

Cascade Natural Gas Corporation – Conservation Advisory Group (CAG) Meeting Minutes

Q2 2026 Meeting Minutes (April 15, 2026)

Meeting held: 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM PT (Microsoft Teams)

The meeting was recorded and transcribed to supplement these minutes.

<u>Attendees</u>					
<u>CNGC</u>	<u>WUTC</u>	<u>WA Dept. of Commerce (COM)</u>	<u>NEEA</u>	<u>Implementer / Contractor</u>	<u>Other / External / Guests</u>
Caleb Reimer Jesse LeGault Stephanie Reed Sheila McElhinney Srishti Singh Jacinda Ashby Noemi Ortiz Jodie Albert Brian Robertson Kody Thompson Michael Parvinen	Wesley Franks Gordon Gimse Paul Koenig	Nick Manning Allen Carbert	Peter Christeleit	Brian Farnsworth (TRC)	Lizet Cruz (Skagit County Housing Authority) Donald Harper (Skagit County Housing Authority) Ashley Randall (Skagit County Housing Authority) Heladio Cardenas (Lower Columbia CAP) Cristal Reyes (YVFWC) Shaylee Stokes (WA Partnership) Kai Hiatt (Public Counsel Unit) Adam CCAP Kimberly C-CCAP

Agenda & Notes

1. Safety Moment – Coping with Stress

Action Items: None

Decisions Made: None

- Caleb Reimer reviewed a safety moment on coping with stress, including taking breaks from stressful media, caring for mind and body (e.g., deep breathing, meditation, stretching), healthy meals and sleep, exercise, and making time to unwind.

2. Meeting Format Update & Review of Q1 Action Items

Action Items: None (Q1 action items were reported as followed up)

Decisions Made: None

- Caleb Reimer noted a change from formal roll call to a “raise hand” approach for questions and comments, with participants stating name and affiliation (and turning on camera if comfortable).
- Q1 follow-ups were summarized:
 - Discussion of 2025 Commercial/Industrial (C&I) program shortfalls and key drivers (e.g., interest rate changes, electrification trends, and lost projects including Whidbey Island Naval Station)
 - Explanation of 2026 residential budget changes tied to therm goals and forecasted rebate spend, with current performance indicating the residential program may exceed budget in 2026 by more than 20 percent.

3. Quarterly Portfolio Update – Commercial/Industrial (C&I)

Action Items: TRC to send examples/details of social media advertising (Facebook/LinkedIn) to Caleb for sharing with WUTC staff (as requested)

Decisions Made: None

- Brian Farnsworth (TRC; noted TRC has been acquired by WSP Global) provided a Q1 2026 C&I program update: ~50,000 therms achieved and ~\$175,000 in incentives issued across 22 measures. Notable projects included Kitsap Juvenile Detention and Free Reign Farms.
- 2026 Q1 therm savings were ahead of 2025 (50,000 vs. ~13,000 therms). A stated 2026 goal is to reduce the “hockey stick” effect by increasing early-year performance.
- Large measure categories included boilers and “custom other,” with “custom other” primarily described as greenhouse heat curtains.
- Outreach/marketing highlights included case study development, print/digital advertising (Tri-Cities Journal of Business, Yakima Herald, El Sol de Yakima, Kitsap Daily News), a Zone 2 (Kitsap Peninsula) postcard mailing (~3,200 customers), an e-blast on increased incentives, Watt Smart Trade Ally training events in Walla Walla and Yakima, and a billboard in Bremerton.
- Wesley Franks (WUTC) asked about Spanish-language outreach and social media advertising. TRC and CNGC noted that Spanish-language materials and forms are available and have been shared, and that social media advertising has been used (via Facebook and Cascade’s LinkedIn page), with examples to be provided.
- TRC noted no expected program impact from the TRC→WSP acquisition (administrative/invoicing changes only).
- Customer financing: TRC described plans to survey all 2026 C&I incentive applicants regarding financing usage/interest; intent is to survey monthly through 2026 and report findings in 2027.
- Pipeline examples mentioned included YMCA of Grays Harbor, Longview School District retro-commissioning, remaining grocery store refrigerated case projects, and additional greenhouse curtain projects (e.g., Belfair).

4. Quarterly Portfolio Update – Residential

Action Items: None

Decisions Made: None

- Jesse LeGault provided an unofficial Q1 2026 residential recap: 297,523 therms saved vs. an annual plan of 194,725 therms (152 percent to goal) and \$4,472,684 in incentives issued vs. an annual plan of \$3,255,015 (137 percent to goal).

