



Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, August 4, 2026 | 10:30 a.m.
Rachel Carson State Office Building, Room 105 and via Microsoft® Teams online

Board Members/Designees Present

Jessica Shirley, DEP Secretary..... Board Chair
Romulo L. Diaz, Jr..... Board Treasurer
Designee Adam Walters..... Board Secretary (for Secretary Rick Siger, DCED)
Designee Kimberly Barrow..... (for Chair Stephen DeFrank, PUC)
Darryl Lawrence..... Consumer Advocate
Designee Heidi Secord..... (for Secretary Russell C. Redding, Agriculture)
Designee Paul Wentzel..... (for Secretary Wendy Spicher, BAS)
Designee Emily Eyster..... (for Senator Carolyn Comitta)
Designee Matt Osenbach..... (for Senator Gene Yaw)
Designee Stephon Petro (for Representative Elizabeth Fiedler)
Designee Jacob Misal..... (for Representative Joshua Kail)
Sarah Hetznecker-Sheehan..... Board Member
Bernie M. Lynch..... Board Member

Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Staff Present

Christine Knapp..... Director, EPO
Abbey Cadden..... Executive Director, PEDA
William Sapon..... PEDA Staff, EPO
Alayna Schmeider..... PEDA Staff, EPO
Greg Smith PEDA Staff, EPO
Vijay Teru..... PEDA Staff, EPO
Robert F. Teplitz Special Counsel
Chloe Wilson Administrative Officer, EPO
Lena Smith Policy Specialist II, Policy Office

Other Attendees

Peter Krajisa..... National Energy Improvement Fund, LLC
Matthew Brown..... National Energy Improvement Fund, LLC
Festus Odubo..... Executive Policy Manager, PUC
Joseph Sherrick..... Executive Policy Manager, PUC
Trent Machamer..... Research Analyst, PA Senate
Joseph Cullen..... Principal, State Strategies, LLC

EXECUTIVE SESSION¹

Prior to the public meeting, the Board held an Executive Session at 10:00 a.m. The Board concluded the Executive Session at 10:24 a.m.

¹ Pursuant to the Sunshine Act regulations (4 Pa. Code § 1.45(f)), the minutes of the Executive Session “do not constitute records available for public inspection and copying.” Therefore, those minutes are maintained separately.

CALL TO ORDER AND ATTENDANCE

The meeting was called to order by Chair Jessica Shirley, Secretary of DEP, at 10:30 a.m. Chair Shirley stated for the record that, immediately prior to the public meeting, the PEDA board held an executive session under Section 708(a)(4) and (5) of the Sunshine Act to discuss legal and otherwise privileged and confidential matters. No official action was taken during the executive session. Abbey Cadden conducted the roll call. A quorum was established.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES (ACTION)

Chair Shirley requested consideration of the meeting minutes from the public meeting held on May 5, 2026.

Motion: Paul Wetzel moved to adopt the minutes, with Matt Osenbach seconding the motion. There was no discussion on the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FINANCIAL UPDATE

Assistant Treasurer Alayna Schneider provided an update on PEDA's financial status. Starting with a budget of \$3.2 million for FY 2025-26, \$3.1 million remained after expenditures. Schneider reminded the Board that the grant from The Heinz Endowments is not reflected in the calculations because it is maintained in a separate account outside of the Energy Development Fund. Schneider shared the FY 2026-27 estimated projections, which were developed based on the prior year's ending balance and planned expenditures.

PROJECT LIST AND GIS MAP

Vijay Teru presented a new interactive dashboard mapping tool designed to visualize PEDA's project data. Statistics show that PEDA programs have supported over 104 projects and provided \$49.2 million in grants. Bernie Lynch and Romy Diaz thanked Teru for leading the tool's development and emphasized the importance of data management.

ENERGY ACCELERATOR PROGRAM UPDATES

Updates were provided on the various programs under the Energy Accelerator Program (EAP).

Peter Krajsa, from the National Energy Improvement Fund, LLC (NEIF), shared updates on the KEEP Home Energy Loan Program. The program continues to grow, with about \$5 million in funded and pending loans as of June 2026. The average loan is roughly \$11,000, and 57% of projects involve electric HVAC upgrades such as heat pumps and mini splits. The recent introduction of a 4.99% interest rate contributed to a 40% year-over-year increase in funded loans. Diaz asked how the KEEP program is addressing recent federal efforts around expanding credit score options and suggested the program explore additional credit evaluation methods, without lowering credit standards, to align with emerging approaches being discussed at the federal level. Krajsa responded that NEIF does not engage in sub-prime lending and that the monthly loan payments are small. Darryl Lawrence asked whether contractors track which equipment is being replaced in financed projects. Krajsa noted the need to balance data collection with contractor usability but agreed it would be valuable and something the team would consider adding.

