MA ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 19, 2025
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

Councilors Present:	Greg Abbe, Commissioner Elizabeth Mahony, Brian Beote, Kyle Murray, William Rose, Daniel Leary, Sharon Weber, Meg Lusardi, Brooks Winner, Martijn Fleuren, Cindy Carroll, Maggie Downey, Kate Peters, Chris Porter, Kim Dragoo, Jillian Winterkorn, Robert Rio, Audrey Hettinger, Paul Johnson, Steven Miller, Alexis Washburn, Tim Costa, Mary Wambui, Tim Costa
Councilors Absent:	Michael Ferrante
Consultants Present:	Adrian Caesar, Gretchen Calcagni, Griff Keating, Margie Lynch
DOER Staff Present:	Ina Dasso, Jo Ann Bodemer, Rachel Evans, Charles Dawson, Lyn Huckabee

1. Call to Order

Bodemer, acting on behalf of the Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:01 PM.

Virtual Meeting Procedure
Bodemer reviewed the virtual EEAC meeting procedure:

1. The Council meeting will be recorded, for administrative purposes only.
2. All attendees except for Councilors and presenters will 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 will be taken by roll call.

2. Public Comment

Hessann Farooqi (Boston Climate Action Network)
Farooqi said that the Boston Climate Action Network (BCAN) has heard from its residents that they want to engage with Mass Save and they do not want to compromise on the safety and health of their families. Farooqi said that it is important that contractor and administrative roles

are filled by community members, and BCAN believes that residents who have a Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI) should be allowed to fill those positions. Farooqi said that many residents with CORIs were never convicted but still face challenges in obtaining employment, and automatic CORI sealing is not reaching the scale that it needs to. Farooqi said that there needs to be a better plan to balance customer safety and equitable employment opportunities.

Mea Johnson (Action for Equity)
Johnson said that she was speaking on behalf of the residents who gathered to discuss limitations on job access as a result of CORIs and background checks. Johnson asked the EEAC to stand with Action for Equity in supporting a fair chance policy for utility jobs so that residents who are certified and trained to perform technical jobs are able to be hired based on their merit and skills and not excluded from the workforce because of a blanket background check. Johnson said that Action for Equity submitted community testimony and asked the EEAC to review it.

Bodemer said that the EEAC received a substantial number of written comments, many in relation to employment opportunities for returning citizens, and encouraged the Council to read these comments, posted to the EEAC website.

Murray requested to discuss CORIs further at an Equity Working Group (EWG) meeting. Bodemer confirmed that the topic is on the docket.

Winner shared the comments of Anil Navkal, who submitted written comments regarding the 2025-2027 Three-Year Plan.

Wambui joined the meeting at 1:15 PM.

3. Council Business and Updates

September 3 Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
Bodemer asked if the Executive Committee had any revisions to the September EEAC Executive Committee meeting minutes. No Executive Committee members proposed edits. DOER, as Chair of the Executive Committee, approved the September EEAC Executive Committee meeting minutes as submitted.

September 17 EEAC Meeting Minutes
Bodemer asked if the Council had any revisions to the September EEAC meeting minutes. Bodemer said that the PAs and Councilor Weber provided minor edits, which will be reflected in the final minutes. No other edits were proposed. DOER, as Chair of the Council, approved the September EEAC meeting minutes as submitted.

DOER Updates
Bodemer announced that the DPU hearing on the 2022-2024 Term Report will occur on December 18, and the link for virtual participation is on the DPU website. Bodemer announced that the EEAC will execute a contract with the existing consultant team for another three-year period to serve as the EEAC Consultants. Bodemer announced that there is a Councilor position

on the EWG opening up that is currently held by Murray, and any interested Councilors should submit letters of interest by December 10 for the Council to review and vote on at the December EEAC meeting.

