**STATE OF MAINE REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**RFP SUBMITTED QUESTIONS & ANSWERS SUMMARY**

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| **RFP NUMBER AND TITLE:** | 202404095 Consulting Services – Maine Specific Forecasts of Peak Electrical Demand |
| **RFP ISSUED BY:** | Maine Office of the Public Advocate |
| **SUBMITTED QUESTIONS DUE DATE:** | May 22, 2024 |
| **QUESTION & ANSWER SUMMARY ISSUED:** | May 24, 2024 |
| **PROPOSAL DUE DATE:** | June 5, 2024 no later than 11:59 p.m. local time |
| **PROPOSALS DUE TO:** | Proposals@maine.gov |

**Provided below are submitted written questions received and the Department’s answer.**

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| **1** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, #1 (p.7) | With respect to forecasts for: Weather and climate - Other than developing long-term projections Heating Degree Days (HDD) and Cooling Degree Days (CDD), does this task entail analyzing the historical distribution of Peak-producing weather conditions to inform scenario forecasts. Please clarify whether that was the intent behind that expectation. |
| **Answer** |
| The intent is to capture the effects of policies affecting heat pump and EV adoption as well as the impacts of climate change. To the extent historical distribution of peak-producing weather conditions informs future scenario forecasts they may be included. |

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| **2** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, #1 (p.7) | With respect to forecasts for: Flexibility in future load - Please elaborate the specific load elements that you would like considered for potential flexibility; e.g., assessment of the impact of potential managed EV charging, substantial use of behind-the-meter batteries etc. |
| **Answer** |
| The intent is to evaluate cost effective means of incorporating increased load due to greenhouse gas reduction and clean energy state policies. This is primarily EV and heat pump load plus the integration of Distributed Energy Resources. Managed EV charging, TOU rates for distribution and supply, cost effective battery implementation are relevant to the analysis. |

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| **3** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, #2 (p.7) | ISONE treats Maine as having 3 load sub-areas – ME, CMP and COMEL that seem to map to major utility territories. Are we right in assuming that the utility footprints you refer to are the same? Please describe the geographies pertaining to the “identifiable load pockets”? i.e., are they defined by political boundaries like collections of counties. |
| **Answer** |
| Identifiable load pockets refer to both geographic areas such as high-density municipalities and specific circuits with high loads or fast-growing loads, such as car dealerships with multiple EV chargers or high load industrial customers.  |

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| **4** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, #3 (p.7) | Please clarify that #3 refers to the impact ‘of’ efficiency investments 'on' the load forecast and not "the impact of the forecast on efficiency investments" |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. It is the impact ‘of’ efficiency investments 'on' the load forecast. |

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| **5** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, #3 (p.7) | Are we right in assuming that the assessment of “the offsetting impacts of Distributed Energy Resources DER), flexible load ….. (BESS) and similar initiatives” shall be dealt with in the context of the Low-medium-High scenario forecasts (i.e., impacts attributable to different penetration levels of the said load elements. |
| **Answer** |
| Yes. |

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| **6** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, #4 (p.7) | We are unclear as to the intent behind #4. Do you expect the contractor to incorporate historical feeder level loads (seasonal maximums?) into the overall load forecast. The high-level delineation of the project tasks in Part I, Section A. states that the contractor is to develop feeder level forecasts “if possible” – thereby implying it is optional. Please clarify if indeed those forecasts are not necessary but ‘good to have’. |
| **Answer** |
| The intent is to use available data on historical feeder level loads. It is not certain that utilities have this information or will make it available for the study. |

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| **7** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| Part II, Section A, #7 (p.7) | Can we expect each utility to provide us hourly metered loads for their respective territory going back 5 years (2018-23)? |
| **Answer** |
| It will be proposed that utilities provide historic hourly metered load data. It is not certain that utilities have this information or will make it available for the study. Such information may also be available from ISO New England and Northern Maine Independent System Administrator. |

