

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

CASE NO. 23-2220-RULE

WORKSHOP ON CLEAN HEAT STANDARD
FUNDING STREAMS

December 19, 2023
1 p.m.

Via videoconference

Workshop held before the Vermont Public
Utility Commission, via videoconference, on December 19,
2023, beginning at 1 p.m.

P R E S E N T

COMMISSION MEMBERS: Anthony Z. Roisman, Chairman
Margaret Cheney
J. Riley Allen

STAFF: Thomas Knauer, Utilities Analyst

CAPITOL COURT REPORTERS, INC.
P.O. BOX 329
BURLINGTON, VERMONT 05402-0329
(802) 863-6067
EMAIL: info@capitolcourtreporters.com

P R E S E N T

1
2 Greg Morse, VGS
3 Jill Pfenning, VGS
4 Dylan Giambatista, VGS
5 Mary Bouchard, VGS
6 Luce Hillman, TAG
7 David Westman, EVT
8 Haley Roe, EVT
9 David Hillman, Pro Se
10 Thomas Weiss, Pro Se
11 Annette Smith, Vermonters for a Clean Environment
12 Henry Mauck, DPS
13 Ben Bolaski, DPS
14 Brian Cotterill, DPS
15 Melissa Bailey, DPS
16 Matt Cota, Meadow Hill, Northeast Hearth, Patio &
17 Barbecue Association, VFDA
18 Emma Ardington
19 Deirdre Morris, PUC
20 Dominic Gatti, PUC
21 Dylan Zwicky, Leonine Public Affairs
22 Wendy Crosier, Stowe Electric
23 Michael Lazorchak, Stowe Electric
24 Pike Porter, Equity Advisory Group
25 Marcus Jones, Living Buildings
Patty Larose, DPS
Tracy Collier, DPS
Callie Fishburn, Bennington County Regional Commission
Stuart Blood, Pro Se
Josh Diamond, Esq, VFDA
John Mandeville, Equity Committee
Ashley Adams, Pro Se
Susanna Lewis, Pro Se

1 MR. KNAUER: Good afternoon everyone.
2 This is a workshop in Public Utility Commission Case
3 No. 23-2220-RULE regarding the commission's design of
4 the potential Clean Heat Standard rule.

5 My name is Tom Knauer. I'm the policy
6 director at the commission, and I have been asked to
7 lead today's workshop. Also in attendance today from
8 the commission are Commissioner Allen, Commissioner
9 Cheney, and multiple staff members including our
10 Clean Heat team Deirdre Morris and Dominic Gatti who
11 is a clean energy innovator fellow from the U.S.
12 Department of Energy.

13 Chair Roisman will be joining us as
14 soon as he is able. And the other member of our
15 Clean Heat team, Tracy Myers, will be joining us in a
16 little while.

17 I'll begin with a few administrative
18 preliminaries. First, please know that I will not
19 mute anyone's microphone today. This means that you
20 should keep yourself on mute unless you're speaking,
21 that way we can minimize disruptive background
22 noises.

23 Second, as we work through the
24 workshop, if you would like to speak, please raise
25 your hand or use the raise hand function of

1 GoToMeeting, and I will call on people in the order
2 in which I see them. If I don't notice you, please
3 interrupt me, and that especially is true for people
4 who are joining us by telephone.

5 Third, today's workshop is being
6 transcribed by a court reporter. A transcript of
7 today's proceeding will be available in ePUC. In
8 order to help establish a clear record, please say
9 your name each time that you speak, and also please
10 refrain from talking over one another.

11 Having covered these preliminaries, .
12 I would like to begin by allowing attendees to
13 introduce themselves for the record. If anyone
14 intends to record today's workshop, please say so
15 when you introduce yourself.

16 I will begin with Mr. Weiss who is on
17 the phone.

18 MR. WEISS: Hello. This is Thomas
19 Weiss. I am listed as a party as a pro se person.
20 I'm a civil engineer who has experience in some of
21 the areas relating to this program that's being
22 developed.

