

**Regional Energy Resource Council (RERC) Minutes**  
**Tennessee Valley Authority**  
**January 31, 2025**  
**10 a.m. Eastern**  
**Virtual Meeting**

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) Regional Energy Resource Council (RERC, or Council) convened virtually on January 31, 2025, beginning at 10 a.m. Eastern, for the 6<sup>th</sup> meeting of the 6<sup>th</sup> term. Meeting presentations are available at [www.tva.gov/merc](http://www.tva.gov/merc).

**Council members in attendance:**

Jan Berry, Monte Cooper, Erin Gill, Rebecca Goodman, Chassen Haynes, Pete Mattheis, Dan Miller, Boyd Pettit, Erik Schmidt, Alexa Voytek, Julie Woosley

**Designated Federal Officer:** Melanie Farrell

**Designated Federal Officer Alternate:** Althea Jones

**Facilitator:** Jo Anne Lavender

- Appendix A – TVA staff and stakeholders who attended the meeting
- Appendix B – Agenda

**Purpose**

The purpose of the meeting was to provide RERC members with the latest information on the:

- Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) process
- Public open houses and comment period after the release of the draft IRP and draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- IRP sensitivity analysis
- Forming the preliminary IRP recommendations
- Next steps in the process.

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

- A.** Erin Gill, RERC Chair, welcomed everyone to the meeting; thanked them for their engagement; and discussed the importance of the topics being discussed in preparation for next month's in-person RERC meeting, where the Council will write an Advice Statement about the IRP for the TVA Board of Directors.
- B.** Melanie Farrell, Vice President, Valley Engagement & Strategy, TVA, welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their engagement. She noted that it was an important meeting where TVA would share an update on the IRP process and provide information on sensitivity analysis and next steps.
- C.** Jo Anne Lavender, the meeting facilitator, led the introductions of the Council members and reviewed the agenda.

**2. Designated Federal Officer Briefing — Melanie Farrell, Designated Federal Officer and Vice President, Valley Engagement and Strategy (Presentation can be found at [www.tva.gov/verc](http://www.tva.gov/verc))**

In her briefing, Melanie Farrell explained that the week before the meeting, the Tennessee Valley region experienced extremely cold weather and on Jan. 22, TVA met the region's highest-ever power demand by delivering more than 35,300 megawatts at 8 a.m. Central. TVA had prepared for that demand, and its power system remained stable throughout the event. Farrell said that engagement and support from customers – including local power companies, directly served customers, and business and commercial customers – helped TVA meet the demand. Farrell also discussed organizational changes at TVA. The new organizational structure includes pulling all non-nuclear generation into one organization, aligning Transmission (now called Grid) to broaden the grid and collaborate with local power companies on changes, creating a focus area called Major Projects to ensure TVA is successfully planning, preparing and executing on large builds to meet future power demand, and moving all external functions under one umbrella. The reorganization will help ensure that TVA is well-positioned to efficiently and with focus continue to meet and serve the needs of the Tennessee Valley region.

**3. TVA's Integrated Resource Plan Update — Candy Kelly, Sr. Manager, Resource Strategy; Althea Jones, Director, Public & Community Engagement; Kelly Baxter, NEPA Project Manager; and Hunter Reed, IRP Project Manager (Presentations can be found at [www.tva.gov/verc](http://www.tva.gov/verc))**

***IRP Process Update***

*Candy Kelly; Sr. Manager, Resource Strategy*

Candy Kelly explained that the draft 2025 Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) is a study of how TVA could meet customer demand for electricity between now and 2050 across a variety of futures. A draft programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) accompanies the IRP to evaluate its environmental effects. The IRP provides strategic direction on how TVA will continue to provide low-cost, reliable and resilient electricity to residents and businesses across the Valley region for years to come. Kelly described the IRP's grounding in fundamental least-cost planning, the IRP and EIS timeline, and the role forecasting plays in IRP planning. She explained that the IRP process begins with evaluating scenarios (future worlds outside TVA's control), developing strategies TVA could employ in those scenarios and evaluating resource options. TVA modeled five strategies in six scenarios, generating 30 unique potential resource "portfolios" – the power supply mix that results from assessing a particular strategy in a particular scenario. Ultimately, the study will lead to a recommended strategic portfolio direction that would guide TVA decisions for decades to come.