Murray asked to discuss the house legislation that was posted. Commissioner Mahony said that the house bill covered a variety of topics including changes to the Mass Save program such as a cap on budgets in the future, a direction change to Mass Save, and a directive to the PAs to cut costs from the program this year. Commissioner Mahony said that the bill is still in the House Ways and Means committee, and DOER does not anticipate it to move forward before the end of the year, but they do expect a lot of dialogue before the House session ends in June. Commissioner Mahony said that 2025 has been a dynamic year for the EEAC, but Mass Save has still accomplished 35,000 Home Energy Assessments (HEAs), 32,000 insulation installations, and 17,000 heat pump installations amid affordability challenges.

Program Administrator (PA) Updates

Porter, on behalf of the PAs, presented updates on the heat pump rate, the HEAT Loan RFQ, and Independent Insulation Contractor (IIC) engagement.

Johnson said that he was under the impression that the PAs would procure work for the IICs who did not receive allocations during the weatherization RFQ. Porter said that the PAs remain willing to introduce any contractors who are interested in small business weatherization to the lead vendors who oversee that work, and they also offer the incentives to customers they source themselves. Commissioner Mahony said that Mass Clean Energy Center (CEC) offers fantastic workforce development programs, and they have professionals and programming that is partially funded by Mass Save to help with this kind of work. Commissioner Mahony said that Mass CEC's main goal is to help place people in jobs, and the financial pressure on Mass Save may result in a shrinking workforce. Jennifer Applebaum said that Mass CEC conducted initial outreach to the contractors who did not receive allocations and hosted one-on-one meetings with thirteen of the eighteen. Applebaum said that the meetings discussed how the contractors can be more competitive in the energy efficiency space and offer a broader range of work, and Mass CEC has connected them with relevant resources based on the interests they expressed during the meetings.

Abbe asked about HEA and weatherization performance through the last three months, noting that HEAs appeared to be dropping off since August, specifically home performance contractor (HPC) HEAs. Fleuren said that the HPCs have been specifically instructed to reduce the number of customers that they expect to serve based on budget allocations, so overtime the charts will show the PAs' budget decisions rather than market trends.

Rose asked if the PAs knew when the tiered heat pump repayment terms were going live. Porter replied that the PAs are targeting a launch in 2026, and they are considering a few different approaches. Porter said that the PAs are committed to reducing the program cost and reserving the full loan budget for customers with the least resources.

4. Active Demand Management: Load Management Study

DOER Presentation
Dawson and Huckabee, on behalf of DOER, presented an overview of the Peak Potential Study, including the background and motivation of the study, methodology and key technical findings, and policy recommendations.

Council Discussion
Bodemer said that Connected Solutions program may become a larger part of the 2028-2030 Plan, and this report will help the Council develop recommendations to the PAs for that plan.

Rose asked if there is a rough breakdown of where passive savings are coming from in terms of building type. Dawson replied that he did not have the breakdown by measure available but would send a follow up email. Huckabee clarified that the data would be laid out very clearly in the full report.

Wambui said that the study shows feasible peak reductions and has clear recommendations to incentivize reductions to peak load, and Mass Save has programs that are capable of enacting these recommendations. Wambui said that the legislature has been trying to strip demand management from the EEAC's purview, and the EEAC needs to bring coherence towards the studies it completes so that the recommendations are followed by statutory language and become binding priorities. Wambui said that without this, the Council will continue producing studies and reports that cannot increase bill savings or equity. Commissioner Mahony said that ISO New England and other entities have released information about the increase in electricity demand over the next decade, and DOER did not yet have the analysis to show the concrete impacts of energy efficiency on the grid. Commissioner Mahony said that the study provided evidence to support that claim and is part of ensuring that there is available data to support the technical and implementation feasibility of the programs.

Peters asked Dawson to expand on the technology neutral approach. Dawson said that the technology neutral response is modeled off of the C&I approach, in which customers are compensated for demand reductions during peak events regardless of what technology they use to do so. Dawson said that this is just one potential model, and it intersects with some of the behavioral demand response pilots that the PAs are conducting. Dawson added that advanced metering is essential for the technology neutral approach.

Murray asked how the 2030 and 2050 savings per year figures were calculated. Dawson replied that the figures were calculated using the avoided electric system costs framework on a modified total resource cost basis, including energy, capacity, transmission, and distribution savings as well as emissions benefits and demand reduction induced price effects. Dawson noted that these are marginal costs.

