

Policy Team Updates

January – March 2012

Public Policy Committee:

Committee Membership

Mandy Mahoney presented the Public Policy Strategic Plan, including the role of Public Policy Committee, at the SEEA Board of Directors meeting in January. The Board confirmed that the committee should be a mixture of on and off board members so that this could be a board development funnel. They also offered additional suggestions for candidates for the Public Policy Committee. The Policy staff was able to secure membership of the suggested candidates. The full slate is as follows:

Public Policy Committee:

- Chair: Steve Levitas, Partner, Kilpatrick Townsend; (SEEA Board Member)
- TVA: Michelle Martin, TVA (Representative of SEEA Board Member)
- IOU: Angela Strickland, GA Power (SEEA Board Member)
- Business: Jim Kapsis, Director of Market Development & Strategy, Opower (Representative of SEEA Board Member)
- SEO: Molly Cripps, Director, State of Tennessee Energy Division (Bob Balzar suggestion)
- ASE: Floyd DeChamps, Senior VP, Policy & Research (Kateri/Brian recommendation)
- NGO: Stacey Paradis, Deputy Director, MEEA (Brian Castelli recommendation)
- Academia: Valerie Thomas, Associate Professor, GA Tech (Mandy recommendation)

Research and Recommendations

The Policy Team staff compiled a needs assessment, best practice analysis, and literature review that produced a set of recommendations for both SEEA's priority projects and the process we should use. The Committee met on March 19th and provided edits, recommendations, and suggestions that were then incorporated. Final recommendations will be made at this board meeting.

Mississippi:

Mississippi Stimulating Energy Efficiency in Action Program

SEEA serves as primary support to the Mississippi Development Authority's (MDA) Energy and Natural Resources Division on the DOE State Energy Program Cooperative Agreement on Stimulating Energy Efficiency in Action. The objective of the cooperative agreement is for Mississippi to implement policies and programs to drive utility investment in energy efficiency. The cooperative agreement sets a savings goal of annual electricity savings of 1%.

In January, Governor Phil Bryant became the new governor of Mississippi. He has prioritized energy and energy efficiency for his administration. We have seen demonstrations of this commitment through his State of the State Address, new energy efficiency and other energy related bills before the state legislature, and his elevation of importance of the MDA's Energy and Natural Resources Division. Through the DOE cooperative agreement, SEEA continues to be relied on by MDA's Energy and Natural Resources Division for technical assistance, strategic plan development, and research. We are working with the new leadership to expanding the Stimulating Energy Efficiency in Action strategic plan to include Governor Bryant's new vision and priorities. The plan will include energy efficiency upgrades to state facilities, building code adoption and implementation, and industrial energy efficiency. We are also supporting MDA to expand the partnerships and alliances with the electric and natural gas utilities, Mississippi State University, and other government agencies.

DOE is excited about this expanded focus and the progress of this cooperative agreement. MDA, SEEA and DOE believe that this allows for a more robust, aggressive and comprehensive approach to energy and energy efficiency.

Mississippi Commercial Code

SEEA has made significant progress in Mississippi on energy codes. Policy Team staff are collaborating closely with the Mississippi Energy Policy Institute (MEPI) to update Mississippi's voluntary 1970's commercial code to a mandatory, statewide standard of ASHRAE 90.1-2007. SEEA provided extensive consulting services on the drafting of the legislation and is serving as a key resource for stakeholder engagement and technical expertise. The Chair of the Energy Committee, Senator Merle Flowers, introduced the legislation in the Senate as SB 2887 on February 20, 2012. On March 8th, SB 2887 passed unanimously in the Senate, 52-0! The House is now reviewing the legislation, and SB 2887 is expected to be successfully adopted before the end of the legislative session on May 6th.