***IRP Open House and Public Comment Period Updates***

*Althea Jones, Director, Public & Community Engagement*

*Kelly Baxter, NEPA Project Manager*

Althea Jones presented information on the public meetings TVA held during the public comment period after the release of the draft IRP and draft EIS. Between Sept. 23 and Dec. 11, 2024, TVA conducted 10 open houses and two virtual webinars. Close to 600 members of the public attended the open houses and virtual webinars, which represented a 32% increase in public participation over the 2019 IRP. Jones also highlighted the requests, concerns and questions that came up during the webinars and open houses.

Kelly Baxter explained that TVA received more than 2,500 official comments during the public comment period. The comments covered a full range of topics related to technology, economic considerations, the power infrastructure and environmental resources. TVA is using the public comments to refine the analyses in the final IRP and EIS, including the development of sensitivities and IRP recommendations for how TVA plans to meet future power demand. Comments will be addressed in the final EIS.

### **QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

***Regarding the form comments, I think I understood that they get tallied and recognized as submissions and true points of feedback, and it's just because they say the same thing that they will be aggregated into one comment. Is that correct? I want to be sensitive to any perception that we are diluting the voice of those who may choose to submit a comment using one of the more pre-scripted forms.***

*Kelly Baxter: That's correct. Also, some folks do add a little bit more of their own information, and if that happens, then it will be acknowledged that additional information was added and what that information was. But yes, we will include the form letter. We will boil down the high points and will provide responses to those high points. The letters themselves, when they're consistent, it will be considered one comment that will acknowledge all of those that did engage and provide that information to us.*

***You mentioned that 67% of the comments are regarding decarbonization. How does that influence what TVA does in the face of regulation and requirements? How are these comments considered if there's no strict requirement for decarbonization?***

*Kelly Baxter: Some of that information has been reflected in the sensitivities. When Hunter talks through sensitivities, that should help answer your question.*

### **IRP Sensitivities**

*Hunter Reed, IRP Project Manager*

Hunter Reed explained that there are three primary actions in terms of major edits and major bodies of work that TVA does between the draft IRP and the final IRP. The first is synthesizing the comment responses from the public comment period and incorporating them within the IRP document and/or analysis, as applicable. The second key piece is the sensitivities, and the third primary piece is the IRP recommendations.

For the presentation on sensitivities, Reed noted that sensitivities are “what if” questions that merit further evaluation. Sensitivity analyses isolate the impact of a change in one key assumption. The sensitivities being modeled are based on input from TVA staff, Working Group members and public comments. Sensitivities will be included in the final IRP and considered, along with the balance of the IRP analysis, when developing the IRP recommendations. Reed reviewed sensitivities TVA modeled within six focus areas: Net-Zero Trajectory, Regulatory Environment, Variation in Climate, Electricity Demand Changes, Resource Costs and Availability, and Natural Gas Commodity Prices. He explained that, in general, sensitivity results fall within the boundaries of the 30 core portfolios presented in the draft IRP. A few sensitivities expanded the bounds of the final IRP results, including:

- Extended coal operations
- Coal/gas cofiring option
- Increased energy efficiency market depth.

## **QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

***Regarding these sensitivity analyses, could you speak to the boundary conditions for the analysis and what constraints you are using?***

*Hunter Reed: The main idea with these sensitivities is we are keeping the underlying modeling forecasts and assumptions the same. The goal is to identify how a change in one key input changes the output. For instance, take increased energy efficiency (EE) market depth. If we force the model to take the highest levels of energy efficiency plus some additional EE that could be available, the higher level of EE is going to offset something. That could result in less solar, storage, and gas expansion, and then, because there is less of that expansion, that’s going to change the way the system operates. It will also change things like our overall system costs as well as carbon performance. So we’re looking to explore the impact to the overall portfolio if you change one key input. That really helps us understand tradeoffs, as we move forward. Nothing in real life happens in isolation like that, but by doing enough of these cases, we start to get an understanding of, if two or three things are happening simultaneously, what that will do in terms of the final resulting portfolio.*

***I know you have reserve capacity that you're required to meet. Is that based on a peak load evaluation? Or is it based on an energy adequacy evaluation? With long-term storage such as batteries that may be available for 10 hours, as you deal with this sensitivity analysis, are you looking at ensuring that you meet your peak load or energy adequacy analysis? So those are the kinds of constraints that I was interested in, and this might not be the right forum for that. I’m not sure exactly what constraints you’re using to frame the analysis.***