Abbe said that this is an incredibly interesting topic that has potential within the programs, and he asked if there is a simplified description of how utility bills are calculated. Abbe said that the majority of people do not understand their bills or how to take advantage of the programs, and he advocated for simplified materials that explain these calculations and opportunities.

Porter suggested an EEAC lunch and learn focused on rate making at a future meeting.

5. Commercial & Industrial (C&I) Programs Update

PA Presentation
Ryan Willingham, on behalf of the PAs, presented C&I program updates, including existing building commissioning, decarbonization studies, and cost controls for large electrification projects.

EEAC Consultant Presentation
Caesar, on behalf of the EEAC Consultants, presented C&I sector updates, including the C&I working group and school decarbonization.

Council Discussion
Washburn asked the PAs to share the successes of decarbonization and cost controls with a broader audience, noting that Mass Save is under scrutiny at the State House, and this kind of information underlines the importance of the programs.

Bodemer asked if the PAs were aware of any remaining potential in C&I properties to inform future planning. Willingham said that the PAs will use current and future study results to inform future planning.

Washburn asked if there would be an additional round of funding in the Transforming Energy in Schools Initiative, recognizing that there are lots of pre-eligibility criteria for schools to meet. Caesar said that the intent was to align with the Massachusetts School Building Authority funding cycle, and there will be another round of applications in the event that the spending pool is not exhausted during the current round.

Weber said that she appreciated the update on the C&I working group, noting that it provides insight into the difficulties of the C&I sector, and she hopes that the updates will continue so that the EEAC can focus on addressing these issues.

Rose asked if the challenges in tracking technical assistance study outcomes vary by building type or industry. Caesar said that these issues are from a small sample size, but anecdotally medium-sized businesses appear to have increased difficulty because they lack the technical resources of larger businesses.

Wambui said that many people ask how schools fit into the Mass Save program, and some schools saw up to a 40% increase in their cost of energy in the prior term. Wambui said that involving schools in Mass Save is part of energy affordability and thanked Commissioner Mahony for moving the initiative forward.

6. Third-Party Implementers Panel Discussion

Third-Party Implementers Panel
Al Velleux, on behalf of Heat Quest Insulation Company, Jeff Ledoux, on behalf of RISE, Jared Grier, on behalf of Cape Cod Heat Pumps, and Abel Vargas, on behalf of Valley Home

Insulation, described their companies' missions, their experiences as third-party implementers in the Mass Save program, and the impacts of the program that they have seen firsthand.

Peters asked the panelists to describe the pain points of the program. Vargas said that messaging and communication is critical in terms of trust, and many customers believe that the program is too good to be true. Grier said that the constant top-down shifts in the program make it difficult to work with, particularly when customers are told they will receive a rebate and then they are denied. Grier said that contractors are left in limbo until the program is finalized several months into the year, and he suggested that there may be too many parties involved in program administration, adding unnecessary complication and confusion to the process. Grier said that the rebate application process is complex, and many customers' applications are denied or delayed due to complications, even though Cape Cod Heat Pumps has a dedicated staff member for rebate processing. Grier asked the PAs to slow down the implementation changes so that the contractors can ensure consistency with their customers, and he added that the assignment of projects to the lowest bidder may compromise service quality. Ledoux agreed about the importance of continuity in customer-facing information. Ledoux said that he has seen success in referring customers to Mass Save for an HEA because the assessment provides the customer with all of the necessary information to access rebates for additional work, but he noted that customers can have difficulty uploading documents to obtain their rebate. Velleux said that his experience has been different because Heat Quest Insulation works with Community Action Partnership agencies, so applications are typically approved quickly and seamlessly, highlighting that their collaboration with Action Inc. in particular has been highly effective.

Peters asked if customers are interested in larger, multipiece projects, and how can the PAs make this process easier and less intimidating. Ledoux said that he has had great experience working with Moderate Income customers and coordinating multiple projects for them, and it is important for contractors to be able to manage projects on their end now that they have turnkey ability through the assessment. Ledoux said that he has seen lots of enthusiasm for transitioning off of delivered fuels, and RISE's new action plan has a lot of resources that assist customers lower their utility costs, save money, and become more energy efficient, which ultimately helps decarbonization at the state level. Vargas said that people appreciate support through the entire process and not having to deal with multiple parties, and contractors are able to directly facilitate the rebate process for customers through the turnkey process.