Schneider provided a brief update on the MORE Grant program regarding recipient progress. There were 42 applicants tasked with completing level two audits, Energy Conservation Measure

(ECM) project design, and interest rate buy-downs within two years. Forty of the 42 applicants were awarded funding for the level two audits. Schneider reported that 56 audits were completed at a total cost of \$574,259, and that the first interest rate buy-down request was successfully closed. ECM project design has seen 37 applicants awarded, with over \$114,000 paid out. Twenty-nine were awarded for the interest rate buy-down and one grantee has requested payment to date. The grant has disbursed over \$700,000 to grantees for completed work. Thirteen grants have closed to date, with some municipalities declining portions of their awards or entire amounts. A total of \$256,124 has been declined due to factors such as debt aversion or budget changes. One municipality declined because improvement costs justified building a new facility.

Matthew Brown of NEIF provided an overview of the loan component of the MORE Grant and Loan Program, which is designed to meet additional financing requirements. The loan utilizes a blend of federal Revolving Loan Fund capital and private capital from NEIF. Loans offer fixed interest rates as low as 0% with terms extending up to 12 years for amounts over \$10,000. The loan process involves conducting level two energy audits, selecting approved contractors, and completing a credit review. Brown highlighted a completed project in Shamokin involving a \$115,000 boiler replacement that saves \$6,000 annually via a 0% loan. Challenges identified include municipal aversion to debt and staff turnover. Diaz asked for clarification on how variable interest rates are determined for the loan. Brown noted that, although funds for interest rate buy-downs are limited, the smaller size of recent projects has allowed the program to offer a fixed interest rate of 0% through combined grant and discretionary funding.

Greg Smith reported on the deployment of \$1.5 million from The Heinz Endowments for low-cost loans for schools pursuing solar projects in southwestern Pennsylvania. One application for \$1,050,000 is currently under review as the program accepts applications on a rolling basis. There is urgency for projects to begin construction soon to secure federal tax credits before the end of 2027. Staff are exploring bond financing options to expand this program into a statewide resource for all school districts. Kimberly Barrow asked for an estimate of the average grant amount from the available funding. Smith referenced the application received but opined that average loan amounts will vary depending on project size, which is influenced by building size and other factors. Diaz noted that the Philadelphia School District had plans to pursue geothermal projects and asked whether the loan program has flexibility to support other clean energy technologies. Cadden confirmed that the proposed statewide solar loan program will be open to other technologies including geothermal and other energy efficiency work. Smith added that geothermal is an attractive option due to preserved federal tax credits and Energy Community bonuses. Staff is working with organizations to educate school districts on the benefits of geothermal technology. Wentzel mentioned the grant funding available through the Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED) and the Commonwealth Financing Authority (CFA) and asked whether this loan program comes from a different funding source. Chair Shirley confirmed the latter and said that the two programs are complementary, with the loan helping to fill the financing gaps the grant may not fully cover. Stephon Petro asked about the expected demand for geothermal, noting that, unlike solar, geothermal may require replacing an existing system. Smith pointed to a presentation on DEP's YouTube channel, which was designed to help schools evaluate these technologies and understand the costs and benefits.

SELECTION OF BOND COUNSEL (ACTION)

Chair Shirley asked the Board to consider the following motion:²

The PEDA board concurs with the recommendation for PEDA staff, with assistance from other state government entities as needed, to enter into contract negotiations with the vendor identified during the executive session of August 4, 2026, and to proceed with the execution of a contract with that vendor to provide bond counsel services in support of the Solar for Schools Loan Program.

Motion: Diaz moved, with Petro seconding the motion. The motion passed with 11 votes in favor, and 2 against. Misal and Osenbach voted nay.

OTHER BUSINESS

No new business was presented.

PUBLIC COMMENT

No comments were made.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:35 a.m.

NEXT QUARTERLY BOARD MEETING

Monday, November 16, 2026, at 10:00 a.m.

² Neither the identity of the vendor recommended in the motion nor the cost could be disclosed at the public meeting because the firm had not been formally notified of its selection, pending the outcome of the Board vote, and because contract negotiations had neither commenced nor concluded. After those steps occur, PEDA will be able to publicly identify the vendor.