*Hunter Reed: I am happy to give a brief response. There are two primary goals of our optimization. The objective function, or target solution, is to solve for the lowest overall system costs, by minimizing present value of revenue requirements, and then a key constraint is to ensure system reliability using a reserve margin. The reserve margin is based off an amount of capacity that is available at the time of the system peak, both in the*

summer and the winter – above and beyond our expected peak load. In the case of the IRP, we use an 18% reserve margin in the summer and a 25% reserve margin in the winter. The model will select resources that maintain peak load plus that reserve margin for reliability purposes. Within the IRP document, we have a number of appendices that talk about the reserve margin study. It also talks about our net dependable capacity study, where we talk specifically about the contribution of, in particular, renewables and storage and how that declines over time as the adoption of those resources increase. But it also speaks to the fact that short- and long-duration storage are treated differently. So, to your point, longer duration storage has a higher initial net dependable capacity as compared to short duration storage.

**You have reserve capacity. Is that based on peak load evaluation? Or energy adequacy? Understand that long-term storage. How do you deal with constraints? Ensuring meet peak load or energy analyses. Those are kinds of constraints interested in. What constraints using?**

**Hunter Reed:** There are two goals of optimization. The solution solves for lowering system cost, or PVRR. As a constraint on that goal – lowest system cost – do that by ensuring system reliability. The model must meet the reserve margin – based on amount of capacity at time system peak above expected peak load – 18% summer and 25% winter. The model will select resources that maintain peak load for reliability. Within the IRP, appendices talk about the net dependable capacity study – which determined the contribution of renewables and storage. Also it speaks to how short and long duration storage is treated differently. I think it's Appendix D in draft IRP.

**There will be public comments on this analysis today. Will there be opportunities for more public comments or input into how the sensitive analysis is done?**

**Hunter Reed:** Public comments to date helped inform which sensitivity cases we would perform. There will not be another opportunity for more comments. We will, however, be bringing the results of the sensitivity cases back to this group at the end of February.

**I am mindful of the recommendation that we made last summer. We recommended sensitivity analysis related to deployment capacity. I noticed you had specifically mentioned that within the market depth of solar and storage. We were also interested in some of the other modular technologies, including things like aeroderivatives. Is that covered anywhere? I want to make sure that we've fully covered the things that we were interested in back in the summer.**

**Hunter Reed:** For that specific case, we only looked at solar and storage. A primary driver of that is the volume of public feedback we got, but also the fact that those are two of the resources that are more likely to potentially be different based off increasing deployment potential. As an example, aeroderivatives in particular are often not selected on their own, outside of being emphasized in a particular strategy. So it really wouldn't have given us any meaningful insight. We are limited in the number of sensitivity cases that we can perform. We ended up doing a total of 33 cases, which was double what we originally intended to do. We were able to do quite a few more cases than we anticipated, and we wanted to focus on

*those that we felt offered the most value and insight. In this case, increasing the overall market availability of solar and storage, we felt like was the most informative and the one that would have the biggest impact.*

### **Forming the IRP Recommendations**

*Hunter Reed, IRP Project Manager*

Hunter Reed explained that the IRP recommendations will be a key component in the final document. The recommendations serve as Board-approved guidance based on least-cost planning principles, guardrails for future resource additions in the long-term and planned actions in the near-term. Reed reviewed the 2019 IRP recommendations, including power supply mix ranges, near-term actions and signposts to monitor. He then discussed the key components of the proposed 2025 IRP recommendations, including power supply mix ranges by resource type (by 2035 and 2050), strategic portfolio direction through 2035, and key signposts and planning implications. He reviewed preliminary power supply mix ranges by 2035 and by 2050; strategic portfolio direction, including recommended actions, planned actions for existing and commercial ready resources, planned actions to advance emerging technologies, and planned actions to enhance system planning; and key signpost themes.

### **QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

***I attended an energy efficiency Zoom call with TVA, and they indicated they hoped to offset 30% of the load growth with energy efficiency and demand response. And I'm not seeing that in the analysis, and I was just wondering about that.***

***Hunter Reed:*** *We saw a very strong signal for energy efficiency additions in the IRP. That was included in the draft results as well. When we talk about that 30%, that is 30% of the expected load growth over the time horizon. It's not 30% of all load; that's specific to the load growth – where are we today versus where do we think we're going to be in five years, 10 years, whatever that time horizon is. The way we did energy efficiency, we include what's currently approved in the business plan over the first three years of our IRP modeling. Then beyond that, we allow the model to select what it feels is the optimal amount of energy efficiency. We offered in the core portfolios three tiers of energy efficiency that was based off the cost to achieve certain volumes of energy efficiency across a number of different program types, whether it's residential, commercial or industrial. We saw quite a large amount of energy efficiency being selected. I would say we saw a strong signal that the currently planned investments should continue, such as the announced \$1.5 billion between 2024 and 2028 in energy efficiency and demand response. I don't anticipate that the IRP would change that trajectory.*