- Compared to Q1 2025, the residential program reported increases in therm savings (~86 percent), measures processed (3,304 measures; ~62 percent), and incentives issued (~37 percent).
- Caleb Reimer noted the residential program is forecast to exceed ~120 percent of its budget due to strong performance and highlighted the role of the trade ally/point-of-sale channel.
- Measure highlights: attic insulation was identified as the largest therm-saving measure in Q1 (nearly 200,000 therms). Other notable measures included 95 percent furnaces (~31,000 therms), prescriptive air sealing (~17,000), floor insulation (~14,000), and duct sealing (~12,000).
- Discussion addressed how incentives correlate with therm savings by measure; attic insulation was described as both high impact and highly cost-effective.
- Methodology overview: therm savings estimates are based on CPA assumptions and regional sources (e.g., RTF) and are calculated/aggregated through the EE Rebates processing system using climate-zone-specific savings estimates.

5. Low-Income Weatherization Program Updates

Action Items: None

Decisions Made: None

- **Standard Low-Income Weatherization (Q1 2026):** Sheila McElhinney reported 13 projects completed (49 measures), WIP payments of ~\$128,000, total project cost with admin of ~\$415,000, and ~2,900 therms saved. Average project cost was ~\$32,000 (range ~\$10,000 to ~\$66,000), with ~3.7 measures per project and ~224 therms per project.
- Agency activity and forecasting were discussed, including that fewer projects were coming in now due to agencies spending other funds; cost per home was noted as higher than some initial estimates (e.g., \$10,000/home was described as increasingly unrealistic).
- **Third-Party Implemented Weatherization (Pilot / Transition to Standard Offering):** Noemi Ortiz reported pilot results through Feb 28: Five projects completed (26 measures) at ~\$140,000 total pilot cost; average cost ~\$28,000/project; average measures 5.2; average therms ~249/project. Two projects were noted as in queue. One contractor dropped due to paperwork burden.
- Noemi reported the pilot was approved April 10 (tariff revision) and will move forward as a regular offering; the group will stop referring to it as a “pilot program.”
- Early forecast for the coming year (2026–2027 program year) was described as 48 projects with estimated total expenses of ~\$769,000 (noting earlier budget expectations of ~\$1.2M and that costs fluctuate), with plans to continue onboarding additional third-party implementers as feasible.

6. Regulatory Updates

Action Items: WUTC staff (Wesley Franks) to follow up with CNGC (Caleb Reimer / Jodie Albert) regarding any staff position on CPA contracting approach

Decisions Made: None

- Caleb Reimer stated the 2024–2025 Biennial Conservation Report (BCR) draft would be provided to the advisory group by May 15, with filing anticipated June 15; members were encouraged to provide review comments to improve the draft.
- Caleb noted new rebate levels became effective for installs on or after March 15 for residential and C&I programs, with updates intended to increase cost-effective therm savings; Spanish translations and website updates were also noted.

- 2027 Conservation Potential Assessment (CPA): Caleb requested beginning CPA work earlier than prior cycles due to alignment with IRP timelines, internal review timelines, and interest in expanding scope (e.g., electrification/fuel-neutral measures). Caleb indicated intent to begin contracting discussions with ICF (noting ICF/Applied Energy Group continuity over multiple CPA cycles).
- WUTC staff asked about contractor continuity/cadence; Caleb noted ICF (previously AEG) has supported multiple CPA cycles and has been an excellent partner for the program.
- Wesley asked about how the Q3 (July) CAG meeting would align with BCR review timelines; Caleb indicated CNGC's intent is to communicate through the draft narrative and written feedback channels and welcomed any recommendations.

7. Wrap-up & Next Meeting

- Caleb Reimer closed the meeting and invited participants to share feedback on meeting format/content and suggest additional attendees for future meetings.
- Next meeting to be held July 15, 2026.

Action Items & Next Steps

1. TRC (Brian Farnsworth) to provide examples/details of social media advertising (Facebook/LinkedIn) to Caleb Reimer for sharing with WUTC staff (per Wesley Franks' request).
2. WUTC staff (Wesley Franks) to follow up with CNGC regarding any staff position/feedback on CPA contractor approach and continuity (ICF engagement).
3. CNGC to distribute the draft 2024–2025 Biennial Conservation Report (BCR) to advisory group by May 15 for review and comment prior to filing.