DRAFT FOR COUNCIL CONSIDERATION

Massachusetts Energy Efficiency Advisory Council: 2026 Priorities
January XX, 2026

2026 is the second year of the current term and the start of initial planning for the 2028-2030 Three-Year Plan. The Energy Efficiency Advisory Council (EEAC) acknowledges the current pressures on the Mass Save Program Administrators to lower non-incentive costs and maintain approved budgets over the term all while equitably delivering robust energy efficiency and clean energy measures to the Commonwealth ratepayers. The Council further acknowledges the over $34 billion in benefits that the Mass Save program has provided to ratepayers in the form of direct energy savings on monthly bills and avoided investment in electric and gas system upgrades, among other benefits. Finally, with a focus on affordability, the EEAC recognizes that Mass Save is an important tool to deliver real energy savings to customers and to the Commonwealth.

The Council looks forward to a continued and collaborative working relationship with the Program Administrators in 2026. In this spirit, the Council asks the Program Administrators to better communicate the benefits of the Mass Save program, with a particular focus on the energy savings and other benefits realized by participants in the program. The Mass Save program provides generous support for our most vulnerable customers, but it also provides energy-affordability for these same households. For example, when an average delivered fuel heating household switches to a heat pump, the outcome is immediate affordability — lower energy costs and relief from high energy bills. **The Program Administrators and the Council must ensure that program reporting speaks the language of the consumer — installs completed, bills lowered, affordability achieved — not just the regulatory language of dollars spent, MMBtus saved, and greenhouse gas emissions reduced**. The program's positive impact on energy savings and affordability is a good story to tell, and the Council encourages the Program Administrators to tell it more clearly and often.

Finally, the second year of a three-year planning cycle also represents the start of planning for the next three-year term. The Council encourages and welcomes input from stakeholders throughout the 2028-2030 planning process. Public comment is available at each EEAC and Equity Working Group meeting, and public listening sessions on the 2028-2030 plan will be scheduled beginning in mid-2026, with multiple opportunities throughout the planning process for the public to provide comments and feedback. The Council encourages the Program Administrators to also actively seek feedback on the Mass Save program as planning for 2028-2030 begins. Toward that end, the Council encourages the Program Administrators to consider holding regional webinars across the Commonwealth to solicit feedback on the Mass Save programs to inform development of the 2028-2030 Three-Year Plan.

The Council sets forth the following priorities for 2026:

1. **Monitor implementation to ensure overall progress toward three-year plan goals while staying within budget and implementing all plan commitments**

The Council is interested in better understanding the Mass Save programs' impact on affordability in terms of customer energy and bill savings and benefits to the Commonwealth at large. The Council recognizes the Program Administrators provide a wealth of data through

various reporting obligations and other data resources. Nevertheless, the message about affordability and Mass Save has not been clear. Toward this end, the Council requests the PAs:

- Work with the Council Consultants as needed on efforts to estimate customer bill savings through the programs, ,including savings realized by all customers from all program benefits
- Recognizing that PA territories are experiencing different market responses, provide additional context on spending constraints (including adjustments to vendor budget allocations) and associated programmatic changes based on PA field experience, with particular focus on the income eligible sector and commercial &industrial prescriptive electrification programs
    - Identify offerings that are underperforming by 20% or more; Provide quarterly updates on the cause of underperformance, PA efforts to improve performance, and/or the reason why the PAs expect performance to improve. The council expects the PAs will proactively identify needed program modifications to achieve planned outcomes
- By end of 2026 and prior to any statewide expansion of turnkey services, provide the Council a quantitative (participation, costs, measure quantities, and existing fuel type based on existing quarterly data) and qualitative (customer and vendor experience) report on the roll-out of turnkey services to moderate-income customers

2. Monitor program budgets to ensure 2026 spending is consistent with planned spending

Consistent with the DPU's directive, the Program Administrators must maintain a focus on managing the approved budgets to ensure program availability for the full three-year term. As part of this effort the Council requests the following:

- Increase budget transparency by sharing cost trends, e.g., what is driving up costs of delivery, including costs in the income eligible program?
- Coordinate with Council Consultants to conduct assessments to determine downstream impacts of Program Administrators budget management practices, e.g., customer participation, confidence in Mass Save, contractor morale, other impacts, program costs etc.