23 MR. KNAUER: Thank you, Mr. Weiss. And
24 Wendy with Stowe Electric. Would you please
25 introduce yourself.

1 MS. CROSIER: My name's Wendy Crosier,
2 and I, like Dominic, U.S. Department of Energy, Clean
3 Energy Innovation fellow. I'm working with Stowe
4 Electric Department for a two-year deployment. Thank
5 you.

6 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. And now I will
7 call on people in the order that they appear on the
8 screen. Beginning with Mary Bouchard from Vermont
9 Gas.

10 MR. GIAMBATISTA: Hello. This is Dylan
11 Giambatista from VGS. I'm actually weighing in here.
12 I'm joined by Mary Bouchard, Jill Pfenning and Greg
13 Morse. Thank you.

14 MR. KNAUER: Great. Actually like that
15 cadence, if I call on someone and there are multiple
16 representatives from this agency or that entity,
17 please feel free to introduce everyone from your
18 shop, and that might save us a few minutes.

19 Next up we will go to Pike Porter.

20 MR. PORTER: I'm Pike Porter. I'm also
21 a member of the Equity Advisory Group.

22 MR. KNAUER: Hello. Haley Roe from
23 Efficiency Vermont.

24 MS. ROE: Hi. This is Haley Roe. I'm
25 an analyst with Efficiency Vermont's regulatory team.

1 Also joining me is David Westman, director of
2 regulatory affairs at Efficiency Vermont. And he
3 will be representing Efficiency Vermont in this
4 workshop. Thank you.

5 MR. KNAUER: Okay. David Hillman.

6 MR. HILLMAN: Hi. I'm David Hillman, a
7 participant in this, pro se.

8 MR. KNAUER: Welcome. Next up is
9 someone listed as Patty with no last name.

10 MS. LAROSE: Hi. I'm Patty Larose.
11 I'm with the Department of Public Service in the
12 accounting division.

13 MR. KNAUER: Okay. Welcome. Next up
14 Matt Cota.

15 MR. COTA: Hi. Matt Cota with Meadow
16 Hill. I'm a member of the CHS Technical Advisory
17 Group and the Equity Advisory Group.

18 MR. KNAUER: Welcome. So there is also
19 an entity here listed as fireflies.ainotetakermarcus.
20 If anyone is aware of who that is or who is
21 responsible for that, I guess now would be a great
22 time to speak up. I did see Annette Smith's chat
23 from 10 minutes ago saying it looks like it might be
24 a transcription service. If anyone else has any
25 other information, please let me know.

1 MR. JONES: I do. This is Marcus
2 Jones. Can you hear?

3 MR. KNAUER: Yes, I can.

4 MR. JONES: Sorry. That is mine, I
5 apologize. It's Marcus Jones with Living Buildings.
6 And I did not realize that was joining us. That
7 could be rejected as a note taking service. It
8 doesn't have to be part of the meeting.

9 MR. KNAUER: Okay. Thank you. Next is
10 Ben Bolaski from the Public Service Department.

11 MR. BOLASKI: Hi there. Ben Bolaski,
12 Public Service Department. Also joined by Brian
13 Cotterill, Henry Mauck and Melissa Bailey via phone.

14 MR. KNAUER: Okay. Thank you. Annette
15 Smith, you're next.

16 MS. SMITH: Annette Smith, Vermonters
17 for a Clean Environment. And I am audio recording.

18 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. John
19 Mandeville.

20 MR. MANDEVILLE: Hello. I'm John
21 Mandeville. I'm the Executive Director of the
22 Central Vermont Council on Aging, and I'm also a
23 member of the equity committee.

24 MR. KNAUER: And let's see. Josh
25 Diamond, you're next.

1 MS. DOANE: I'm Joshua Diamond. I'm
2 with the Dinse law firm. I'm here on behalf of the
3 Vermont Fuel Dealers Association.

