

# RESPECT

## Reforming Energy System Planning for Equity and Climate Transformation

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The regulatory system that governs utility investment decisions has made insufficient progress in addressing climate change and environmental justice. Acadia Center recently published its [Reforming Energy System Planning for Equity and Climate Transformation](#) (RESPECT) framework to identify opportunities to reform this outdated policy environment and better align utility incentives with environmental and consumer outcomes.

RESPECT proposes a new framework for how the grid and gas networks should be planned that will help ensure that our energy systems help meet state goals to reduce climate pollution, further environmental justice, and lower consumer costs.

In creating RESPECT, Acadia Center identified three key problems with utility planning and regulatory oversight: (1) utility planning is siloed between electric and gas utilities, which causes overspending, reduced reliability and resilience, and more climate pollution; (2) current planning processes ignore equity and environmental justice; and (3) utilities have a financial interest in the outcomes of their planning decisions, creating significant conflicts of interest.

By proposing two fundamental reforms, RESPECT reduces these conflicts and redirects the focus of energy system planning towards consumer benefits and addressing the climate crisis. The RESPECT proposal recommends:

### Comprehensive Planning

States should conduct “all-in” independent energy system planning that incorporates meaningful stakeholder input, including voices that have been ignored to date. Comprehensive planning should consider supply- and demand-side resources, as well as climate requirements, environmental justice impacts, and need to transition and electrify across the state.

### Separate Planners and Owners

States should create neutral, statewide Planning Entities that are designed to look for solutions beyond utility boundaries and across fuels, leaving traditional utilities free to focus their efforts on business development in alignment with climate and equity mandates.

By separating the entity that conducts planning from the entities that own the grid, RESPECT helps to avoid financial conflicts of interest; align system planning with climate and clean energy goals; and maximize consumer benefits through planning that prioritizes environmental justice. The full report, FAQs, and a webinar can be found on Acadia Center’s [website](#).

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