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| **8** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Cover Page/Page 1** | Extension request: Given that responses to questions are expected back on May 29th, could we have until June 7th to submit the proposal so we have sufficient time to incorporate responses to questions? |
| **Answer** |
| No. Under the State of Maine Procurement rules, an extension would require an amendment to the RFP which OPA does not plan to issue at this time. |

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| **9** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Appendix C** | Please clarify that bidders should provide no more than three project descriptions and references as part of Appendix C. |
| **Answer** |
| Bidders may provide more than three project descriptions, however more than five is not recommended. |

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| **10** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Appendix D** | In the past, our firm has worked for OPA after completing the Cost Proposal by using our standard commercial hourly rates in the first section (“Staff Resources – Employees Titles/Hourly Rates”) and leaving all other sections blank or set to zero. As such, we have not provided justification for/a breakdown of our hourly rates. Is such an approach acceptable to use when completing the Cost Proposal Form for this RFP? |
| **Answer** |
| Bidders should provide the information requested in Appendix D. |

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| **11** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Appendix D** | Can the consultant add more people to the project later on? |
| **Answer** |
| Staffing may be modified. However, the contracted price remains the same unless expressly renegotiated. |

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| **12** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Appendix D** | Can consultants increase their rates (1) annually during the initial contract period and/or (2) for optional extensions? |
| **Answer** |
| Rate changes may be discussed during the contract period or at optional extensions. |

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| **13** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **n/a** | Does OPA have a budget in mind for this project? Does OPA have a desired total maximum budget for the total cost to perform all tasks? |
| **Answer** |
| No. OPA reviews the proposals made in response to the RFP, considering price as one of the selection criteria. |

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| **14** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part 1. A. page 5** | Please refer to the following statement on page 5 of the RFP: "The Department is seeking proposals from qualified firms to provide peak electrical demand forecast data at a regional level, at a minimum, and at a feeder level if possible.1. Please elaborate on what the Department means by “at a regional level.”
2. Is an analysis of peak load forecasts at the utility jurisdiction level acceptable for this project?
3. Is an analysis of peak load forecasts at the substation level acceptable for this project?
4. What is the Department's expectation about the number of distribution feeders for this feeder level analysis?
5. Is this feeder analysis optional?
 |
| **Answer** |
| a.“Regional level” means a geographic area with similar characteristics. It may be a municipality, a county, a utility service area, or a discrete urban or rural division of load based on electric service configuration.Utility jurisdiction is a possible level of aggregation if more detailed load information is notavailable.b.Utility jurisdiction is a possible level of aggregation if more detailed load information is notavailable.c. Substation level analysis is acceptable if more detailed load information is notavailable.d. The OPA does not have the information on number of distribution feeders.e. The feeder level analysis is dependent on the availability of the information. |

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| **15** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A and B. page 5 and 7** | 1. What are the deliverables? Are there any anticipated deliverables beyond the final report?
2. The RFP page 5 states that “The Department is seeking proposals from qualified firms to provide peak electrical demand forecast data at a regional level, at a minimum, and at a feeder level if possible.” Is the data/output of the analysis a deliverable separate from the report? In what format does OPA need the data?
3. Does OPA need any presentations/webinars for this project as a deliverable?
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| **Answer** |
| a.The goal is to provide a more accurate estimate of load growth than what is currently estimated and reported in the ISO-NE capacity, energy, load, transmission, (CELT) Report. Maine specific data will provide greater accuracy in the Maine load forecast.The deliverable is a final report.b. The data analysis is not a separate deliverable. The format needs to be such that the data can be reviewed to provide support for the report’s conclusions.c. The OPA does not anticipate presentations for the report. |

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| **16** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A. page 7** | Please elaborate on "load minimums" mentioned on page 7 of the RFP. |
| **Answer** |
| Load minimums refer to the unusual system condition when generation and external transactions exceed system demand. |

