

## Public Comment to the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council Nov. 20<sup>th</sup> meeting

By Water F Mena, member of the Merrimack Valley Inter-Faith Team and Staff Director/Lead Organizer for the Merrimack Valley Project

I am here today from the Merrimack Valley Inter-Faith Team, a group of clergy and lay faith leaders from Andover, North Andover and Lawrence that formed after the Sept. 13, 2018 gas disaster.

The purpose of my visit is to speak on the progress in our region on the EEAC's 2019 Priority number 4, which is "Equitable customer participation and savings".

As you know, the "Three Year Energy Efficiency Plan" calls on Columbia Gas to dedicate targeted efforts to support the installation of high efficiency equipment and weatherization measures in homes and businesses affected by the Sept. 2018 disaster. As a result, Columbia Gas committed to encouraging increased participant in its energy efficiency programs in our 3 towns, through additional resources to support customers, increased incentives and targeted marketing efforts during 2019.

Results have been mixed on the progress made by Columbia gas in equitably delivering no cost insulation and air sealing incentives to all three towns. Therefore, we sent a letter to Columbia Gas president Mark Kempic on Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> requesting an extension of the special incentives for another year, through Dec. 31, 2020. This was signed by our entire legislative delegation. In addition, Senator's Markey and Warren, and Rep. Trahan, sent Mr. Kempic a letter supporting our request.

I'm pleased to report that Columbia Gas has responded with a commitment to request an extension of the special incentives of the Department of Public Utilities. **We are here today to provide this information, and to request that you use the influence of the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council to petition the DPU to honor this request.**

Further, Columbia Gas informed us in their letter that they initiated the targeted outreach campaign to reach renters, non-English speakers and low income customers on July 31, 2019. This was nearly 8 months into the one year period during which the special incentives are being offered. We have asked them to continue their targeted outreach campaign and that they integrate our suggestions on how to reach the community into their 2020 plan. This should be done in addition to the outreach efforts that will be done by the City of Lawrence if they are approved as a MassSave Municipal Partner. **We're also here to request that you assist us in making sure the DPU includes this targeted marketing campaign as a feature of the special incentives program that Columbia Gas is requesting to offer in 2020.**

Thank you.