Other State Initiatives:

- Alabama: On March 12, 2012, Alabama adopted its first statewide, mandatory residential energy code. The Alabama Energy and Residential Codes (AERC) Board passed the 2009 International Residential Code (IRC) and 2009 International Energy and Conservation Code (IECC) with a unanimous vote. A legislative review committee is now in the process of certifying the code, and the new code will formally take effect on October 1, 2012.
- Arkansas: In January, Arkansas updated its commercial energy code. The Administrative Rules and Regulations Subcommittee of the Arkansas General Assembly renamed the 2004 Arkansas Energy Code as the Arkansas Energy Code for New Building Construction and adopted ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2007 and Chapter 5 of the 2009 IECC. The new code will be effective January, 1, 2013.
- Florida: On March 15, 2012, the 2010 Florida Energy Efficiency and Conservation Code went into effect. Adopted by the Florida Building Commission in 2011, the state-developed code claims the 2009 IECC and ASHRAE Standard 90.1-2007 as foundational documents, with significant Florida-specific changes integrated throughout.
- Georgia:
 - On February 29, 2012, SEEA completed its contract with the Georgia Environmental Finance Authority (GEFA) in partnership with the Building Codes Assistance Project (BCAP) and Southface. SEEA and their partner organizations authored a report providing best practice Georgia Amendments to the 2009 IECC implementation recommendations for Georgia building departments based on Savannah and Chatham County. SEEA, BCAP and Southface then traveled to Acworth, Marietta, Columbus, Augusta, Brunswick and St. Mary's to deliver and discuss the report in person. Copies of the report are also being mailed to other Georgia building departments, and Georgia Power plans to also distribute the report during their training sessions. This report will increase efficiency and implementation effectiveness in Georgia.

- As part of the Georgia Power Integrated Rate Planning process, the Georgia Public Service Commission convenes the Demand Side Management (DSM) Working Group. Georgia Power, SEEA, and other advocacy organizations participate on a quarterly basis. On March 13, the DSM Working Group met. The group reviewed the success and accomplishments of Georgia Power 2011 energy efficiency programs. Additionally, they conducted a working session on the plans for program expansion and revision.
- On February 28, 2012, SR 1069 was introduced in the Senate. This proposed legislation is a resolution urging the repeal of the Georgia Amendments to the 2009 IECC. SEEA quickly mobilized in collaboration with local, regional and national stakeholders and served as a “go to” source for information. This role enabled SEEA to get essential content to lobbying groups that have stopped the legislation in its tracks.
- Louisiana: The Louisiana Public Service Commission has an open energy efficiency rule making docket. SEEA submitted comments to the rule on January 13, 2012. ACEEE is undertaking an energy efficiency potential study that is scheduled to be completed toward the end of the spring. SEEA is providing technical input and supporting ACEEE to make the proper connections in Louisiana. The rulemaking is on hold until the conclusion of the study.
- South Carolina: In February, South Carolina House and Senate committees passed bills to update the South Carolina Energy Standard to reference the 2009 IECC. SEEA attended and provided public testimony in support of H. 4639 at the January 25, 2012, House Public Utility Subcommittee meeting, where the committee then voted in favor of the legislation. On February 1st, the Senate Judiciary Committee passed S. 1110. On February 23, 2012, the full House approved H. 4639, which has now been assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee. The South Carolina Home Builders Association spoke in favor of both bills. The effective date for the proposed legislation is January 1, 2013.
- Virginia:
 - The Virginia State Corporation Commission released a request for comments regarding Dominion Virginia Power’s application to implement new Demand Side Management (DSM) programs and to update rate adjustment clauses. SEEA submitted comments on February 28, 2012, in support of energy efficiency and Dominion’s new DSM programs.
 - On February 27, 2012, the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) hosted SEEA for a luncheon to discuss collaboration potential surrounding their energy code work. On February 28th, SEEA also attended the Virginia Building Codes Academy’s training session, “An Introduction to Energy, Energy Conservation, and Energy Codes.” Through this meeting SEEA is already working with Virginia stakeholders on 2012 IECC development, training and compliance initiatives.