***Gas turbines could be built so that the material construction would handle hydrogen instead of natural gas as the combustion fluid. Is that in the thinking when you analyze additional costs for gas? Are you planning to build the gas turbine so that they could use hydrogen rather than natural gas?***

**Hunter Reed:** When we talk about natural gas additions, we do think it is prudent to future-proof these assets as much as possible. For example, our construction that we have ongoing at our Cumberland and Kingston facilities, those combined cycle units out-of-the-box will have the ability to burn a lower blend percentage of hydrogen. And then, we are making sure that we have the ability to get a higher blend percentage through time. So the newer, advanced turbines do have the ability. Sometimes, depending on the blend percentage, you have to invest a little bit more in balance of plant equipment. We are looking, when we actually construct these facilities, how do we ensure that we're future-proofing them? And a key way of doing that is making sure that you at least have the ability to increase volumes of alternative fuel usage if, in the future, we need to do that.

**I understand that strategic portfolio examples for resources, emerging technologies and greater system planning are illustrative and not exhaustive examples, but my question is, does the IRP speak to a recurrence in terms of how often these are revisited or considered over a certain period of time? How does TVA come back to this and say, "Oh, here's a new example that we need to add to our list?" Is there a process for revisiting these over time?**

**Hunter Reed:** In terms of the IRP, this is meant to be broad strategic planning direction through 2035. This IRP is really giving the most insight into the next four to five years of decisions that will influence between now and 2035. In the past we have been doing our integrated resource plans typically every four to five years. We will wait for Board instruction on exact timing. We will certainly be monitoring the key signposts and meaningful changes in key signposts as well as Board direction on when to initiate the next IRP. Those are going to be the key determinants on when we need a full overhaul of these. We've done this study up to 2050, and we feel really good that it will give us a strong planning foundation, especially for the next 10 years.

**If I'm not mistaken, I feel like one of the terms that I've heard in years past on IRPs is the idea of coming out of the gate with these recommendations, somewhat framed as a no-regrets type of list — things that you're going to need to do regardless of how the scenarios and reality shape out. I haven't heard that language this time. Is there a nuance here of really trying to make sure you are precisely matching in real time the needs of the Valley based on these signposts so that we avoid essentially an overbuild of any one type of resource that is not well-matched with the needs of tomorrow? Is that a correct and current framework for how you're going to be identifying these recommendations.**

**Hunter Reed:** The IRP is really around giving that broad strategic guidance. We certainly see some key themes that come out of that, and the recommended actions will key in on what some of those stronger signals are in terms of resource types. But then, from a TVA perspective, we will have to do further evaluation on site-specific resource additions. So that will get further reviews, but it will have to tie back to the overall strategic guidance.

**Clifton Lowry:** It's a good observation that you don't see the terminology "no regrets." I think we're thinking of things as low- to no-regrets at this point. In regard to how the existing system will evolve with regard to new assets that are getting added and the operation of that relative to the demands that are coming at the system, that's a little bit of

*an advancement in the thinking of how to apply the signposts. We need to be taking the temperature of this as we go to ensure that we are still on the low-regret to no-regret path.*

***Will this signpost mapping will be made public? So we'd get to see it in real time?***

***Clifton Lowry:*** *The expectation – and something that is a prelude to the next RERC meeting where we come with a request for an Advice Statement – is that the Council would request or advise a commitment from TVA to provide status updates with regard to key assumptions that sit within the signposts. That is something for this body to think about, because it would be good advice to present to our Board.*

***Next Steps***

*Hunter Reed, IRP Project Manager*

TVA staff is currently reviewing all submitted comments and incorporating feedback, as appropriate. The IRP staff plans to meet with the RERC again in late February to provide updates on final modeling results and proposed 2025 IRP recommendations, and to seek an advice statement for the TVA Board of Directors.