Peters asked about contractor training needs. Grier said that heat pump installer training requirements have lapsed despite the technology evolving rapidly, noting that there are many installers who are no longer qualified because manufacturer-run installation certification classes are not thorough enough. Grier said there needs to be more education on expectations, installation, and maintenance because heat pump technology is delicate and requires correct maintenance, electrical work, and sizing. Ledoux said that RISE put a lot of effort into training energy specialists to identify additional customer resources in response to the decarbonization outline, which helped identify opportunities beyond what Mass Save can provide. Ledoux echoed the issues with heat pump installer training, adding that additional training is needed to identify whether a ducted or ductless system is appropriate for different building types.

Council Discussion

Beote asked if there are any technologies or measures that are not currently offered through Mass Save. Grier said that energy recovery ventilators are no longer part of the program, but there are homes where ventilation rebates would be helpful. Ledoux said that Mass Save offers a small rebate for building airflow when it falls below the standard. Ledoux said that contractors need the ability to assess the thermal envelopes of roofs, rafters, basement floors, etc. depending on where heat pump systems are installed to improve efficiency and comfort.

Fleuren asked the panel for suggestions on how to improve communication issues relating to rapid program changes. Grier said that a top-down approach from the administrators to the contractors to the end users would make communication more consistent and helpful. Vargas said that increased warning for program changes would allow contractors to adjust better. Fleuren asked if the panel had any concerns about issues with lowest pricing or increased oversight. Grier said that Cape Cod Heat Pumps was part of the Income Eligible program before turnkey was offered, and the project managers often looked to contractors for system design and installation instead of dictating how it should be done. Grier said, regarding lowest pricing selection, that there should be more questions about why some bids are drastically lower than others, and contractor history and quality should also be considered in the selection process. Vargas said that the HPCs are concerned about rising customer acquisition costs despite the available incentives and bonuses.

Winner asked the panel for advice for community-based organizations who are trying to navigate the programs. Ledoux said that he has been involved in informational sessions for communities, and those who attend typically spread the word beyond the session. Vargas said that credibility is a big issue for Mass Save, and allowing contractors to participate at some level in outreach builds trust and credibility in the entire process. Grier agreed that community outreach and education is essential and said that there are misunderstandings around how the program works, expected savings, and costs. Grier said that educating end users as best as possible significantly improves their experience. Velleux said that he does his best to guide clients to other services that are available, and it is easier within the Income Eligible program because all services are available at no cost. Velleux said that there have been unprecedented affordability struggles in the past four years, and any cost saving measures that can be provided make a dramatic difference. Velleux said that he is grateful for the opportunity to improve his clients' lives in every job.

Weber said that she was concerned that the panelists had experience with fixing improper installations done by other contractors and asked how the feedback loop can be improved to prevent this. Grier suggested more robust vetting and continued education for contractors, reiterating that electricians who attend a single heat pump manufacturer-run class should not be empowered to provide a rebate to a customer and install a technology that they are not equipped to handle. Grier said that while it is not required, he and his team regularly attend training and keep up to date with best practices.

Wambui said that she appreciated the panel format and hearing directly from people in the field, and she thanked Velleux for his compassion and dedication to serving his clients.

Bodemer asked about customer responses to the new enhanced assessment report. Ledoux said that the new assessment has allowed him to focus on the needs of the specific customer because it is comprehensive, noting that customers appreciate having immediate access to additional resources via links instead of having to search for and vet information themselves. Ledoux said that contractors are encountering homes that have already worked with Mass Save more frequently, so the extra resources provide value even if Mass Save cannot do anything more for the customer. Vargas said that the sentiment is that some customers are more willing to engage than others, and each customer can choose to act on the additional recommendations or not depending on what is right for them. Vargas said that the enhanced assessment is an educational tool both while the contractors are with the customer and afterwards.

