm PT**
- Format: PDF preferred, and word doc/google doc supported. If not as a PDF, the Facilitation Team will convert it.
- Maximum Length: 5 pages, Letter-sized
- Limit to one submission per Working Group Member
- If folks do not have software to write their own documents, please contact suhaila@common-spark.com who will provide you a private Google Doc.

Please view [Instructions PDF](#) for all requirements and processes.

Q&A

- Energy Division staff noted they are looking forward to hearing from the Working Group through both written opportunities.

- Members asked for clarification on both written opportunities, their distinctions and requirements, and processes. Elaborations were modified to the information section above for clarity.
- Why is the Reflection Compilation submitted by the NRDC and what does it mean to submit by a motion?
 - The Reflection Compilation is expected to be submitted to the CPUC by NRDC because they are well set-up to submit this without additional overhead.
- Will there be a "post mortem" of this ECWG process written up and who will be involved in composing that?
 - There will be an evaluation survey issued at the end of the Working Group (after compilations are assembled and published), which will also include opportunities for Working Group members to provide comments/statements for inclusion in the evaluation.
- What will be presented to CAEECC or CPUC, when will it be posted publicly and where?
 - **Written Opportunity #1, Statement:** Will be posted to the CAEECC 11/29 Meeting Webpage for review by CAEECC Members. Ex-officio of CAEECC (including CPUC) may review these.
 - **Written Opportunity #2, Reflection:** Will be submitted to the CPUC. CAEECC will likely be provided an update on the conveyance of the compilation at their Q1 2024 Meeting in addition to it being posted to the CAEECC website.
- Can you clarify what you are calling "written statements vs reflections"?
 - **Written Opportunity #1, Statement:** 1500 characters, no guidance on content.
 - **Written Opportunity #2, Reflection:** maximum of 5 pages per working group member, one submission per member. It's recommended this includes a brief bio (included in the 5 page limit) for context-setting for the audience of the compilation.
- Does this shift mean the ECWG collaborative work is over?
 - Yes and No. The format of this working group is closing due to the reasons listed in the Facilitator Statement. The work of the working group is not, and may be picked up in a different venue or a re-start of this working group pending a CPUC Decision.
- Why would Written Opportunity #2 be sent to CPUC and not to CAEECC for review first?
 - The intention is to acknowledge the concerns raised by this working group since Meeting #1: *Why have the group you're trying to fix review and potentially "filter" submissions?* This process would avoid that concern

altogether. CAEECC will very likely still review your submissions, but that review is not dependent on the entire compilation being sent to the CPUC.

- Can you sign on to joint comments and then do solo?
 - You may sign on to joint comments, but then you cannot also send your own—one submission per Working Group Member. You may echo each other if you work collaboratively on your own reflection.
- Will these reflections and written statements be the final work product of the working group?
 - Yes. Again though, this work may be picked up and worked on in the future with a more ideal equitable process.
- Is there a limit to how many working group members can sign on to a single reflection?
 - No.
- Are there parameters for what's in there? Or is it open to make any comments?
 - For those who are unsure what to write about or seek guidance, consider the following topics (identified in the [Instructions PDF](#)). *We encourage you to write honestly.*
 - Recommendations for CAEECC's purpose moving forward.
 - Recommendations/reflections for an ideal equitable process that would identify, define, and determine CAEECC's purpose (first bullet).
- I suspect we will all need some time to read the instructions and even process in order to formulate questions- can we have some follow up for Q&A? Can you compile questions and post?
 - Yes. **Please email suhaila@common-spark.com with any questions.**
Questions and responses will be posted to:
<https://www.caeecc.org/ecwg-written-reflections>
- Can we have a saved chat distributed, again, some of us may not be able to participate in reading chat etc.
 - It is included in this Summary.
- Some Members shared frustration and confusion about this decision.

Comments and Dialogue

- A Member thanked the Facilitation Team. Acknowledged they are someone who has spoken up. Noted they appreciate constructive criticism and asked if there could be more sharing on who was committing harm without unveiling who said what. Several Members echoed this request.

