EQUITY WORKING GROUP (EWG)
MEETING MINUTES

Monday, March 24, 2025
Virtual Meeting: Zoom

Equity Working Group Members Present: Brooks Winner, Stephanie Terach, Sonakshi Saxena, Jo Ann Bodemer (for Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony), William Rose, Mary Wambui, Doug Quattrochi, Jhenny Saint-Surin, Maggie Downey, Kyle Murray, Margie Lynch, Alexis Washburn, Charles Harak, Cindy Luppi, Griff Keating (for Adrian Caesar), James Collins

Equity Working Group Members Absent: (None)

Other Attendees: Ina Dasso, Alissa Whiteman, Chris McClellan, Danilo Morales, Hayley Kallfelz, Jocelyn Lee, Kate Peters, Leah Cohen, Sam Nigro, Bernetta Morton, Cynthia Luppi, Matthew Friedlander, Briana Kane, Elischia Fludd, Corey Starzman, Gretchen Calcagni, Joe Nunley, John Massie, Katelyn Tessier, Leah Cohen, Marylene Marcelino, Melanie Coen, Quiana Lee-Gaines, Zack Lippert, Annalise Stein, Melody Abedinejad, Suzanne Russo, Jordan Galluzzo, Kaira Fox, Kyle Cabral

1. Call to Order

Bodemer, acting on behalf of the Chair, called the meeting to order at 2:03 PM.

Virtual Meeting Procedure
Bodemer reviewed the virtual EEAC meeting procedure:

1. The Council meeting would be recorded, for administrative purposes only.
2. All attendees except for Councilors and presenters would remain muted for the duration of the meeting.
3. Councilors should hold comments until the end of presentations, but Councilors and other participants should speak instead of using any chat function.
4. Councilors who disconnect from meetings need to announce when they rejoin.
5. All Council votes would be taken by roll call.

2. Public Comment

Matthew Friedlander (RenewAire)
Friedlander commented that he attended the March EEAC meeting and expressed his interest in learning more about utility energy-efficiency programs.

3. EWG Business and Updates

Bodemer announced that the House and Senate approved the exemption to the Open Meetings Law allowing for virtual or hybrid open meetings, which Governor Healy would likely sign into law.

Bodemer noted that the Department of Public Utilities (DPU) approved the Program Administrators' (PAs') 2025-2027 Plan with a requirement to reduce the Residential budget by $500 million.

4. DPU Order on the 2025-2027 Plan: Equity Components

Lynch, on behalf of the EEAC Consultant Team, presented the Equity Components of the DPU Order on the 2025-2027 Plan including electric-only offerings, hard-to-measure costs, and planned production for renters and non-renters.

EWG Discussion
Quattrochi asked for clarification on targeted heating fuels. Lynch replied that customers using delivered fuels (oil and propane) are priority targets for heat pump installations. Keating noted that the electric portfolio budget includes spending on oil and propane customers.

Luppi asked how many renters live in the state. Lynch said that about 37% of the population are renters. Winner noted that renters occupy two-thirds of households in Boston.

Quattrochi requested to the see the volume of installed measures, including the number of households served and types of measures installed.

Bodemer asked about the moderate-income incentive amount for heat-pump water heaters. Keating said that the dollar amount of the heat-pump water heater incentive is higher for moderate-income customers than market-rate customers.

James Collins joined the virtual meeting at 2:35 PM.

Quattrochi asked for clarification on budgeting for workforce development. Keating indicated that the budget tables show direct incentives to customer programs with a focus on measure types that the programs deliver. Lynch indicated that the Hard-to-Measure budget includes workforce development.

Harak asked where savings from the HEAT Loans accrue. Lynch replied that the greenhouse-gas (GHG) and energy savings accrue to the Residential sector.

Quattrochi said that the Plan proposed a zero percent interest rate for HEAT Loans, but national interest rates are currently at their highest. Lynch responded that there have been extensive discussions about interest rates and that there are many options for revising HEAT Loans. Lynch said that the filed HEAT Loan budget amount is lower than originally planned due to associated income criteria. Quattrochi said that the PAs should not fixate changing the HEAT Loan, as significant alterations may cause unintended consequences. Lynch said that the HEAT Loan is part of the Residential budget, so it is also subject to budget cuts.

Downey emphasized that the PAs are reducing heat pump incentives for market-rate customers.

