



## Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of  
Energy and Environmental Affairs

# Electric Connections: Issues, Actions, Improvements

Melissa Lavinson  
Executive Director, Office of Energy Transformation

495/MetroWest Partnership  
June 2, 2026





# Introduction to EEA



- The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) is a cabinet-level office that oversees the Commonwealth's six environmental, natural resource, and energy regulatory agencies.
- EEA seeks to protect, preserve, and enhance the Commonwealth's environmental resources while ensuring a clean energy future for the state's residents.
- Energy agencies
  - Department of Energy Resources (DOER)
  - Department of Public Utilities (DPU; quasi-judicial)
  - Massachusetts Clean Energy Center (MassCEC; quasi-public)

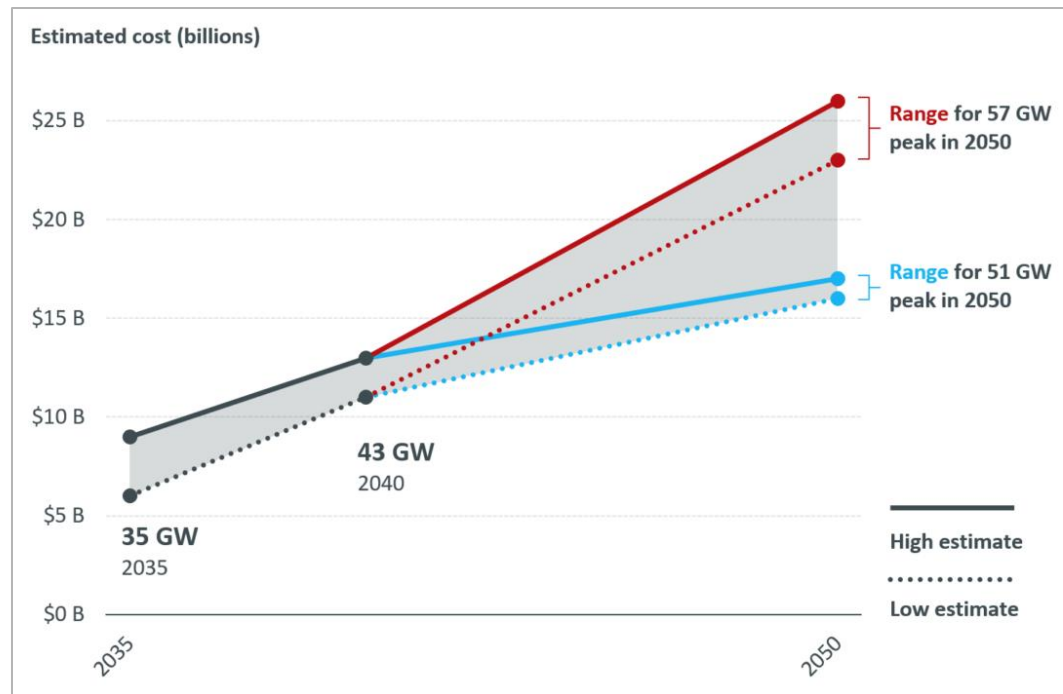
# Background

- EEA has received complaints about grid capacity and the grid connection process from customers, including businesses, commercial developers, municipalities, and housing developers.
- Grid connection challenges are a barrier to economic and housing development, adding time, cost, and uncertainty to projects.



## Background (cont.)

- As Massachusetts electrifies its buildings and new housing and economic development projects are added to the grid, peak electric demand may increase by as much as 50% by 2035 and more than double through 2050.



Source: ISO-NE, 2050 Transmission Study (Feb. 2024), Figure 2-1, p. 16

- Changes are needed now to stop this problem from growing, particularly as the state is working to increase economic development, housing, and meet growing demand.