4 MR. KNAUER: Welcome. Next, Callie
5 Fishburn.

6 MS. FISHBURN: Hi. Callie Fishburn,
7 Bennington County Regional Commission.

8 MR. KNAUER: Stuart Blood.

9 MR. BLOOD: I'm Stuart Blood. Private
10 citizen from Thetford. And pro se party, member.
11 Whatever. Party goer.

12 MR. KNAUER: Participant. All right.
13 Mike Lazorchak.

14 MR. LAZORCHAK: Yes, Michael Lazorchak.
15 Town of Stowe Electric Department. Legal/regulatory
16 affairs.

17 MR. KNAUER: Welcome. Tracy Collier.

18 MS. COLLIER: I'm Tracy Collier. I'm
19 with the Public Service Department. I'm just
20 listening in today.

21 MR. KNAUER: Okay. Welcome. Dylan
22 Zwicky.

23 MR. ZWICKY: Yes. Dylan Zwicky.
24 Leonine Public Affairs.

25 MR. KNAUER: Ashley Adams.

1 MS. ADAMS: I'm Ashley Adams. I'm a
2 Burlington resident, a pro se participant. And I own
3 a manufacturing business in South Burlington.

4 MR. KNAUER: Welcome. Susanna Lewis.

5 MS. LEWIS: I'm Susanna Lewis. I'm a
6 private citizen. I'm just watching.

7 MR. KNAUER: And Emma Ardington.

8 (No response)

9 MR. KNAUER: Okay. In case I missed
10 anyone, now would be a great time to introduce
11 yourself if you care to do so. And seeing none,
12 before we turn to the substance of the workshop,
13 Chair Roisman, did you have something you wanted to
14 say?

15 (No response)

16 MR. KNAUER: Tony, we can't hear you if
17 you're speaking right now, so you might need to make
18 sure that you've selected the right microphone.

19 (No response)

20 MR. KNAUER: All right. Well as the
21 Chair figures out the technical questions, I think we
22 will proceed. And I'm sure he will let us know when
23 he's able to speak and say anything that he would
24 like to say.

25 The purpose of today's workshop is to

1 discuss the topic of funding the commission's
2 administration of the potential Clean Heat Standard.
3 Pursuant to section 6(h) of Act 18, on or before
4 February 15 of 2024, the commission must report to
5 the Vermont General Assembly on suggested revenue
6 streams that may be used or created to fund the
7 commission's administration of the Clean Heat
8 Standard program, and shall include programs to
9 support market transformation such as work force
10 development, market uplift, and training that may be
11 administered by a third party.

12 On November 3 the commission issued an
13 order requesting comments on this topic. And
14 comments were filed by Vermonters for a Clean
15 Environment, Pike Porter, the Department of Public
16 Service, Vermont Gas, Thomas Weiss, Efficiency
17 Vermont, the Vermont Fuel Dealers Association, Donna
18 Lebin, and the Louise Diamond Committee to Protect
19 Next Generations.

20 MR. KNAUER: So my plan for this
21 workshop is to ask questions based on my review of
22 those written filings. I suspect that my colleagues
23 at the commission may have additional questions, as
24 may the workshop participants.

25 Before I begin with my first question,

1 does anyone have any questions about this approach to
2 the workshop?

3 (No response)

4 MR. KNAUER: Seeing none, I'm going to
5 -- and there is no particular order in which I
6 reviewed these other than the order that filings
7 appeared to me in ePUC.

8 So first, I have a question based on
9 the filing from Vermonters for a Clean Environment.
10 VCE recommends that funding sources must be equitable
11 and that the general fund is not an appropriate
12 short-term funding source.

13 So the question is, if the general fund
14 is not appropriate, does VCE have a recommendation
15 for what would be an appropriate short-term funding
16 source as the commission the department and --
17 continue to develop the proposed rule?

18 MS. SMITH: This is Annette Smith. I
19 don't have an easy answer to this funding source
20 question. But I did submit a recent report that
21 indicates that those responsible for a lot of carbon
22 emissions are the wealthiest. And so while I am no
23 expert on how to turn that information into a
24 potential source of funding, that was one idea that I
25 am offering.

1 I'll also note that in reviewing the
2 comments, I found Thomas Weiss's comment about using
3 a funding source that is intended to be declining, as
4 in the sale of fossil fuels, is not a good policy.

