

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE REPORTS



Conclusions

This Scorecard provides a snapshot of MLPs' progress in mitigating the climate crisis and transitioning to a clean energy future. The results show that substantial efforts have been made in many areas. In some cases, MLPs have assumed a position of leadership in the Commonwealth. By identifying trends in MLP activity across categories, MCAN offers recommendations for steps that MLPs, MLP associations, government officials, legislators, and advocates can take to enhance efforts. These recommendations are meant to provide a clear direction for stakeholders interested in enhancing efforts to combat climate change in their MLP or in MLPs across the board.

Based on the findings in this report, MCAN outlines recommendations in each of the four categories. Some of the most important include the following:

- 1 Incorporate Class I REC retirement into long- and short-term strategies
- 2 Strengthen and enhancing policies that enable residents to transition to clean energy
- 3 Increase the size of energy efficiency programs and rebates and, more generally, the overall percentage of revenue invested in energy efficiency
- 4 Increase equity and access to energy efficiency programs
- 5 Enhance opportunities for community engagement in decision making
- 6 Reduce the barriers for MLPs to participate in statewide programs

Issues of justice within the energy sector were not addressed directly in this Scorecard. These issues are critical to MLPs' operations, and their

approach to climate mitigation and a clean energy transition. Moving forward, MLPs should focus on how they can identify and resolve disparities, equity issues, and disproportionate burdens resulting from their operations. MCAN firmly believes that addressing issues of justice is the foundation for effective climate mitigation. We are fully committed to expanding our focus on these issues in future reports.

The progress that has been identified in this Scorecard is a direct product of the hard work and advocacy by community members in MLP districts as well as the openness of MLP staff and light board members to incorporate community feedback into their policies and operations. Further enhancements to MLPs' efforts to combat climate change cannot be expected unless such advocacy continues. We hope that MLP residents use the information presented in this Scorecard, to whatever extent it is beneficial, to educate their neighbors, identify priorities unique to their communities, and engage their MLPs (both light boards and staff) in bolstering efforts to mitigate climate change and accelerate the transition to clean energy.

While advocacy and community engagement enables change, movement towards accelerating the energy transition can only happen when MLP light boards and staff are open to new, ambitious approaches and responsive to residents' requests. In this vein, we hope this Scorecard helps MLPs identify opportunities for coordination and innovation; identify trends and progress across MLPs; and consider how their utility can continue to increase its efforts. Even with different priorities and possible disagreements about best practices, MCAN recognizes that MLP staff and light boards are valued and necessary partners in this work. As such, we are committed to working with MLP staff and light board members to identify solutions and promote progress wherever feasible.

MLPs are an essential part of the Commonwealth's solution to the climate crisis. They are well positioned to take action and are capable of being leaders in the Commonwealth. This Scorecard is proof of these possibilities. As we look towards the future, MCAN is committed to working with advocates, MLP staff, MLP associations, and state officials to ensure that this potential is fully realized.

Future Research for Following Reports

This Scorecard expanded and improved upon MCAN’s initial Scorecard released in 2019. Following discussions with experts, advocates, and MLP staff, we have taken steps to enhance this iteration with the intention of more completely accounting for MLPs’ progress in combating climate change while doing more to acknowledge the differences between MLPs and IOUs. In future iterations of this Scorecard, we intend to continue building on our progress with the goal of developing an even more useful resource for advocates, MLP staff, and other stakeholders.

In subsequent iterations of MCAN’s MLP Scorecard, any areas for improvement will be identified in each of the four scoring categories. These improvements should generally reflect avenues by which we can expand the factors considered in each category, enhance data collection methods, and adequately capture new developments. Changes will be made only if adequate data are available from the majority of MLPs.

In subsequent iterations, MCAN will seek to include metrics that enable us to account for or further consider the following:

- 1 The level of financial investment and ownership of clean energy generation facilities and infrastructure. Investment and ownership of dirty facilities may also be considered.
- 2 The work that is being done to install and integrate smart meters, communication networks, and data management systems that enable two-way communication between utilities and customers (i.e., AMI).¹⁰¹
- 3 Efforts made to adopt integrated resource planning (IRP) to effectively plan for increased integration of distributed resources, to improve demand-side management, and to better prepare MLPs to transition to a net zero future.¹⁰²
- 4 The implementation and strength of commercial energy efficiency programs and incentives.

101 “Advanced Metering Infrastructure and Customer Systems: Results from the Smart Grid Investment Grant Program,” Advanced Metering Infrastructure and Customer Systems: Results from the Smart Grid Investment Grant Program § (2016), <https://www.energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2016/12/f34/AMI%20Summary%20Report%09-26-16.pdf>, pg 4.

102 Douglas C Bauer and Joseph H Eto, “Future Directions: Integrated Resource Planning” (American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy, 1992), <https://www.aceee.org/files/proceedings/1992/data/papers/SS92%Pan-el8%Paper02.pdf>, pg 1.

- 5 The work that MLPs are doing to advance the electrification of the transportation sector through the adoption of electric vehicles and electric vehicle infrastructure.

Prior to incorporating these or other measures, MCAN will review available data and consult with experts and MLP staff to ensure that the proposed metrics accurately reflect MLPs' activity in these areas.

In addition to addressing potential improvements to each scored section, MCAN intends to create an additional category in subsequent reports focused on energy equity and environmental justice. To identify important metrics to include in this category, MCAN plans to consult with environmental justice advocates and scholars, data scientists, and MLP staff. This new scoring category will not diminish the importance of other categories but will instead alter the point scale and supplement the various considerations incorporated into subsequent reports.

We believe that the methodology presented in this Scorecard provides a strong foundation for an analysis of MLPs' progress in mitigating climate change. As such, we anticipate that future reports will not shift so drastically as to inhibit comparison between reports. Going forward, we are confident that it will be possible to track progress over time by comparing results. MCAN believes that tracking MLPs' progress from year to year is important to paint a full picture of ongoing efforts.