

Testimony to the EEAC on the 2022-24 Mass Save Draft

From Susan Olshuff, ener-G-save, Cooler Communities, [REDACTED]

I appreciate speaking to you about the new 3 yr plan. I have to admit that I have not studied the draft plan super carefully, so in the remarks that follow, forgive me if I'm speaking about things you covered.

My name is Susan Olshuff, and I work with ener-G-save, a western MA community organization that has been urging people for some years now to take advantage of Mass Save. We also run an environmental education programs in school districts called Cooler Communities, bringing sustainability into the curricula, and helping students become activists to bring their families and neighbors to pledge actions, including lining up energy audits.

A few issues are top of my mind and heart.

First is equity. I have seen first hand the challenges of reaching people of color and others who fall into the categories of the underserved. These are the same people cited in the last 3-year plan. We must do better. These communities, the low-income, the renters, the foreign language speakers need more than we have to date provided. How many will be willing to take out a loan, even interest free, for a heat pump? Does this new plan have budget figures that can truly make a difference? Given for how long we have neglected to reach goals to serve them, does the budget truly reflect a commitment to make these next three years turn things around? I'm happy to see training as a feature in the plan. It is essential to include these diverse community members in those trainings. Surely after covid, these people need jobs. Do we have concrete goals of inclusivity? Is this a priority of this plan to meet these goals? Where are they articulated? How often will they be evaluated? We need a real plan, or else, in the blink of an eye, we will have the same issues in our next 3-year plan.

And can we please do something to ensure that all CAP agencies equally offer good service? I know of too many stories where unanswered phone lines, and long waiting periods, discouraged, or even made it impossible for people to take advantage of the free offers for which they were eligible.

The second issue I want to address is **data** and its accessibility. I understand that community partnership programs have new mapping tools which is great. We need such access for all our

cities so that grassroots groups that are working to encourage efficiency can know which neighborhoods to target to use scarce resources best for maximal benefit.

Lastly, I fear that we are not being bold enough in our efforts to meet the challenge of our time. I urge you to make sure that the new Mass Save plan meets the goals of the new MA climate plan and the roadmap to 2050, and goes way beyond. It's just needed.

I genuinely thank all of you for all the work you are pouring into every detail on the 222 plus pages. Please, as you make changes and improvements and tighten up all the details, be bolder, far bolder, than you dare to be... for your kids and grandkids and their kids.

Thank you.

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Susan Olshuff
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