5 So I don't know if that answers your
6 question. But I did offer one idea which was to find
7 a way to get funding from those most responsible for
8 the emissions.

9 MR. KNAUER: Yeah. Thank you for that.
10 I guess do you think that would be appropriate for
11 both short term, say in the next fiscal year, as well
12 as the long term, or do you differentiate at all
13 between the two?

14 MS. SMITH: Well I think that one of
15 the problems with this whole construct is we don't
16 know what it's going to cost. And the complexity of
17 this -- the legislation is -- having attended the
18 previous workshop and the first Technical Advisory
19 Group meeting, it's evident to me that the
20 administration costs for this could be substantial.
21 And so it's hard -- it's really hard to come up with
22 a way to fund it without knowing what it's going to
23 cost. It's kind of a circular problem.

24 I will also note that the department
25 and others are suggesting that it come from a

1 surcharge on fuels. And as someone who is reliant on
2 propane and has no alternative, and is not a wealthy
3 person, I find that to be kind of a regressive type
4 of taxation. I don't have a way to get off propane
5 for the -- for technical reasons, and yet this
6 proposal to fund the Clean Heat Standard that would
7 enable other people to make changes would be coming
8 out of my pocket to some extent. So those are some
9 of my thoughts on it.

10 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. Next question
11 about Pike Porter's filing. Mr. Porter recommends an
12 increased vehicle registration fee on combustion
13 vehicles. So my question to Mr. Porter is, do you
14 see a link between the use of transportation and the
15 thermal sector?

16 MR. P. PORTER: Well I don't know why
17 we need to see a clear link between the two. Both of
18 these objectives are to reduce greenhouse gases. And
19 the largest polluters are in the transportation
20 section.

21 And I think my suggestion was not just
22 a fee on combustion engine registrations but also
23 some kind of tax or fee on other combustion systems
24 such as gas-powered lawnmowers, gas-powered leaf
25 blowers, et cetera, et cetera, power boats.

1 But I don't see -- I mean the need for
2 some kind of link between the two is arbitrary, and I
3 don't think it needs to be there.

4 MR. KNAUER: Okay. And just to make
5 sure I understand the proposal, would this be -- the
6 fee on -- the registration fee for vehicles, is that
7 a flat fee that everyone would pay? Or is that based
8 on some other factor such as miles driven per year or
9 something along those lines?

10 MR. P. PORTER: So I think that's all
11 up for conversation, discussion, obviously. I
12 proposed it as a flat fee. I agree with Ms. Smith's
13 comments that, you know, wealthiest among us are
14 creating most of the pollution. So I could see a fee
15 on, say, luxury vehicles, those over a certain
16 amount.

17 I could see it on -- a fee on new
18 purchases of new vehicles but not on used vehicles.
19 I think there are lots of ways of doing it, and I
20 don't want to, you know, propose one over the other
21 at this point in time.

22 MR. KNAUER: Okay. And one of the
23 other recommendations that you made, Mr. Porter, was
24 to use a proposed wealth tax on the richest
25 Vermonters to pay for the Clean Heat Standard. Was

1 there a specific wealth tax that you were referring
2 to? Or were you calling for the creation of
3 something new there?

4 MR. P. PORTER: So I believe that there
5 has been one proposed in the legislature. And I
6 don't know that that one proposed will go very far.
7 I don't have any more specific proposals than the
8 idea of a concept should be investigated.

9 MR. KNAUER: Okay. Before I move on,
10 does anyone else -- we have got 38 people here. I
11 want to make sure that everyone gets a chance to
12 participate who wants to.

13 Anyone else have comments based on the
14 filings from Vermonters for a Clean Environment or
15 from Mr. Porter? Ashley Adams raised her hand.

16 MS. ADAMS: Yeah. I have nothing more
17 specific except to second both really the concept of
18 a progressive means of funding and not a regressive
19 means of funding. I just think that's really, really
20 critical and we really, really need to get that
21 right. Whatever the details look like, I think, you
22 know, there probably are a lot of options out there
23 beyond, you know, maybe beyond what was expressed
24 today. But the concept of it being a progressive
25 means of funding I just think is really critical.