**4. Public Listening Session**

**Leah McCord**

I'm speaking today on behalf of the members of the Clean Up TVA Coalition, a group of 20-plus organizations working towards a better future for the people of the Valley. We strongly oppose TVA's methane gas buildout. As concerned residents, we urge you to halt this initiative, which poses significant risks to our environment, the health and safety of our communities and our local power company bills. The long-term economic cost of investing in methane infrastructure are concerning to us. As the global market shifts towards renewable energy, continuing to build out methane gas facilities risks leaving TVA and its ratepayers with billions of dollars in stranded assets. Residents of the Valley have already seen an increase in their electricity payments due to this gas buildout, including over 9% in rate hikes in the last two years, further aggravating increasingly high energy burdens. Additionally, the volatility of fossil fuel markets coupled with the decreasing cost of renewable technologies makes methane gas an economically unwise investment. We do applaud TVA for maintaining power during the extreme cold the Valley recently experienced. It is concerning, however, that 20% of the power that kept the lights and heat on had to be purchased in from other power producers. This availability gap should be seriously considered. We are concerned that the IRP that is being proposed insufficiently considers renewable energy, and, critically, battery storage as a solution to meet this need. Clean Up TVA and others have strongly requested that TVA provide an interim report on the IRP to provide transparency on the sensitivity tests and any newly incorporated aspects of the scenarios or strategies. We would expect to see narrower resource ranges in that report. We would like to again encourage IRP planning staff to provide that report publicly before presenting the final IRP to the Board for approval. An additional 30-day comment period is critical to receive expert and stakeholder feedback. The proposed methane gas buildout and its

inclusion in the IRP is incompatible with the goals of environmental protection, economic sustainability, public health and energy innovation. We strongly urge you to take decisive action to advance a cleaner, healthier, more affordable and more sustainable energy future for the Tennessee Valley through renewables. Thank you for your attention on this critical issue.

**Gaby Sarri-Tobar**

I'm a senior energy justice campaigner at the Center for Biological Diversity. As the country's largest federal utility, TVA plays an outsized role in confronting the crises of our time. Last year, communities in the Valley faced an onslaught of devastating extreme weather events – from Hurricane Helene and record-breaking flooding to deadly heat waves and tornadoes. These disasters are becoming increasingly disastrous, claiming lives, homes and businesses. TVA's energy system is not only increasingly vulnerable to these events, putting people's access to life saving power at risk, but the utility's incessant reliance on fossil fuels like fossil gas is paving the way for costlier and more life-altering disasters. TVA has one of the largest gas buildouts of any utility this decade. And according to the draft 2025 IRP, TVA forecasts that it could double that gas capacity in the coming decades. On top of this, by relying on unproven, expensive and dangerous technologies like carbon capture and storage and hydrogen blending, there seems to be no end in sight to TVA's reliance on dangerous fossil fuels. Not only is this action irresponsible in light of the climate crisis, but it will burden the 10 million people in the Valley with dirtier air and water, higher utility costs and more unreliable power during extreme weather events. Families in the Valley already experienced some of the highest energy burdens in the country, and for two years in a row, TVA has raised rates for struggling families to finance an unnecessary billion-dollar gas buildout. So to continue on this path of expanding gas, as TVA proposes in the IRP, would raise monthly costs for families and make it harder for people, especially communities of color and low income to keep the lights on and homes cool during deadly heat waves and warm during the coldest months. There are several oversights in TVA's IRP that must be corrected for TVA to live up to its commitment to improve quality of life in the region. Above all else, TVA must abandon fragile, expensive and unreliable fossil fuels in favor of achieving 100% renewable, resilient and distributed energy and adjust an equitable way. And this is consistent with TVA's principles for the IRP to make the system reliable and resilient, environmentally responsible, low cost and flexible. So to that end, I encourage the RERC to urge TVA staff and the Board to ensure that the final IRP addresses these oversights that TVA has not considered based on today's presentation. This includes modeling an additional scenario for 100% renewable power by 2035 that maximizes distributed renewable energy alternatives. A study modeled by Synapse Energy Economics shows that such an alternative could save families billions in costs over the next 25 years, create thousands of new jobs, improve public health and lower energy burdens. TVA should therefore combine strategies C&D to model a fully renewable energy alternative that includes resilient solutions like rooftop solar and community-based solar with long-duration battery storage, more energy efficiency and demand response, and even maximizing large-scale renewables on already built surfaces. Even the draft IRP acknowledges that there is great potential for these renewable solutions. So it's really up to TVA to show utilities across the country what it looks like to lead the way on solar by maximizing these solutions that help reduce land impacts and that bring community benefits,

boost local jobs and make the grid resilient to extreme weather events when centralized fossil fuel power falls short time and again. TVA should also narrow resource ranges to prevent TVA staff from exploiting broad portfolio ranges that maximize fossil gas generation while slow walking the transition to renewables. And lastly, TVA should also release the sensitivity analysis or interim report for public comment. This IRP is going to have major implications for millions of people in the region, and it's critical that TVA allow the public to view and respond to this additional analysis that TVA has conducted. Thank you for this opportunity to speak, and I hope that the RERC will act on these recommendations. There is great potential for TVA to be a leader in the transition to renewable energy future, and we hope that you will act on this by developing a fossil fuel-free future.

