



# Stakeholder Working Group Charter

## Introduction

NorthWestern Energy is committed to creating a robust Integrated Resource Planning (IRP) process and to continually engaging stakeholders to solicit feedback, aligning with our mission. An IRP serves as a "roadmap" that considers the utility's forecasted energy and demand, developing multiple portfolio resource options to meet the projected needs. IRPs are updated regularly as conditions change and assumptions are revised. Stakeholder engagement and input are essential components of the IRP planning process.

For the IRP process, NorthWestern Energy will facilitate a stakeholder process aimed at enhancing the IRP and planning processes through feedback received from participants. NorthWestern Energy is dedicated to building on this foundation to continually improve and expand stakeholder engagement for future IRPs. As part of this commitment, NorthWestern Energy formed a stakeholder working group representing a wide range of interests and perspectives.

## Mission Statement and Objectives

The mission of the working group is to provide a broad range of perspectives and expertise to inform the development of IRPs that are in the best interest of NorthWestern Energy's customers and the State of Montana.

The objectives of the working group are to:

- Create an open dialogue around NorthWestern Energy's IRP.
- Provide the opportunity to share diverse opinions on the planning process, analysis, and contents of the IRP.
- Offer a forum for deep discussions on assumptions, supporting studies, methodologies, portfolios, sensitivities, and analytics that inform the IRP development, including the tradeoffs inherent in integrated resource planning.
- Collaborate on how diverse perspectives and approaches can advise and benefit NorthWestern Energy's IRP.

To fulfill the mission and objectives, working group members commit to:

- Participate actively and focus on the success of the process.
- Build trust and strong relationships among members.
- Consider the interests and concerns of all NorthWestern Energy stakeholders.
- Interact respectfully with all members.
- Foster transparency in the planning processes and assumptions.
- Encourage an open dialogue and diverse perspectives and input.



- Dedicate the necessary personnel, time, and resources to fully participate in the working group.
- Fairly evaluate feedback and input from all members, keeping their needs, concerns, and questions alive in IRP planning.
- Recognize that while not all feedback can be incorporated into the IRP, all perspectives will be considered.

## Stakeholder Working Group vs. Technical Advisory Committee

It is important to distinguish the role of the stakeholder working group from that of a technical advisory committee:

- **Stakeholder Working Group:**  
The stakeholder working group is designed to provide a broad range of perspectives, including those from non-technical backgrounds. Its primary role is to offer insights, feedback, and considerations from various stakeholders that reflect the interests of the community, customer groups, environmental organizations, and other non-technical entities. The group focuses on the broader impacts of the IRP, ensuring that diverse voices are heard and that the planning process aligns with the wider community's needs and values. This group is more focused on ensuring transparency, inclusivity, and a comprehensive understanding of how IRP decisions affect different segments of the population.
- **Technical Advisory Committee:**  
In contrast, a technical advisory committee is typically composed of experts with specialized knowledge in fields such as engineering, economics, environmental science, policy, and energy planning. The committee's role is to delve into the technical details of the IRP, providing in-depth analysis, reviewing methodologies, and offering recommendations based on technical data and studies. This committee is essential for evaluating the feasibility, efficiency, and effectiveness of various resource options and ensuring that the IRP is grounded in sound technical principles.

By having both a stakeholder working group and a technical advisory committee, NorthWestern Energy ensures that the IRP process is both technically robust and reflective of the broader public interest.

## Additional Public Process

In addition to the stakeholder working group and technical advisory committee, NorthWestern Energy will implement a public process specifically designed to inform the broader public about the IRP and gather feedback from the general public.

### Stakeholder Working Group Membership Limit:

To ensure effective collaboration and manageability, the stakeholder working group will be limited to a maximum of 20 members. This limit includes representatives from various sectors such as government, regulatory bodies, industry, consumer advocacy, environmental organizations, and others. This cap ensures that



the group remains small enough to facilitate in-depth discussions while being large enough to represent diverse viewpoints.

## Selecting Stakeholder Working Group Members

The selection of stakeholder working group members is crucial to ensuring a comprehensive and representative process. NorthWestern Energy will select members based on the following criteria:

- **Diversity of Perspectives:** Ensuring a wide range of viewpoints, including environmental, regulatory, consumer, and industrial perspectives.
- **Expertise:** Selecting members with relevant expertise in energy planning, environmental science, economics, and other related fields.
- **Commitment to Process:** Prioritizing individuals and organizations that demonstrate a commitment to engaging in the IRP process and contributing meaningfully.
- **Geographic Representation:** Ensuring representation from different regions within the state to reflect the varied needs and concerns of NorthWestern Energy's service area.
- **Stakeholder Impact:** Including organizations and individuals who represent groups that are significantly impacted by NorthWestern Energy's operations and decisions.

## Removing a Stakeholder Working Group Member

- To maintain the integrity and productivity of the working group, it is essential that all members contribute amicably to the process. If a member is found to be consistently non-responsive, disruptive, disrespectful, or uncooperative, NorthWestern Energy may terminate membership and seek a replacement from the same stakeholder category to ensure continued representation of that interest in the group.

## Timeline

The working group is envisioned as an ongoing process without a set end date. Organizations and individuals identified as the primary contact will continually evaluate their ability to effectively participate. If an organization or individual chooses to no longer participate in the working group, NorthWestern Energy will seek a replacement that represents similar interests.

## Media and External Communications

The intent of the working group is to foster a collaborative and open discussion regarding NorthWestern Energy's IRP. While member organizations are free to express their opinions, they are asked not to speak to the media or external groups on behalf of the working group to ensure that the group can meet its mission, objectives, and commitments.



Working group materials, including presentations, meeting summaries, and documents submitted through the Input and Feedback Forum, will be posted to the IRP web page and made available to the general public.