



Candidate Profiles

Ric O’Connell

Executive Director, GridLab

Ric is the founding executive director of GridLab, hired in 2017 to launch the organization. Ric leads the GridLab team of experts providing comprehensive technical grid expertise to policy makers and advocates. A recognized leader in renewable energy technology and policy, Ric has provided engineering support for more than 8 GW of utility scale solar projects worldwide, including several of the largest projects in the world.

Prior to GridLab, Ric was at Black & Veatch for 12 years where he was instrumental in building the global renewable energy consulting practice. While at Black & Veatch, Ric provided expertise to the Energy Foundation China program and had leadership roles on a number of high profile policy studies including 20 percent Wind Energy by 2030, and the California Renewable Energy Transmission Initiative.

Ric has a BSEE from Duke University and a Master’s in Renewable Energy Policy from CU Boulder.

William D’haeseleer

Emeritus Full Professor (‘Ordinarius’) with Formal Duties, University of Leuven (KU Leuven)

William D’haeseleer is emeritus professor at KU Leuven and former director of its Energy Institute. Currently he is still entrusted with formal duties.

His education and industrial experience reflect multidisciplinary interest in energy and the drive to understand the underlying physical phenomena. He obtained an MS in Electro-Mechanics (option Power Engineering), after which he pursued out of curiosity an MS in Nuclear Engineering (both at KU Leuven). At the University of Wisconsin-Madison, he subsequently studied plasma transport phenomena, obtaining another MS in (formally) EE and his PhD.

Before joining KU Leuven, he spent several years at the Max-Planck Institute in Munich and at Tractebel, the engineering company advising the Belgian utilities.

His research concentrates on energy systems, energy management and energy policy, with emphasis on multidisciplinary facets, particularly energy-system integration, encompassing energy-scientific/technical possibilities and boundary conditions, ecological aspects and economics. He taught

courses on Energy Science & Technology, Thermal Systems, Energy Management, Renewable Energy, and Nuclear Engineering.

William D'haeseleer insists on being technology agnostic/neutral. After a full-scope system evaluation, hopefully the best technology mix may survive and win. He is an active member of organizations such as the EU's Energy Advisory Committee, ESIG, the World Energy Council – Belgium (chair), and the Belgian Royal Academy.

Aidan Tuohy

Director, Transmission Operations and Planning R&D Group, EPRI

Dr. Aidan Tuohy is the Director of EPRI's Transmission Operations and Planning R&D Group, managing a portfolio of near and long-term research, thought leadership and applications, with a focus on supporting the reliable, resilient and affordable transition to a clean electricity system. He leads a team of over 70 individuals that have deep subject matter expertise spanning long term planning, operations planning, real time operations, system protection and market design and operations.

He joined EPRI in October 2010. Previously he was the program manager for the EPRI research program on Bulk System Integration of Variable and Distributed Energy Resources. He has worked in resource adequacy, flexibility assessment, power system scheduling, integration of renewable generation forecasting, and other renewable and DER integration issues.

Prior to joining EPRI, Dr. Tuohy worked as a consultant to the Irish electricity industry on projects related to wind integration into markets, system operations and planning. He also worked with the International Energy Agency on the Grid Integration of Variable Renewables project.

Dr. Tuohy received a Bachelor of Engineering degree in electrical/electronic engineering from University College Cork, Ireland in 2005. He completed his doctoral degree at the University College Dublin Electricity Research Centre in 2009, on the topic of operating and planning issues in carbon-constrained power systems. During his studies, he spent time in both Risoe-DTU (Denmark) and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

Dr. Tuohy has published several journal papers and frequently presents at industry conferences. He chairs the Energy Systems Integration Group (ESIG) working group on Operating Impacts and Market Design, while he is also involved in NERC, IEEE, IEA, IEC and CIGRE activities.

Karen Onaran

President & CEO, Electricity Consumers Resource Council

Karen Onaran is the President and CEO of the Electricity Consumers Resource Council (ELCON) where she advocates for policies benefiting large industrial and commercial consumers of electric energy before the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC), the Department of Energy (DOE), the North American Reliability Corporation (NERC), and Congress. Karen joined ELCON in July 2021 as Vice President.

Prior to joining ELCON, Karen was the Director of Federal Regulatory Affairs at Edison Electric Institute (EEI) where she focused on federal electric transmission policy issues, supporting investor-

owned utilities on transmission planning and investment issues, as well as wholesale market operations, to promote policies geared towards electric transmission's role in providing safe, reliable, cost-effective, and increasingly clean energy to consumers.

Prior to her 10 years at EEI, Karen was a paralegal for 16 years in Washington D.C. focusing on energy project finance and federal regulatory compliance.

Karen is a graduate of the University of Mary Washington and received her Master of Business Administration degree from Johns Hopkins University.

Stephen Martz

Vice President, Integrated Planning, Xcel Energy

In his current role, Steve oversees the integrated planning organization at Xcel Energy. In this role he is responsible for the long-term system planning and strategy of the electric distribution and transmission, generation, and natural gas businesses.

Prior to his current role, Steve was the vice president of engineering with responsibility for technical design, system planning, asset management, integrity, and project management. He started with Xcel in 2015 as head of the planning group where he was responsible for company growth planning and asset optimization.

Steve was previously employed by Sempra Energy where he worked in various capacities including design engineering, operations management, R&D, corporate development, and marketing.

Steve holds a BS in Chemical & Materials Engineering from Cal Poly and master's degrees in Finance and Business Administration. He actively serves on several industry committees with the American Gas Association and the Southern Gas Association. He also serves as a board member for the Rocky Mountain Pipeliners Club and Reach Out Students for Education.

Jeff Bladen

Global Director of Energy, Meta

Jeff Bladen serves Meta Platforms as its Global Director of Energy. With 25 years of energy and technology management experience Mr. Bladen has broad responsibility for the development and execution of Meta's strategy for Reliable, Affordable and Sustainable energy across Meta's operations and supply chain. This includes Meta's recent efforts to drive reliable and efficient grid-scale decarbonization building on Meta's already achieved commitments to operate with 100% renewable energy. Meta's energy team also leads the strategy development and execution of the energy components of the company's net-zero carbon by 2030 goal for itself and its supply chain.

Mr. Bladen previously served in multiple executive roles at the Midcontinent Independent System Operator (MISO) as the executive director of digital strategy and executive director of system operations & market services supporting development and execution of MISO's markets and technology strategies. Over his career in energy, Mr. Bladen has also served numerous other leadership roles at companies including PJM Interconnection, Constellation Energy, DNV GL

Energy and Gamesa.

Mr. Bladen holds a Master of Business Administration with honors from the Stern School at New York University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the Maxwell School of Public Affairs at Syracuse University.