Abbe asked if the panel had heard feedback from colleagues in the field on the new assessment. Ledoux said that his colleagues agree that the new incentives and enhanced rebates have been helpful.

Peters asked the panel if they have had difficulty discussing income qualification with customers in the field. Vargas said that people are happy to find out that there is potential for them to receive financial assistance, so they are willing to provide the necessary documentation for income verification. Ledoux said that some customers who are not tech-savvy struggle with uploading the documents or have issues with self-attestation for weatherization, but generally they are excited when they find out they qualify for no-cost services.

Winner asked if the panel has any advice for collaborating with landlords in rental buildings. Ledoux said that many landlords are not invested in improving energy efficiency because they do not pay the utility bill, so making the process as seamless as possible increases the likelihood that they will agree to the work. Ledoux said that rental buildings have a lot of potential still because the landlords likely have not paid for barrier remediation to allow for weatherization. Grier said that landlords may use improvements such as a heat pump installation to charge increased rent because of the added air conditioning, and he asked the EEAC to consider that consequences to renters may not always be positive despite good intentions.

7. EEAC 2026 Priorities Kickoff

Council Discussion

Bodemer said that DOER shared a document outlining the 2026 EEAC Priorities development process, current 2025 EEAC Priorities, initial ideas for 2026 EEAC Priorities, and questions for consideration.

Wambui said that, regarding energy affordability and accountability, she would like to see program reporting that aligns with the language of consumers. Wambui said that in the quarterly reports, the budget data did not reflect the same achievement as the measure implementation data. Wambui said that there is a need for pipeline transparency, including detailed reporting of intakes, assessments, jobs in progress, backlog carried forward, and completed work. Wambui said that everything needs to be tied back to energy affordability to strengthen the argument for keeping Mass Save going, particularly its value for Income Eligible households.

Fleuren asked if he could share recommendations with DOER directly, and Bodemer confirmed that Councilors could share feedback to the EEAC email.

Weber asked for increased monitoring and reporting on measures that have fallen behind, noting that she requested additional data on insulation performance during the September EEAC meeting. Weber said that she needs assurance that when a measure is falling behind and it is discussed at a meeting, the PAs will take it as an action item and follow up.

Rose asked to add a bullet for encouraging public engagement in the 2028-2030 planning process with regard to budget and affordability and suggested that it may be worthwhile to call out Designated Equity Communities (DECs) specifically in the priority for monitoring equity progress.

Murray said that there is a need for some sort of outreach publicizing that Mass Save is the best energy efficiency program in the country to show decision makers that the program is highly valuable to customers in terms of bill savings.

Winner echoed Wambui and Murray's comments regarding linking program achievements to energy affordability. Winner suggested adding a priority for helping the PAs expedite and communicate the ways that they are delivering to customers by minimizing heat pump costs. Winner said that he wanted to uplift the priority for reviewing principles and supporting the PAs in their implementation.

Lusardi said that she would like to see monitoring on the continued development, implementation, and impacts of new customers service tools like the Statewide Solutions Center. Lusardi suggested hosting statewide or regional meetings to allow for increased testimony about the benefits of the program from folks on the ground implementing the work.

Johnson said that the EEAC should examine incentive levels because lower incentives would allow the PAs to serve more customers. Bodemer said that this would fall within strategic planning.

Beote said that within strategic planning, the EEAC should revisit the social cost of carbon and discuss increasing it, and the EEAC should also discuss adding more vendors to the program.

Bodemer encouraged the Council to send additional comments and feedback on the 2026 EEAC Priorities to the EEAC email.

8. Adjournment

Bodemer, on behalf of the Chair, adjourned the meeting at 4:02 PM.

Meeting Materials:

- Official Meeting Notice
- Meeting Link

- Agenda
- September 3, 2025 EEAC Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – DRAFT
- September 17, 2025 EEAC Meeting Minutes – DRAFT
- November PA Updates
- DOER Peak Potential Study Presentation
- C-Team C&I Updates
- PA C&I Updates
- 2026 Plan Year Council Priorities for Discussion