

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on state efficiency investment plans... as a resident of Dracut MA and someone who has been an active user of the state weatherization program. While I am an active supporter of the program, I believe there is room for substantial improvement based on my own experience.

First, in a town that is rapidly becoming a national gas pipeline hub, I have questions about how the program might better address the issues of utility peak demand -- so that all pipelines in our area do not have to be dug up and expanded just to serve demand that occurs on a handful of days. I also have general questions about how energy auditors perform their work -- as it seems that many people will be counseled that their buildings cannot be insulated -- even if the owners are willing to pay extra to address preconditions.

My recommendations are as follows:

1) Energy auditors should remove and destroy incandescent bulbs when they install efficient bulbs.

Why leave the removed bulbs in the hands of the homeowner, who may reuse them later and thus negate some of the potential electricity savings?

I have had three audits from large energy audit providers, and in no case were the incandescent bulbs removed.

2) Outdoor lighting should be prioritized over indoor lighting for replacement.

Outdoor lighting rarely makes use of CFL bulbs or at this point, LEDs. This lighting (mostly halogens) sends waste heat into the atmosphere where it does not contribute to heating a home. For this reason, the efficiency programs should target replacement of all outdoor lighting, including Christmas lighting, with LED lights as the program moves forwards. Outdoor winter lighting is certainly a major component of winter peak demand, and as recently as December 2013, the seasonal winter peak day occurred in December during holiday lighting season, and not during January when the weather is usually coldest.

3) My house had several serious issues that needed to be addressed before the basement could be insulated.

Some of those, like a partial sill replacement, are not easy jobs that can be quickly addressed by any contractor, since they require some specialized expertise yet may not be large enough to warrant the time of many more experienced construction firms.

In my opinion, homeowners should be able to write up a plan for addressing some of these fundamental problems and there should be a separate program that provides training and support to contractors so that some expertise is built up around the state in how to economically address some of the barriers to weatherization -- whether they be related to moisture, rot, replacement of wiring, or addressing construction defects. A special "preconditions hotline" should be set up so that homeowner participants in the weatherization program can gain suggestions from a public advocate who can offer a series of steps to follow.

4) Recipients of large rebate awards could have some obligation to participate in Demand Response.

I installed a GE heat pump water heater in my basement, replacing an electric water heater. A year after I installed it, I learned that in the Pacific Northeast there was a successful pilot

program where these water heaters could be remotely programmed to heat the water at off-peak times. Considering that I received a \$750 rebate for the water heater, I certainly would have been willing for my water heater to be used in this fashion -- heating water in advance of expected peak power times and delaying the recharge until electricity demand is low.

<http://neea.org/docs/default-source/reports/final-hpwh-dr-report-and-summary.pdf?sfvrsn=6>

5) The cost of gas conversions must be fully accounted for.

It appeared to me, when doing a boiler replacement at my mom's house, that the cost of converting to gas was more heavily subsidized than simple replacement of the oil burner. This may be justified by current regulations concerning global warming, but it is hard to tell what those conversion costs are (i.e. running a 95 foot gas line and installing a new meter) and whether efficiency dollars are going to that significant upfront cost. I simply ask that these costs be reported in an open and transparent fashion so that the Advisory Council will be able to understand if the natural gas startup cost is draining program dollars. This is particularly important now that the spread between the price of gas and the price of home heating oil has narrowed significantly.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment. I am very interested in participating in future meetings and in providing more feedback as needed.

Rich Cowan
Dracut, MA