MASSACHUSETTS
DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES

Elizabeth Mahony, Commissioner

Building Decarbonization Clearinghouse Briefing

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Presented by

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Background

Why a Building Decarbonization Clearinghouse?

- **The Massachusetts Commission on Clean Heat recommended in its final 2022 report to reconstitute a reformed Mass Save under a new "Building Decarbonization Clearinghouse". The two primary goals for doing so were to advance long-term equitable decarbonization and elevate customer-centric design to create a "one-stop shop" that would be "understandable and accessible" to consumers.**

- **Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) hired a consulting team led by VEIC and supported by the Solomon Group to conduct research and develop options for a possible Clearinghouse, including in relationship to Mass Save.**

What is a Building Decarbonization Clearinghouse?

A Building Decarbonization Clearinghouse would be a centralized resource designed to help individuals, businesses, and organizations navigate the various programs, incentives and technologies available for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. It can serve as a one-stop shop for information on energy efficiency, electrification, renewable energy and other decarbonization strategies.

Key needs and challenges heard

1. Customers can both *lack* trustworthy information and be *overwhelmed* by information and messages coming at them.
2. Customers can get lost navigating between different programs, including as state and federal programs increase in number.
3. Many customers need deeper support and "hand-holding" to understand options and gather resources to complete building improvement projects.
4. Decarbonizing buildings happens in steps and needs support over time.
5. The cost of decarbonization is a barrier for many customers.
6. Customers have varying access to programs (and incentives) depending on which utility territory they live in.
7. Equity and EJ households need greater outreach and engagement to ensure they can benefit from programs more than in the past.
8. Need to strengthen the correlation between the delivery of decarbonization programs and achievement of the state's CECP targets.
9. More is needed to center the objective of reducing energy burden, even as decarbonization presents new/greater challenges for energy burden.
10. Desire for mission-aligned administrators with data transparency and clear accountability.

Response the same regardless of administrative model

Response varies by administrative model

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Proposed core objectives of the Clearinghouse

- Reduce energy burden in environmental justice households
- Ensure access to and adoption of decarbonization technology
- Achieve long-term GHG reduction quantities in buildings
- Reduce energy costs for non-residential customers
- Minimize demand for electricity to reduce need for new infrastructure

What should a proposed Clearinghouse provide?

- Consolidate and coordinate marketing, education and outreach
- Create a true “one-stop shopping” program experience
- Create a statewide data platform
- Consolidate customer assistance and support
- Require long-term planning
- Allow flexibility in funding to support decarb objectives and allocate additional non-ratepayer funding
- Service to all customers statewide
- Provide greater outreach and engagement of equity and EJ households
- Adopt policies to include direct accountability for GHG reduction targets

Modified Mass Save model vs Single Statewide Entity

Feature	Modified Mass Save	Statewide Entity
Coordinated Marketing	Same	Same
One Stop Shopping	Same	Same
Statewide Data Platform	PA established	State established
Consolidate Customer Support	Same	Same
Require long-term planning	Same	Same
Flexibility of funding, non -ratepayer funding sources	Same	Same
Serve all customers	Create MLP PA	Entity serves all customers, including MLP
Serving Equity/EJ households	Increase CFPs and funding	Create ~6 regional hubs
Accountability for GHG Reductions	Performance Incentives	Independent Board of Directors
Administration	Electric PAs, with modified gas PA role	New Quasi-State Agency

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Top Takeaways from Stakeholder Feedback

1. The energy efficiency industry was concerned that establishing a new administrator would disrupt their industry, program delivery, and undermine business growth.

2. In contrast, other stakeholders, especially in the equity-related focus groups, prefer a new statewide authority. They are generally seeking greater trust, better communication, and an administrator with a single focus on programs. Even these supportive stakeholders want to see a well managed transition and an administrator that is not bogged down by bureaucracy.

3. The PAs want to remain in their roles as administrators. They identified some positive policy changes, but they primarily see the new Mass Save plan as responsive to equitable decarbonization needs.

4. There is a universally strong desire for solutions that emphasize local engagement and relationships. In general, this desire is distinct from and beyond any preference for program administration by either statewide authority or utilities.

5. Stakeholders emphasized the need for more flexible funding to ensure equitable access to decarbonization technologies, simplify the process for customers to access incentives, and break down silos to provide a comprehensive view of available programs. Direct-to-consumer funding and additional funding sources could help overcome financial barriers and raise awareness about decarbonization incentives.

6. MLPs oppose any requirement to participate in a Clearinghouse of either model. There is some sentiment that they are doing a good job already, but the primary opposition is to loss of autonomy and having to pay more for programs through their rates.

7. Most stakeholders emphasize the need for a unified customer experience, a single platform for emerging technologies, and a long-term approach to decarbonization, with a focus on hands-on engagement with building owners and equal program coverage. Robust data infrastructure and advanced metering is imperative to effectively target retrofit efforts.

PA Recommendations

PAs generally assert that the new plan sufficiently addresses the design criteria and meets customer needs, but they do support/recommend several changes related to the straw proposal, such as:

- Expressly codify ability to pool funds for electrification (per 2025- 2027 Plan)
- Modify cost-effectiveness test by expressly codifying flexibility to remove some external costs from the total resource cost test and expressly codifying ability to apply income eligible non-energy impacts to disadvantaged communities and moderate-income customers
- Codify ability for PAs to access data from state agencies on customers who have qualified for benefits programs which make them categorically eligible for the discount rate, and amend statutes to more easily share data with community partners
- Authorize additional funding sources aside from customer bills
- Amend statute to explicitly reference "decarbonization" in connection with the services to be provided by the PAs
- Additional regulations that mandate participation in programs for publicly-financed multifamily buildings

Next Steps

- March 2025 – Final Project Report
- March 2025-- EEA Development of statutory framework to support Clearinghouse
- Timeframe for Clearinghouse- 2028

Currently:

- DOER is developing a BER building decarbonization database, which could serve as a framework for a future statewide building decarbonization database
- EEA is developing a building energy modeling tool, with model refinement through publicly available data and accessible building data from Mass Save

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Thank You!