3. Monitor equity progress to ensure commitments and initiatives are achieving planned outcomes

The successful delivery of the equity initiatives and the continued work of the Equity Working Group to provide input and feedback on equity remains a high priority for the 2025-2027 three-year plan. The Council recognizes that much of the work to deliver on equity, particularly through the moderate-income turnkey pathway and offers in Designated Equity Communities, began in late 2025 and views 2026 as providing a full year of implementation and increasing outcomes. To the extent not included in the quarterly/bi-annual data workbook and quarterly reporting, the Council request the following:

- Provide both qualitative and quantitative feedback to the Council and Equity Working Group on outcomes achieved for moderate income customers and in Designated Equity Communities
- Provide feedback to the Council and Equity Working Group on implementation of new customer facing initiatives, including the Mass Save Solutions Center and language access enhancements, as well as feedback to the Council and the Equity Working Group on implementation of the Community First Partnership program
- Provide regular updates on small business turnkey participation and trends across geographies and business types (e.g. renters, nonprofits, etc.).
- Provide progress updates on the Program Administrators' development and implementation of a returning citizens policy

4. Monitor progress of commercial and industrial programs to ensure commitments and initiatives are achieving planned outcomes

The Council is pleased to learn that the commercial and industrial sector is experiencing an uptick in program participation. To assist the Council in monitoring the Program Administrators' progress toward the C&I Plan goals, programs, and enhancements, the Council requests updates on the following (to the extent not included in the quarterly/bi-annual data workbook and quarterly reporting):

- Development and launch of new programs and enhanced initiatives, including reports on market response to assist the EEAC in evaluating success of new program designs or offers
- Proactively discuss any expected program design changes due to market response

5. Reporting, including improvements to streamline and increase transparency in data reporting, and statewide database

The Council prioritizes transparency and reporting as critical to monitoring progress toward the objectives and equity priorities of the 2025-2027 Plan. The Council appreciates receiving regular updates from the PAs utilizing the newly revamped Quarterly Reports and redesigned data workbook.

The Council requests regular updates on the following:

- Evaluation, Measurement and Valuation:
  - Bi-annual embedded evaluation results to support program delivery
  - Implementation of EM&V recommendations, particularly those focused on program design and delivery
  - Market effects research for heat pumps and new construction including any implementation changes
- Data Reporting
  - Updated Customer Profile Dashboard
  - Mass Save Data 2.0

6. Initiate Strategic Planning for 2028-2030 Three Year Plan

The Council looks forward to working with the Program Administrators in developing the 2028-2030 Three-Year Plan. The Council will continue to bring a solutions-based dialogue to the initial planning process and encourage the Program Administrators to be willing to engage in out-of-the box thinking. The pressure for Mass Save to equitably drive more savings and benefits, lower costs and maintain reasonable ratepayer bill impacts will require collaborative dialogue with the EEAC and other stakeholders and Program partners.

The Council's initial areas of interest include:

- Affordability and program design
  - Anchor program design and goals in consumer outcomes, with specific attention to affordability gains from fuel switching and other measures, ensuring that households experience tangible reductions in energy costs
  - Examine incentive levels to maximize customer adoption of energy efficiency and clean energy measures while minimizing ratepayer impacts, including robust no-cost services to low-moderate income customers
  - Examine cost-drivers, as well as cost differences in program delivery for residential and income eligible programs
  - Analyze and evaluate the cost to provide customer-facing services (e.g., Mass Save solutions center, turnkey delivery, language access and decarbonization consultations, income eligible solution centers for 1-4 and 5+) to determine opportunities for cost efficiency and whether these costs are justified by the outcomes achieved
  - Consider implementing a rebate only program for some aspects of program delivery
  - Assess the effectiveness of implemented budget controls and evaluation study results, e.g., heat loan and heat pump, to inform programmatic design and any impacts on equity outcomes
- Potential Studies
  - Engage with stakeholders to design a study with clearly defined outputs that inform PA program design and goals consistent with Commonwealth policies and objectives. Consideration should be given to understanding the geographic opportunities that exist in each municipality and identify opportunities with the greatest realized customer savings
- Assessment of workforce needs
  - Align the Mass Save vendor population to support current program needs and long-term strategic goals, prioritizing high-quality delivery and fostering an equitable workforce
  - Plan for an annual contractor health survey/study to understand the state of the industry from the contractor perspective and identify contractor development support needs including the needs of diverse contractors.
  - Improve contractor payment turn-around time across all sectors
  - Proactively seek contractor feedback on program design and suggested improvements

- Equity focus
  - Identify lessons learned from new equity initiatives, including Designated Equity community offers, to inform 2028-2030 equity planning. This includes identifying and addressing disparities in adoption of weatherization and heat pumps amongst different customer segments (e.g., income eligible, rental properties, moderate income, market rate)
  - Ensuring that distributive justice remains a key objective of equity
  - Continuing to evolve the CFPs as a key equity initiative including exploring how to utilize the CFPs to boost community awareness of Mass Save successes and benefits
  - Consider if any new equity initiatives are required to meet unmet equity needs
- Development of Plan Recommendations
  - Provide information and collaboratively discuss program design and implementation with the EEAC and Equity Working Group as they develop 2028-2030 Plan recommendations