### **Terrell Benold**

Thank you for this opportunity, and thank you all for your service. Let me say first of all, that TVA's official mission statement needs to be changed. I know that the TVA Appropriations Act back in 1933 set up this concept of least-cost planning, but in 1933, promoting economic prosperity as the reason for TVA's existence is an outdated mandate from almost 100 years ago. It appears to be the crux of the problem with the IRP development process. The reason is that all the modeling that has been done so expertly, and Mr. Reed's presentation was incredible, but it's based on the fatally flawed premise of least-cost planning. This has led to a long-range plan that's widely criticized as being the most backward in the country. We can't afford for the largest utility in the country to be this wrong. It's widely understood that TVA's mission in the coming years should be, instead, to go all out in the development of all non-fossil fuel energy sources and battery storage systems as soon as possible while providing reliable energy. This last part is the reason it may still be necessary to engage in some short-term methane burning to replace decommissioned coal, but if so, this should be the very last resort, not the main part of the plan. Let me also please address the elephant in the room. This year, the TVA Board will swear in at least three new members who will be selected by a man who loudly claims that climate change is a hoax; who's determined to place only his loyalists, qualified or not, in positions of power; and who has made it unmistakably clear that he wants to singularly enrich the oil and gas companies – his donors. The Board that you advise may be lacking in experience and expertise, and therefore not be well-positioned to challenge the chairman. It may be necessary, therefore, for you on the RERC to be better-informed than ever and more assertive than ever in promoting truth. We're counting on you to do that. There are a number of groups who stand ready to give you free expert advice if needed. Literally every year, the fires get worse, the hurricanes and floods more disastrous, the tornados stronger and more numerous, the drought-stricken areas drier and the average global temperature higher, and with unstoppable releases of methane from thawing Arctic permafrost rising, I am profoundly worried for my children and grandchildren, and I hope you are, too. Thank you very much.

### **Joseph James**

I am a climate tech entrepreneur, and I have developed one of the lowest-cost ways of capturing CO<sub>2</sub> out of the atmosphere and storing it in the ground in the form of biochar. I was

very fortunate to participate in one of Tennessee's climate tech accelerators last year, and I would encourage a couple of things. Number one, particularly for technology like mine, it would be great if TVA could identify its underutilized lands. That would include closed facilities, acreage that might be surrounding existing operations to protect them from the community and vice versa, and other lands that they may have some control over within the state and within their territory, because those lands can be used to capture as much as 35 tons of CO<sub>2</sub> per acre per season – excuse me, at a cost of \$35 a ton. So it's a very substantial opportunity. I would also suggest that in addition to collaborations with EPRI and some of the other utility related R&D agencies, that there be some sort of formal solicitation for technologies that could enhance TVA's operations, especially as it relates to carbon capture and sequestration. I do hope that there will be ongoing opportunities and workshops and other kinds of things where entrepreneurs that have technologies that could benefit the agency get a chance to have interactions with TVA. Thank you for the opportunity.

