

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Case No. 19-2956-INV

Investigation pursuant to Act 62 into the creation of an all-fuels energy efficiency program, expansion of energy efficiency utility programs and services, and funding options for those programs	
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Order entered: 10/30/2019

ORDER RE THIRD ROUND COMMENTS AND NOTICE OF WORKSHOP

Introduction

On July 11, 2019, the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) opened this investigation in response to Section 2 of Act 62 (H.63) of the 2019-2020 Vermont legislative session. Act 62 requires the Commission to report to the Legislature on the Commission’s consideration of the creation of an all-fuels energy efficiency and conservation program, expansion of energy efficiency utility programs and services, and funding options for those programs.

On September 24, 2019, I convened the first workshop with a focus on reviewing the current statutory policies and goals that guide Vermont’s energy programs, Vermont’s current portfolio of energy programs and services, and the current sources of funding for those programs and services. The workshop was preceded by written stakeholder comments on these topics.

On October 25, 2019, I convened the second workshop with a focus on discussing the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps in Vermont’s current energy programs and services and funding sources. The workshop also included a presentation on the Transportation Climate Initiative and discussion of stakeholders’ preliminary recommendations to the Commission. This workshop was preceded by written stakeholder comments.

In today’s Order I establish deadlines for further comments and final recommendations for the Commission to consider for its preliminary report, and the factual and policy basis for those recommendations.

Discussion

Scope and Schedule of Third-Round Topics

As indicated at the conclusion of the October 25 workshop, additional information and recommendations are requested regarding the following questions.

1. On an annual basis, how many homes receive thermal efficiency services, and at what cost? For those homes that receive services, do the homes meet Vermont's statutory building efficiency goals, where the annual fuel needs and fuel bills are reduced by an average of 25%? (10 V.S.A. § 581)
2. Is there a quantification of unmet demand for thermal efficiency services? In other words, do thermal efficiency service providers have a backlog, and, if so, how many customers are waiting for thermal efficiency services?
3. The Thermal Efficiency Task Force report was issued in January 2013.¹ The report quantifies the funding needed to meet the State building efficiency goals. Is that quantification still a reasonable proxy for the cost to meet the goals, or is there more recent information or figures available?
4. If Vermont lawmakers were to establish new funding sources dedicated to reducing fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions for the transportation and heating sectors, how much funding would be required to accomplish Vermont's statutory goals and commitments?
5. If Vermont lawmakers were to establish new funding sources dedicated to reducing fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions for the transportation and heating sectors, what are the preferred funding options? For example, the Thermal Efficiency Task Force considered multiple public funding options, including an energy efficiency fee on fossil fuels used in space heating, an energy efficiency tax credit, an increase in the gross receipts tax on fossil fuels, and removal of the sales tax exemption on residential heating fuels.

¹ The Thermal Efficiency Task Force report is available on the Department of Public Service website. https://publicservice.vermont.gov/energy_efficiency/tetf#Report

In addition to commenting on these topics, participants are invited to file refined recommendations for the Commission to consider as part of its preliminary report, provide additional factual and policy reasons as appropriate to support their recommendations, and to specify any statutory or regulatory amendments required to implement their recommendations. All comments and recommendations, and any requests to present at the third workshop, should be filed by November 15, 2019. Reply comments, following the third workshop, should be filed by November 29, 2019.

Notice of Workshop

The third workshop will be held on November 22, 2019, from 9:30 A.M. to approximately 12:30 P.M. at the Susan M. Hudson Hearing Room on the third floor of the People’s United Bank Building at 112 State Street in Montpelier, Vermont. The workshop will be recorded by a court reporter.

SO ORDERED.

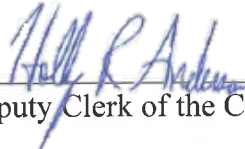
Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 30th day of October, 2019.



Thomas Kinauer
Hearing Officer

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: **October 30, 2019**

Attest: 
Deputy Clerk of the Commission

Notice to Readers: This decision is subject to revision of technical errors. Readers are requested to notify the Clerk of the Commission (by e-mail, telephone, or in writing) of any apparent errors, in order that any necessary corrections may be made. (E-mail address: puc.clerk@vermont.gov)

PUC Case No. 19-2956-INV - SERVICE LIST

Melissa Bailey
Vermont Public Power Supply Authority
P.O. Box 126
5195 Waterbury-Stowe Road
Waterbury Center, VT 05677
mbailey@vppsa.com

(for Vermont Public
Power Supply Authority)

Erin C. Bennett, Esq.
Vermont Department of Public Service
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620
erin.bennett@vermont.gov

(for Vermont
Department of Public
Service)

Senator Christopher Bray
829 South Street
New Haven, VT 05472
cbray@leg.state.vt.us

Victoria J. Brown, Esq.
Vermont Electric Cooperative, Inc.
42 Wescom Road
Johnson, VT 05656
vbrown@vermontelectric.coop

(for Vermont Electric
Cooperative Inc.)