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| **17** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A. page 7** | Please elaborate on the following sentence: "Include as distribution planning “inputs” into the feeder level forecast historical loads" as shown on page 7 of the RFP.  |
| **Answer** |
| To the extent the information is available, historical loads may provide data to assist in making reasonable projections for a 10 year future forecast. |

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| **18** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A. page 7** | Refer to the following statement on page 7 of the RFP: "Compare the Maine specific forecast to the ISO-NE regional forecast CELT 2023 which incorporated state policy goals as its inputs." Please elaborate on this task. |
| **Answer** |
| State policy goals for greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction and renewable energy targets do not consider customer adoption trends and other practical factors which affect load. For example, while states may have EV adoption goals, EV adoption rates vary among regions. The analysis of customer adoption trends will help identify where utility investments are needed in the near term and where investments can be deferred because EV adoption is unlikely to occur in the near term. The CELT 2023 Report does not include this granular level of analysis. |

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| **19** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A. page 7** | To develop scenarios, should the Consultant explicitly incorporate the impacts of potential new regulations on peak loads that have been proposed in the state or adopted in other states (e.g., zero emissions equipment standard, building performance standards)? Or should the Consultant not assume any new regulations and assume variations in various key resources based on varying market responses?  |
| **Answer** |
| Known regulations should be included in the analysis. Variations in key resources based on varying market responses will likely provide the most accurate forecasts in the absence of known data. However, if a proposed regulation would provide significant benefits, it is helpful to acknowledge the impact such a proposal would have if adopted. |

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| **20** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A. page 7** | Please refer to the following statement on page 7 of the RFP “Identify any primary data requirements that are necessary or convenient to complete the peak load forecast and, as appropriate, develop a plan to collect such primary data.” 1. Will the successful bidder be responsible for collecting primary data?
2. What data can we obtain from the utilities? Will the utilities share hourly load data at the feeder level or the substation level?
3. Can the Consultants obtain the utilities’ and/or Efficiency Maine Trust’s market data (e.g., data developed by IHS Markit) regarding the current penetration of heat pumps, EVs, and solar PV by region/location?
4. If yes to either of the former question about data from utilities, what format will data be provided in?
5. If yes to either of the former questions about data from utilities, what requirements will the awarded bidder need to meet in order to get such data (confidentiality, security, etc.)?
 |
| **Answer** |
| 1. The Consultant is responsible for collecting publicly available data. If data resides with the utility or another entity, the OPA will work with the consultant to get access to the data.
2. The level of cooperation from the utilities is not known at this time.
3. Access to data from EMT and the utilities is not known at this time.
4. Data format is not known at this time.
5. A nondisclosure agreement is typical but it is not known at this time what security measures would be required for access to utility or EMT data.
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| **21** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A. page 7** | How does OPA intend to use the results of this analysis? |
| **Answer** |
| The OPA intends to use the results of the analysis to inform its responses for grid planning, NWA investigations, and other instances where utility investments are tied to load forecasts. |

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| **22** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A. page 7** | Does the consultant need to conduct a load flow analysis?  |
| **Answer** |
| No. |

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| **23** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. A. page 7** | Does the consultant need to compare our forecast to the capacity of the assets and analyze distribution headroom?  |
| **Answer** |
| No. |

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| **24** | **RFP Section & Page Number** | **Question** |
| **Part II. C. page 6** | 1. Are there specific deadlines/schedules that potential bidders should consider?
2. What are the critical milestones between now and the end of the project (2026) that the respondent should be aware of? Are they flexible or fixed (e.g., state legislative sessions)?
3. Similarly, what are the expected tasks for the possible Renewal periods #1 and #2 which extend into 2028 and 2029?
 |
| **Answer** |
| 1. The OPA and Consultant will establish internal deadlines. Currently, there are no external deadlines.
2. Currently, deadlines are flexible as the report is intended to inform discussions and is not attached to a specific docket.
3. Specific dockets may be opened. Possible tasks could include presenting the report as part of testimony in a future proceeding.
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