### **Kent Minault**

I volunteer with the Sierra Club. Climate scientists are telling us we're almost out of time. The measures we adopt for our energy future can't take us backwards. We can't put up a bunch of polluting resources and call them a bridge to renewables. We have to go straight for the goal with resources that will steadily draw down the burden of pollution. TVA's planned gas buildout runs directly counter to this necessity. Listen to the voices that have been telling you this. During his first week in office, President Biden signed an executive order calling for a carbon pollution free electricity sector by 2035, which TVA's gas bill that would render impossible. Then in '22, Biden passed the Inflation Reduction Act, which included a special provision explicitly naming TVA as eligible for tax credits for renewable energy. This made wind, solar and batteries cheaper for the utility than any other generating resource. At the rally for the Valley in Nashville last September, Latricia Adams, a member of President Biden's White House Environmental Justice Advisory Council, spoke directly against the expansion of gas. "They have a choice, right?," she said. They can lead us into the future with a clean, affordable renewable energy path or continue down a dangerous path of fossil fuel dependency. The gas buildout must stop. At that same rally, a state representative called for TVA to be a "beacon of clean, affordable energy instead of deepening our reliance on dirty, expensive fossil fuels." Memphis Council member Pearl Walker pushed the point further by calling for checks to be put in place to make TVA accountable for unilateral decisions around rate hikes and new gas projects. In much of last year, the EPA said TVA's environmental review of its Kingston coal plant replacement has serious deficiencies and "does not satisfy the requirements of NEPA and it's implementing regulations." They emphasize that their concerns continued to be substantial. They told TVA to consider lower cost, lower risk and more responsible alternatives like solar and storage. At the same time, an independent study by the Applied Economics Clinic showed TVA's own solar option could save customers 1.3 billion over 20 years compared to the gas plant. The EPA pointed out the TVA did not even consider the IRA Act incentives or the special clause in the Act that enabled TVA to use them, and in 2022, the EPA determined that TVA actually broke the NEPA Act in its cost assessments and modeling methodologies for its proposed Cumberland gas plant. The message from the EPA was reinforced in December by a

letter from Representative Steve Cohen and Senator Ed Markey and co-signed by nine other Congressional leaders telling TVA in the most detailed and persuasive terms not to do it, and to go for renewables and storage. DOE has said that TVA could have met a 100% clean energy goal by 2030 if it had started earlier, and could still make it by 2035. The basic message has been reinforced by similar pleas from the National Park Service, the mayor of Nashville, the Nashville City Council, the NES Board of Commissioners and 150 people at the Cheatham County open house, where to a person they told TVA not to build a gas plant in their community after telling them in no uncertain terms that TVA would never come into a community that didn't want them. TVA is already breaking ground for it. On October 11th of last year, the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals placed a temporary halt on the construction of the Cumberland gas pipeline. At issue was the hasty process behind two water permits that didn't adequately factor in the potential consequences of a methane pipeline that could impact 677 bodies of water. These voices are joined by a wide range of environmental organizations – Southern Environmental Law Center, Sierra Club, Appalachian Voices, Sunrise Movement, Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, Clean Up TVA, Center for Biological Diversity, Southern Sustainability Directors Network, Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council, Energy and Policy Institute, Evergreen Action, and SAGE TN. In a May op-ed in the Memphis Commercial Appeal, Representative Justin Pearson cited a Synapse Energy Economics report showing TVA could bring more than \$250 billion in economy-wide savings every year here, significantly reduce the energy burden on families and create more than 15,000 new jobs by shifting to 100% clean energy. Why don't folks in the work talk about all this in these meetings? TVA could be a global leader.

### **Tracy O'Neill**

I am an advocacy coordinator for the Southern Alliance for Clean Energy, and I'm here today to provide our perspectives on TVA's Integrated Resource Plan. We recognize the extensive effort invested in developing this plan, and we commend TVA on certain aspects. However, we have identified critical areas where the IRP lacks the specificity and strategic direction necessary for TVA to lead the Valley toward a sustainable energy future. We have submitted comprehensive comments on the IRP, and as you review this plan, we would like to highlight some of our concerns for you and encourage you to read our comments in their entirety as well. Specifically, I would like to address the lack of clear direction in the IRP – deficiencies in public engagement and transparency in its development, the bias towards methane gas and the missed opportunities by undercutting energy efficiency and renewable energy. The current draft presents 30 potential paths based on six scenarios and five strategies, but doesn't prioritize a single strategy or a preferred portfolio. This overly broad approach undermines the plan's effectiveness as a guiding document. While TVA may have checked the NEPA boxes in preparing this IRP, we believe the NEPA processes should not preclude a more robust public engagement strategy. The current approach limits meaningful community participation and fails to provide the transparency necessary for public trust. We recommend TVA establish a comprehensive public input process for its IRP beyond the standard NEPA requirements. Webinars and open houses check boxes, but when TVA limits dialogue to one-sided scripted responses, as we've seen in Cheatham County, that is not engagement. TVA staff force the inclusion of new methane gas power capacity in the draft IRP, regardless of economic viability. We're concerned

