

To: EEAC
From: Laura Olton, Chair, Town of Wellesley Climate Action Committee
Subject: Public Comment
Date: May 26, 2021

As Chair of the Town of Wellesley's Climate Action Committee, I am submitting the attached comments to the EEAC to highlight a condominium owner's disappointing efforts to participate in Mass Save's existing Multifamily Program.

By way of background, Wellesley is committed to reducing our town's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and appreciates all the efforts of the EEAC and the energy efficiency programs it designs. Wellesley is a Green Community and values working with the Commonwealth on its energy conservation, MVP, and renewable energy programs, among others.

Our town has had GHG emissions reduction goals since 2009, and at its most recent Annual Town Meeting, Wellesley established new goals, consistent with state efforts, of 50% reduction in town-wide emissions from 2007 by 2030, 75% by 2040, and net zero emissions by 2050. Fifty-six percent of the town's emissions come from buildings. The Wellesley Municipal Light Plant is currently piloting an air source heat pump rebate program for residents.

I am submitting these comments to underscore current difficulties scheduling and executing the Mass Save process with regard to multifamily units. In this specific case, the person who sought an energy audit in her multifamily property is a well-educated member of the Wellesley Municipal Light Plant Board, who wants to encourage her condominium association and property manager to weatherize their units. As her detailed experience shows in the attached memo below, the process was tedious, frustrating, and did not result in the energy efficiency improvements she anticipated.

We wanted to make you aware of this issue as the EEAC scales up these programs, especially with regard to multifamily dwellings. It is important that Mass Save implementation on the ground aligns with the goals established by the design of this program.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these comments.

The attached comments have also been provided by the resident, Ellen Korpi, to Senator Creem and Representative Peisch.

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: LAURA OLTON, CHAIR OF WELLESLEY CLIMATE ACTION COMMITTEE
FROM: ELLEN KORPI, WELLESLEY MUNICIPAL LIGHT BOARD VICE CHAIR
SUBJECT: ISSUES WITH MASS SAVE MULTI-FAMILY PROGRAM
DATE: MAY 21, 2021
CC: DON NEWELL, FRANCISCO FRIAS, JEFF WECHSLER, MARYBETH MARTELLO

Purpose – To focus your attention on what appears to be systematic dysfunction in the Mass Save Multi-family Housing program and seek your assistance in outreach to the appropriate State officials.

Background – I am hopeful that my disappointing experience with the Mass Save Multi-family Housing program can turn into an opportunity to materially improve the results from the millions of dollars poured into the MassSave Multi-family program.

Goal of Mass Save – Per the Mass Save website: “...helping residents and businesses across MA save money and energy, leading our state to a clean and energy efficient future.”

Addressing the Energy Use Intensity in our housing stock is a crucial part of achieving our State’s emission reduction goals. It provides one of the best “returns on emissions reduction” and also provides significant cost savings to utility customers.

Reality of My Personal Experience - I own a townhouse condo that is part of an 8 unit condo association. Five units are gas heated by National Grid and 3 are not. I was seeking an energy audit for myself in order to qualify for free air sealing and the insulation incentive and also hoped to encourage my condo association partners to weatherize their units. Our property manager who owns half the units was supportive of my doing this but not motivated on his own.

My understanding is that the Mass Save multi-family program provides the energy audit on one or two sample units and then applies the incentives to all the units. I was offered a remote energy audit and was surprised by what it did not cover. For example, I was never asked about my 15 year old top load wash machine. An energy audit from Energy New England last year predicted a very fast payback (and emission reductions) by replacing it with an efficient, new front loading wash machine.

I have attached a play by play summary of my interactions. It is difficult to comprehend how someone any less motivated than me would have ever ended up completing the process.

I have also attached a photo of the free equipment that was shipped to me that appears to be worth at least \$100. It includes 2 power strips, 3 shower heads and a bag full of sink aerators. Installing it is way beyond my competency and I question whether I even need most of it.

Conclusion – It is possible that some lack of technical ability or understanding on my part contributed to this situation at one point or another. If that is the case, then the process needs to

be more “dummy-proof” because most people are not as computer-savvy, motivated or educated on this subject as I am.

It is my intention that this information is viewed as the basis for advocating systemic improvement and not as a complaint seeking intervention in my personal situation. I encourage the evaluation to include a revamping of the Energy Audit design so that it is more focused on decarbonization, which is the whole point of spending this money.

Interacting With Mass Save

1. I called the Mass Save 800 number, was instructed to go to the multi-family section, was transferred there and put on hold for about 45 minutes. Then a recording came on requesting my phone number so they could call me back. I left my phone number but never received a call back.
2. I called the Mass Save 800 number again several weeks later and chose multi-family on the menu. I was put on hold for about 45 minutes. Then a recording came on requesting my phone number so they could call me back. I left my phone number again but never received a call back.
3. Several weeks later I called National Grid directly and asked how I could contact their multi-family Mass Save vendor directly so that someone would answer the phone. They provided a different 800 number which turned out to be for the single-family program. The person there was very helpful, staying on the line for about 45 minutes while asking me many questions and texting the answers to a multi-family counterpart who was unwilling to have my call transferred to her. Finally, the multi-family person texted the helpful person that she would call me back in a couple of minutes.
4. About 3 hours later I received a call from ClearResult. The person re-asked all the questions that had been communicated to her in the texts from the previous person. She asked several times whether I owned all 8 units, apparently not understanding that a condo association assumes multiple owners. She told me I was not authorized to make this request and my property manager needed to call.
5. My property manager called ClearResult. He was told the energy audit would only apply to the 5 gas heated units. He asked me to call back to set up the appointment for my unit.
6. When I called ClearResult to make the appointment, their data base had no record of my property manager calling and authorizing an energy audit.
7. My property manager had to call a second time to authorize me scheduling an energy audit for my unit.
8. I finally was able to schedule a remote energy audit.
9. When I finally received the report, ClearResult just sent it with no discussion. A copy was not sent by them to the Property Manager and no effort was made by them to encourage him to weatherize the other units.
10. After I received the report, it was not clear to me how to arrange for the air sealing and insulation that was recommended. I wrote and requested direction on what my next step should be.
11. On April 21, I was instructed to call an 800 number to schedule an appointment with the contractor.
12. I called the 800 number and a recording stated that there was a long wait time. It had menu options to schedule audits and apply for rebates but did not have a menu option for making an appointment to schedule the installation.

13. I emailed ClearResult for further instructions on how to arrange for the contractor to do the work.
14. On April 24, a subsequent email from ClearResult said someone would contact me to set up an installation appointment
15. On May 6, someone who happened to hear of my saga from someone I know, reached out to their Mass Save contact at about 4:30 pm (I had not requested this and only learned of it after the fact.)
16. At 5:25 pm on May 6, "Nick" called me to find out when he could install my air sealing. He said he was not equipped to install the additional insulation that had been recommended in the energy audit. He did not know I was part of a multi-family organization and that we hoped to convince other owners to also weatherize.
17. I set up an appointment for Nick to do the air sealing. He promised to send me a confirming email with all his contact information but did not.
18. Nick called to confirm our appointment and did the air sealing as promised. The weatherization strip on my front door that he installed came loose the next day. I was able to find his contact information in my call log and have requested he return.
19. I am still wondering how to leverage this to encourage my fellow condo association members to weatherize their units.