# New Load Connection Initiative

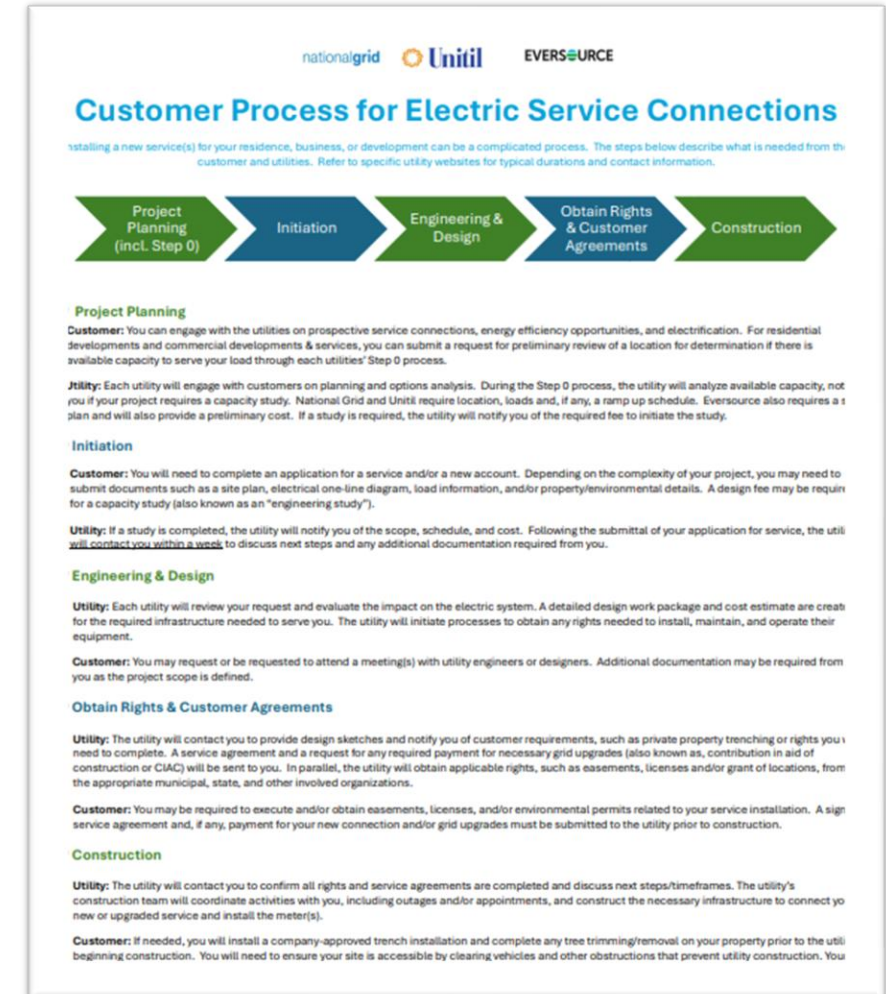
- EEA launched a [new initiative to address interconnection challenges](#):
  - Targeted engagement with stakeholders including municipalities, businesses, and housing developers to better understand the "pain points" in the load connection process.<sup>1</sup>
  - Monthly meetings with the EDCs to understand their processes and identify ways to improve the customer experience.
  - Developing projections of anticipated transportation and building electrification load in the next ten years, and the impact of this new load on the electric grid, to inform future grid planning efforts to avoid grid connection and capacity issues in the future.
    - **Important note:** The Energy Affordability, Independence, and Innovation Act would require the EDCs to include housing and economic development in their grid infrastructure planning.
    - The [Grid Modernization Advisory Council \(GMAC\)](#) is also exploring how large, new projects can be incorporated into EDC grid planning processes.

<sup>1</sup>Engagement included, but was not limited to: (1) sector-based focus groups with Energy Transition Advisory Board members / companies; (2) regional roundtables with Metropolitan Area Planning Council municipalities; (3) housing developer roundtable organized by MassHousing; (4) member roundtable organized by NAIOP; and, (5) western Massachusetts new customer connections workshop @ UMass Amherst.



# Customer Experience Improvements Collaboration

- We continue to work with the EDCs to develop (1) better resources for customers and (2) ways to provide customers with more timely information on grid capacity and interconnection costs.
- **New customer resources:** EEA launched a [101 website](#) with interconnection process summaries and links to relevant utility websites; this website will also host information on future EEA new customer connections work.
- **Better information on grid capacity and costs:**
  - **Capacity Maps:** New capacity map from Eversource, Unitil developing a dynamic capacity map, and National Grid is updating their online map
  - **Step 0:** All three companies publicized their process for providing detailed grid capacity information (and, for Eversource, grid cost estimates) ahead of the formal new service request process
  - **Power Forward:** Eversource and National Grid process to evaluate grid capacity and upgrade costs for multiple housing projects in a municipality. Applications will open this Spring.