- Facilitator: We'll have to think about that, want to protect those who did open up about harm.
- A Member noted there's two difficulties. One difficulty around structure versus no structure and finding a coherent process. Another is aggressive/disrespectful behavior. Asked for more clarity on the latter. Concerned because if CAEECC wants to have community engagement, there will be changes in the norm and culture. Several Members echoed this request.
 - Facilitator: Offered some general examples including: an assumed license to accuse folks; folks felt shut down; folks felt worthless.
- A Member asked if the facilitation team talked to those doing harm and if not, why not?
 - Facilitator: We didn't know exactly who folks were talking about as no names were ever used. Noted that as a facilitator, they felt discredited, disempowered, and disrespected on multiple occasions which made it a tough environment to do their job. Highlighted that others feel this way too.
- Many Members expressed disappointment and sadness about this decision. Acknowledged that ECWG needs to be safe to have conversations.
- A Member asked if this decision and the accounts of harm are just a way to silence truth to power.
 - Facilitator: This is not an effort to silence truth to power, there has been a genuine breach of respect and Community Agreements.
- Many Members invited those willing to come together and continue working collaboratively, several citing that they believe in this work.
 - A Member asked if perhaps the CPUC or ex-officio present could act as facilitator with the community agreements.
 - A Member noted that the Leadership Team had spent a lot of time with the meeting schedule moving forward and that this could be a starting point for collaborative work.
 - A Member noted that small groups of people with programmatic experience and experience with barriers can be very powerful and insightful.
 - A Member asked if the CPUC could commit to a co-creative process to design a future venue for this discussion.
- The CPUC Energy Division offered space directly with the Energy Division staff to host informational sessions. They noted these wouldn't replace working group Meetings, but could offer a supplementary space to understand the CPUC, CAEECC, or energy efficiency more.
 - Several Members supported this informational session.

- Members echoed appreciation for the Facilitation Team, acknowledging the difficult position and shared sympathies for the behavior of this Working Group. A Member apologized for the disrespect.
- A Member acknowledged that some comments were more forceful than others. Noted that previous spaces spoke truth to power but not in a disrespectful way.
- A Member elevated that this feels like a failed experiment and questioned if ECWG can't even come to a process that works, how is it going to work at the CAEECC itself.
- A Member wished there were attempts to increase resources.
 - The Facilitators have increased resources, three-fold for this process. Noted that a typical CAEECC Working Group is 3-4 meetings and this was set up to be 6 with many other touchpoints.
 - A Member raised curiosity how Evolving CAEECC was set up to be more thorough than a normal CAEECC Working Group.
 - A Member responded that the CDEI Working Group pushed for a longer timeline knowing it would be needed.
 - A Member raised that the CAEECC norm of 3 Working Group Meetings is a forced and false and faulty process that is set up for failures and thus perpetuates the status quo and deflects transformation.
- A Member noted that this group was made within a parent group to try to change the group and because of that, it would never be a true community-led process. Offered for Members to use the experience as a way to show what needs to happen instead from the very beginning and request it through the written opportunities (gave an example that silo-ing energy efficiency wouldn't be an effective way to reach justice, diversity, equity, or inclusion). Requested to take what didn't work here and recommend a pathway forward using the community agreements and with enough funding resources. Several Members echoed this and one noted that equitable solutions are inherently hard to hear so a better process is needed to support this. One realized that the structure and the setup of this experiment (structure, format, time-frame, budget) was inadequate and that combined begs for a new process design.
 - Facilitator: Evolving CAEECC WG was not built in a container that would be supportive for this work and we are looking forward to building a better one.
- A few Members apologized for any harmful behavior and offered folks to reach out to them directly if folks felt that the Member was breaching Community Agreements as a way to bring awareness to their actions/behaviors and continue growing as individuals.
 - Facilitator: Reflecting, I could have done more to support a space that encourages calling folks in.

- One Member supported the idea of written reflections noting that the previous Evolving CAEECC Working Group process did not align to their available capacity. Supported the idea to request a better, more equitable process via reflections.

Appendix A - Attendance

Organization	Name
Evolving CAEECC Working Group Members	
Acterra	Leo Steinmetz
Association of California Community & Energy Services	Jason Minsky
Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG)	Amaury Berteaud
Brightline Defense Project ("Brightline")	Sarah Xu
Center for Accessible Technology	Kate Woodford
CPUC	Pamela Rittelmeyer
CSE	Fabi Lao
Day One	Angelique Lopez
Emerald Cities Collaborative	Jenifer Lomeli-Quintero
Energy Solutions	Evan Kamei
Gateway Cities Council of Governments	Sumire Gant
Individual	Aislyn Colgan
Individual	AJ Perkins
Individual	Alice Sung
Individual	Mr. Charles
Individual	Nicole Milner
Individual	Spencer Lipp
MAAC Project	Valerie Hash
MCR Performance Solutions	Melanie Gillette
Nevada County Energy Action Plan Committee	Jan Maes
NRDC	Lara Ettenson
San Diego Urban Sustainability Coalition	Tanisha-Jean Martin
San Joaquin Valley Clean Energy Organization	Kelsey Jones
The Energy Coalition	Laurel Rothschild
The Greenlining Institute	Jordyn Bishop
Valley Clean Air Now	Tom Knox
Willdan	Lou Jacobson
CAEECC Members (and ex-officio) not part of Evolving CAEECC WG	
CPUC	Coby Rudolph
CPUC	Ely Jacobsohn

SoCalIREN	Lujuana Medina
WRCOG/IREN	Benjamin
SoCalIREN	Erica Helson
Members of the Public	
Resource Innovations	Nils Strindberg
Silent Running	Jim Dodenhoff