about TVA's insistence on new methane gas infrastructure. The IRP fails to account for key risks, including volatile fuel prices, environmental justice and site-specific impacts, and the potential for stranded assets. Locking in long-term investments in methane gas could burden ratepayers for unnecessary infrastructure while renewable energy and storage options continue to become more cost-effective and scalable. Tennessee and the surrounding TVA service areas have some of the highest residential electricity usage in the nation and some communities struggle with unaffordable energy bills. Coupled with TVA's large commercial and industrial sectors, energy efficiency is an essential tool for reducing costs and demand. TVA has often stated, and we agree, the cheapest megawatt is the one that isn't used. Yet the draft IRP does not fully leverage energy efficiency, particularly in industrial and commercial sectors, or cost-effective savings could be substantial. TVA's recent investment in energy efficiency shows progress, with savings more than tripling from 2022 to 2023, as documented in SACE's latest energy efficiency in the Southeast Report. While this is commendable, TVA still lags behind its peers, achieving only a third in the region average and one seventh of the national average. Despite having natural advantages to excel in energy efficiency, TVA is not fully leveraging it as a cost-effective clean resource to lower bills and reduce system wide demand. In the draft IRP, TVA overlooks significant opportunities to lower cost and enhance grid reliability, resilience and flexibility through renewable energy and battery storage. To fully realize the benefits of these technologies, TVA must adjust its IRP modeling as detailed in our full comments to avoid artificially restricting their cost savings potential. In closing, while we appreciate TVA's efforts, the draft IRP currently lacks the clear direction needed to drive a cleaner, more affordable and resilient energy future. Before finalizing the plan, TVA must focus on a clear, actionable strategy with near-term steps and shift away from methane gas capacity, prioritizing efficiency, renewables and storage solutions. We appreciate TVA's responsiveness to our feedback and sensitivity recommendations, but urge greater transparency in this analysis and an additional public comment period on new IRP elements not covered in the draft EIS. We encourage the RERC to advocate for these critical improvements in the final IRP. We thank you for your time and attention.

## **5. Closing Remarks**

Erin Gill thanked everyone for their participation, including the public speakers, and said she is looking forward to the February meeting where the Council will hear IRP and EIS updates and provide an Advice Statement for the Board.

Melanie Farell thanked members of the Council and public who participated and said the RERC's and public's input is valueable to TVA, which currently is working to incorporate official comments from the public comment period into the final document. She also mentioned the news that CEO Jeff Lyash had just announced that he plans to retire by the end of the fiscal year.

**Appendix A**  
**Non-Council Meeting Attendees**

<b>TVA Staff Members</b>	
Althea Jones	Jennifer Brundige
Amy Edge	Jo Anne Lavender
Ashley Farless	Kelly Baxter
Bekim Haliti	Logan Stephens
Candy Kelly	Marylee Sauder
Clifton Lowry	Melanie Farrell
Hunter Reed	Millie Callaway
Jane Elliot	Rebecca Brinkley
	Zachery Brom

<b>Stakeholders</b>	
Al Berrong	Joe Franklin
Alexa Voytek	Joe James
Amanda Garcia	Julia Settles
Bonnie Swinford	Julie Woosley
Boyd Pettit	Justin Kanitz
Chassen Haynes	Kathryn
Chris Carnevale	Kent Minault
Curtis Baysinger	Leah McCord
Dan Miller	Mike Green
Daniel Joranko	Monte Cooper
Eric Coons	Nancy Laplaca
Erik Schmidt	Pam Jones
Erin Gill	Peter Mattheis
Frederick Napier	Rebecca Goodman
Gabriela Sarri-Tobar	Richard Shafer
Gil Hough	Ryan Shen
Heather Kulisek	Sheree Martin
Jacob Duncan	Solmin Kim
Jan Berry	Terrell Benold
Jared Howard	Tracy O'Neill
Jennifer Bogus	Trey Bussey
JoAnn McIntosh	

**Regional Energy Resource Council Meeting Agenda  
January 31, 2025  
Virtual**

**Objectives:**

- Review and inform RERC Members on the Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) process
- Informational Update on the Draft IRP Public Comment Period and Sensitivity Analysis

<b>10:00 – 10:10</b>	<b>Welcome and Introductions</b>
<b>10:10 – 10:20</b>	<b>IRP Process Update</b>
<b>10:20 – 10:45</b>	<b>Recap of Draft IRP Public Comment Period</b>
<b>10:45 – 11:05</b>	<b>IRP Sensitivities</b>
<b>11:05 – 11:10</b>	<b>Break</b>
<b>11:10 – 11:30</b>	<b>Forming the IRP Recommendations</b>
<b>11:30 – 12:30</b>	<b>Public Listening Session</b>
<b>12:30</b>	<b>Adjourn Meeting</b>