Clare Buckley
Leonine Public Affairs, LLP
1 Blanchard Court
Suite 101
Montpelier, VT 05602
cbuckley@leoninepublicaffairs.com

(for Vermont Vehicle
and Automotive
Distributors Association)

Christopher Burns
City of Burlington Electric Department
cburns@burlingtonelectric.com

(for City of Burlington
Electric Department)

Jonathan Dancing
Building Performance Professionals Association of Vermont
PO Box 8125
Brattleboro, VT 05304
jdancing@bppa-vt.org

(for Building
Performance
Professionals
Association of Vermont)

Daniel Dutcher
Agency of Transportation
1 National Life Drive
Montpelier, VT 05633-5001
daniel.dutcher@vermont.gov

(for Vermont Agency of
Transportation)

William F. Ellis
McNeil, Leddy & Sheahan
271 South Union Street
Burlington, VT 05401
wellis@mcneilvt.com

(for City of Burlington
Electric Department)

Richard Faesy
Energy Futures Group
rfaesy@energyfuturesgroup.com

(for Energy Futures
Group, Inc.)

James Gibbons
City of Burlington Electric Department
585 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
jgibbons@burlingtonelectric.com

(for City of Burlington
Electric Department)

Kerrick Johnson
Vermont Electric Power Company
366 Pinnacle Ridge Road
Rutland, VT 05701
kjohnson@velco.com

(for Vermont Electric
Power Company, Inc.)

Dan Kopin
Utility Services, Inc.
1080 Waterbury-Stowe Road
Suite 2
Waterbury, VT 05676
dan.kopin@utilitysvcs.com

(for Utility Services,
Inc.)

Sandra Levine, Esq.
Conservation Law Foundation
15 East State Street, Suite 4
Montpelier, VT 05602
slevine@clf.org

(for Conservation Law
Foundation)

Shana Louiselle
Vermont System Planning Committee
366 Pinnacle Ridge Road
Rutland, VT 05701
Slousielle@velco.com

(for Vermont Electric
Power Company, Inc.)

Marilyn Miller
Vermont Vehicle and Automotive Distributors Association
1284 US Rout 302-Berlin
Suite 2
Barre, VT 05641
mmiller@vermontada.org

(for Vermont Vehicle
and Automotive
Distributors Association)

Todd Olinsky-Paul
Clean Energy Group / Clean Energy States Alliance
50 State Street
Suite 1
Montpelier, VT
Todd@cleanegroup.org

(for Clean Energy Group
/ Clean Energy States
Alliance)

Chris Rauscher
595 Market Street, Floor 29
San Francisco, CA 94015
chris.rauscher@sunrun.com

(for Sunrun Inc.)

Morris L. Silver, Esq.
Law Offices of Morris L. Silver, Esq.
P.O. Box 606
Benson, VT 05731-0606
mlsilver@sover.net

(for Efficiency Vermont
- Vermont Energy
Investment Corporation)

Eileen Simollardes
Vermont Gas Systems, Inc.
85 Swift Street
South Burlington, VT 05403
esimollardes@vermontgas.com

(for Vermont Gas
Systems, Inc.)

Jonathan Slason
RSG, Inc.
55 Railroad Row
White River Junction, VT 05001
jonathan.slason@rsginc.com

(for RSG, Inc.)

Darren Springer
City of Burlington Electric Department
585 Pine Street
Burlington, VT 05401
dspringer@burlingtonelectric.com

(for City of Burlington
Electric Department)

Gabrielle Stebbins
Energy Futures Group, Inc.
PO Box 587
Hinesburg, VT 05461
gstebbins@energyfuturesgroup.com

(for Energy Futures
Group, Inc.)

Melissa Stevens
Green Mountain Power Corporation
2152 Post Road
Rutland, VT 05701
melissa.stevens@greenmountainpower.com

(for Green Mountain
Power Corporation)

Jared Ulmer
Vermont Department of Health
108 Cherry Street
Burlington, VT 05402
Jared.Ulmer@vermont.gov

(for Vermont
Department of Health)

Matthew J. Walker
Efficiency Vermont-Vermont Energy Investment Corporation
128 Lakeside Avenue, Suite 401
Burlington, VT 05401
mjwalker@veic.org

(for Efficiency Vermont
- Vermont Energy
Investment Corporation)

Allison Bates Wannop
Vermont Department of Public Service
112 State Street
Montpelier, VT 05620-2601
allison.wannop@vermont.gov

(for Vermont
Department of Public
Service)

David C. Westman
Efficiency Vermont - Vermont Energy Investment Corporation
128 Lakeside Avenue, Suite 401
Burlington, VT 05401
dwestman@veic.org

(for Efficiency Vermont
- Vermont Energy
Investment Corporation)

Michael Wickenden
446 Tenney Hill Road
Hyde Park, VT 05655
michael.wickenden@gmail.com

Jenn Wood
Green Mountain Transit
101 Queen City Park Road
Burlington, VT 05401
jwood@ridegmt.com

(for Green Mountain
Transit)