Murray said that the PAs need to be cautious of overcutting budgets considering the revised guidelines for mid-term modifications (MTMs) this term. Bodemer agreed that the $500 million-budget cut is not an easy task for the PAs, and she encouraged continuous meaningful and thoughtful discussions and feedback.

Winner asked if it was feasible to determine eligibility based on previous participation. Peters replied that the PAs have some guidelines and rules regarding eligibility; for example, customers are not eligible to receive the same incentive for a measure two years in a row. Peters said that the PAs are also conducting screenings to ensure that they are not paying for the same equipment twice. Winner said that a dollar cap or income limits on eligibility for the HEAT Loan could be interesting solutions. Winner suggested a potential waitlist for customers that have already received a certain amount of incentives from MassSave.

Peters stated that the PAs are focusing on areas including market-rate heat-pumps, market-rate weatherization, and offerings for moderate-income renters as they pertain to budget cuts.

Wambui expressed interest in maintaining as many of the moderate-income benefits as possible and added that the PAs should continue to emphasize equity.

Wambui left the virtual meeting at 3:00 PM.

Harak said that the DPU Order on the 2025-2027 Plan specified that the PAs must maintain planned GHG savings as much as possible. Harak asked if the PAs must meet mandated GHG targets as they cut the budget. Peters said that the PAs must preserve GHG reduction goals to the extent practicable, and their compliance filing will be subject to DPU approval. Harak asked for the impact of potential budget cuts on both GHG savings and incentives. Keating said that there is time to conduct some discrete modeling of the budget cuts.

Quattrochi said that he was interested in maintaining current eligibility standards and incentive levels. Quattrochi said that the PAs should attempt to preserve as much of the original program design as possible.

Winner stated that the PAs have information regarding non-participation, but they have not completed a participant study. Winner asked if past participation in the program is a predictor of future participation. Keating replied that this question has likely not been addressed in an evaluation study. Keating said that there are participation studies looking at why customers adopt

particular measures, such as the Heat-Pump Participation Study. Keating said that the Customer Profile Study provides an overview of participation by different customer segments.

Washburn asked if there will be a point at which there are fewer opportunities to perform comprehensive assessments, and if vendors could conduct partial audits in buildings.

Downey highlighted the importance of the Council identifying high-level priorities for the Residential budget.

Luppi said that she was concerned about the budget impacts on moderate-income residents and GHG savings.

Quattrochi said that allowing past MassSave participants to re-participate in the program could help increase participation and production among their friends and neighbors. McClellan said that customers who have previously had a home-energy assessment can receive other services if they are not eligible for a second assessment. McClellan said that he was uncomfortable with preventing customers from participating when there are programmatic mechanisms to ensure that they are eligible for different opportunities to save energy and reduce emissions.

Rose said that he was pleased that the budget cuts would not impact the Income-Eligible sector, and that he was interested in protecting as much of the moderate-income and renter spending as possible.

Harak asked if Lynch would share the spreadsheet on the Residential Budget with the Equity Working Group. Harak said that the National Consumer Law Center published their report on affordability for residents in arrears on their utility bills.

Collins expressed support for maintaining offerings for renters.

Bodemer stated that the Equity Working Group members will need to prioritize areas in which the PAs are considering budget cuts. Bodemer encouraged all Equity Working Group members to participate in the prioritization process and provide feedback to the PAs.

5. Community First Partnerships

Saint-Surin, Massie, and Downey, on behalf of the PAs, presented updates on the Community First Partnerships (CFPs).

EWG Discussion

Winner said that the non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) for data sharing were delivered without notice. Winner asked if the PAs had discussed the development of the NDAs with municipalities, or if there is a structure in place for decisions about programmatic or structural changes to the CFPs. Massie agreed that the NDA requirement was introduced late. Massie said that the PAs have sent out additional communications to increase clarity given the short turnaround time. Peters said that the communities who participate in the CFPs are effectively advisory groups that work with lead vendors. Peters said that the NDAs and data-sharing provisions were introduced

to give communities better access to the data that would be helpful in delivering projects and working with customers.

6. Adjournment

Bodemer, acting on behalf of the Chair, adjourned the meeting at 3:53 PM.

Meeting Materials:

- Official Meeting Notice
- Meeting Link
- Agenda
- CFP Update presentation
- EWG next steps slide