# Enabling Sustainable Economic Development Work Group

- The Office of Energy Transformation (OET) created a new focus area working group to develop solutions to create economic development zones that have grid capacity and are clean energy-ready, to enable businesses like climatetech or advanced manufacturing to more quickly and easily expand and grow.
- Through the [Enabling Sustainable Economic Development Work Group](#), OET hopes to enable the following:
  - **Expand grid capacity and streamline the process** for connecting new customer economic development-enabled load to the electric grid.
  - **Help drive economic development to areas with least grid impacts** and are aligned with existing capacity and/or future plans.
  - **Attract more businesses** like advanced manufacturing, life sciences, climatetech, and AI.
  - **Increase competitiveness** with other jurisdictions that provide energy-focused support/amenities.
  - **Additional focus on and coordinated stakeholder input into EEA's ongoing work to meaningfully improve the interconnection** of new load and energy resources to the electric grid.



# Process for Identifying New Developments

- One common issue → information about planned construction or electrification project does not make its way to the utility, which can lead to significant project delays if sufficient grid capacity does not exist at that location, requiring upgrades.
- A process that systematically (and, ideally, automatically) provides them with the relevant information about planned large projects as soon as the local planning department or state government is notified would help them plan better and reduce timelines for projects.
- EEA is engaging with customers, municipalities, and other state agencies to identify a process through which information on new construction or electrification projects is passed along to the EDCs.



# Bi-Annual Customer Connection Forum

- Share information about the grid connection process and improvements under development
- Provide transparency into the state and EDCs' work related to grid connections
  - The EDCs will provide updates at each forum on the solutions under development, both related to topics covered during these forums and other relevant areas
  - These updates will ensure accountability for all parties
- Discuss customer "pain points" with the grid connections process and collectively develop solutions
  - The goal is to (a) address the most impactful pain points and (b) include stakeholders in developing solutions
- Next meeting is September 15, 2026



# Discussion



## Discussion – Your Experiences

- What is your experience / familiarity with the new load connection process?
- Have you been able to find information online about the new customer connection process? Was this information helpful and clear? If not, what was unclear, unhelpful, or hard to find?
- What process, grid capacity, timeline, and cost information was provided to you by utilities when you first reached out and/or submitted a load letter?
- How has communication been with utilities throughout the process, and were timelines and potential delays clearly communicated?
- Where in the process of connecting to the grid/working with utilities do you typically run into roadblocks, if any?
- Which part of the grid connection process presents the biggest pain point for development?



## Discussion – Solutions

- What specific improvements do you think utilities should make to their customer communication for the grid connection process?
- What measures should municipalities, the state, and/or utilities take to make sure that the utilities are aware of potential new developments?
- How could /should housing, economic development, or electrification plans be included into utility grid planning efforts?
- Are there more important topics that aren't on the list?
  - Grid upgrade cost allocation / sharing for building retrofits
  - More precise cost estimates for grid upgrades
  - Improve customer representative response time / communication
  - Updates to how engineering studies factor in building codes



**THANK YOU!**

**SAVE THE DATE:** Afternoon of September 15, 2026

Information on the next forum and any updates on EEA's work related to new customer connections will be posted to the [new 101 website](#)

# EDC Customer Connections Links



- National Grid Connections Portal:  
<https://gridforce.my.site.com/electric/s/>
- By Phone: 1-800-375-7405 between 7:00 AM and 4:30 PM (including escalations)
- National Grid Commercial Connections Guide:  
<https://www.nationalgridus.com/MA-Business/Start-Service-for-New-Construction/New-Electric-Service>
- National Grid New Residential Services Guide:  
<https://www.nationalgridus.com/MA-Home/Start-Service-for-New-Construction/New-Electric-Service>
- Heat Maps:  
<https://systemdataportal.nationalgrid.com/MA/>



- Eversource Contractor Website:  
<https://www.eversource.com/residential/about/doing-business-with-us/builders-contractors/electric-work-order-management>
- By Phone: 1-888-NEEDPWR
- Heat Maps:  
<https://navigator.eversource.envelio.com/?lang=en-us#8.17/42.025/-71.67>



- Unitil Contractor Website:  
<https://unitil.com/builders-contractors>
- Phone: 888-301-7405