1 Thank you.

2 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. And just so
3 people are aware, Chair Roisman has been able to join
4 us by phone. I believe he is probably Caller 6. I
5 see that Henry Mauck from the department has raised
6 his hand. So please go ahead. You're on mute.

7 MR. MAUCK: Thank you. Sorry about
8 that. I just wanted to clarify something that I
9 think I heard in an earlier comment. Just that the
10 department is not in favor of a surcharge. And we
11 mentioned in our comments that employing a surcharge
12 is not the best way to go about funding the programs.

13 MR. KNAUER: Pike Porter. Please go
14 ahead.

15 MR. P. PORTER: Yeah. I didn't speak
16 specifically about a surcharge, but I would agree
17 with that comment, that that's a regressive tax, and
18 I wouldn't be in favor of that as well.

19 MR. KNAUER: So it seems like a great
20 segue because my next set of questions has to do with
21 the department's filing.

22 So the department suggested that the
23 general fund remains the best short-term funding
24 source to cover the work of the commission and the
25 department related to the development of the Clean

1 Heat Standard rule. The department also suggested
2 that a long-term funding mechanism for the Clean Heat
3 Standard should wait so that it can be considered in
4 tandem with the overall policy.

5 Is it a logical inference that the
6 department is suggesting a statutory change that
7 would delay the commission's funding report which is
8 currently due to be filed February 15 of next year?

9 MR. MAUCK: Thanks for the question.
10 Well first of all, regarding the use of the general
11 fund, the department thinks it's an appropriate
12 mechanism for funding the work in the near term
13 before any rules are adopted into law by the
14 legislature in 2025. I can speak for the
15 department's budget, and the way that its work is
16 funded through the regulated entities that it
17 provides oversight to now, does not include the
18 obligated parties be included in this bill.

19 So I think in the near term for -- also
20 for transparency sake, the general fund is an
21 important thing to consider for funding the work of
22 the department and the commission. But then if it is
23 adopted by the legislature, a long-term funding
24 mechanism would potentially involve a closer
25 relationship between the work of the obligated

1 parties in the market and the costs of oversight.

2 So I don't believe we are necessarily
3 saying that we would have to delay the report to the
4 legislature. Just that, as has been mentioned, there
5 is a lot of things to see in terms of overall costs
6 of the work that needs to be done, the costs of
7 market transformations, the potential within the
8 state to implement such a plan, and a lot of that
9 depends on the thermal potential study that the
10 department is working on right now.

11 So yes, I think the general fund is
12 appropriate for the short term and then in longer
13 term finding something that will closely correspond
14 from the obligated parties to the work of oversight
15 which is similar to how the department's budget is
16 made up at the moment, between the utilities that it
17 provides oversight to, and the revenues that they
18 create.

19 MR. KNAUER: All right. So let me ask
20 this in a different way. I believe I understand the
21 short-term funding position of the department. I
22 don't think there is any ambiguity there. But I also
23 think I'm hearing, I read, that we should wait on
24 making a long-term funding recommendation to the
25 legislature. Is that the department's position?

1 MR. MAUCK: Yes. Yeah, I think waiting
2 to get a better sense of overall costs of
3 implementing the program would be appropriate before
4 identifying a new revenue stream other than general
5 funds.

6 MR. KNAUER: All right. My read of the
7 legislative ask is that we deliver that answer on
8 February 15. So that's why I asked originally are
9 you suggesting that we or someone else seek a
10 legislative change to that ask.

11 MR. MAUCK: Yeah. It might be -- it
12 might be important to do so. Given that, yeah, among
13 other things, the thermal potential study isn't due
14 until the fall. So if that's the only way to achieve
15 that, then yes.

16 MR. KNAUER: Okay. And I see Dylan
17 Giambatista has his hand raised.

18 MR. GIAMBATISTA: Yes. Thank you.
19 This is Dylan Giambatista with VGS. With regard to
20 these questions, we read the department's comments
21 and we are reflecting on what we heard during the
22 legislative session, which this topic was debated.
23 And I will say that I think for the purposes of
24 providing an update there actually is a good amount
25 of update that could be provided with the February

1 report deadline, and that includes steps taken to
2 date during implementation, including these meetings
3 that we are in now.

4 With regard to funding sources, I'll
5 just point out that we are in the midst of state
6 fiscal year 2024. The legislature will return in
7 several weeks and begin building the budget for
8 fiscal year 2025. This process will continue into
9 fiscal '25, and it seems as though the legislature
10 will need to be -- that there will be a need for
11 continued appropriation. Currently funds came from
12 the general fund to support staff positions both at
13 the commission and the department. That process will
14 continue. So certainly there is an update there that
15 could be provided.

16 And with regard to the general fund,
17 you know, this is a program in development. It's a
18 proposed program. And state government is underway
19 working on the details of it. And so it would seem
20 that the general fund is, in fact, the appropriate
21 funding source but, of course, lawmakers will have
22 the final say on that.

23 I'll just leave my comments there for
24 now. However, I'll also just note based on the
25 comments by the Department of Public Service and the

1 filing that was made in the written comments, that
2 longer term it is true that through the course of
3 additional study, including the potential study, we
4 will become aware of the full scope of this program.
5 And in so doing, we will have a better sense of what
6 the funding need will be. But it may be that at this
7 point in February of 2024, the update relates to the
8 information you've so far worked on and sourced but
9 longer term it likely will be -- necessitate some
10 delay in describing or fully identifying a funding
11 source which would be based upon the need. And until
12 that process is concluded it might be challenging.

13 So we share those comments. They were
14 also submitted in our written comments and I
15 appreciate the opportunity to weigh in.

16 MR. KNAUER: David Hillman. Your hand
17 is up. We can't hear you.

18 MR. HILLMAN: I think I share the same
19 comments that we just heard from Vermont Gas. I
20 think number one is, we don't have an option to not
21 provide this report. It's part of the statute. So
22 to your comment, Tom, if you don't want to do that,
23 then you've got to get the statute changed, I would
24 assume. And I don't think that's the way you want to
25 go.

1 And I think it's really important to
2 give the legislature as much information as possible
3 as soon as possible knowing that this process is
4 going to really evolve over time. And if you look at
5 any other kind of like big, major project, say you've
6 got to build a huge new building, you don't have all
7 the details down. But one of the first questions
8 always asked is, how much is it going to cost. And
9 so I think this group, this commission, has to come
10 up with, you know, with a cost based on, you know,
11 you can make assumptions and state those assumptions
12 as to how the cost is derived using good financial
13 and engineering judgment so that you can provide the
14 legislature information as to where this thing is
15 going. You don't want to hit them blind side a year
16 later when it's too late to change course. Thank
17 you.

18 MR. KNAUER: Just reviewing my notes.
19 Turning next, I had a question for Vermont Gas.
20 Vermont Gas in its written comments recommended that
21 the costs and the benefits of various funding options
22 be considered.

23 Does Vermont Gas have any specific
24 inputs on costs or benefits of the funding options
25 that it noted in its comments, including continued

1 state appropriation, commission billing models, fee
2 models or registration processes?

3 MR. GIAMBATISTA: Yeah. Thank you for
4 the question. Dylan Giambatista with VGS. You know
5 the comments that we set out were to make note there
6 are multiple options available to fund a program
7 that's in development. Right now, as we have just
8 discussed, there isn't a complete sense of what the
9 need will be or what it will take to support the
10 program beyond the development into implementation
11 and continued use.

12 So we provided these more as an option
13 list. And of course, in the order that went out
14 there was reference made to a surcharge which was
15 part of a white paper that had been published on this
16 topic. And, you know, our understanding or our read
17 of what that surcharge represented in that particular
18 white paper was an example, but maybe not a specific
19 recommendation.

20 And so our comments are to point out
21 that there are maybe multiple funding streams
22 available for this purpose. You know, I would leave
23 to the wisdom of this process what the best ones are.
24 And ultimately, the general assembly, when they
25 review and approve final rules for the program, will

1 need to determine what the best use is both in terms
2 of ongoing programmatic support, which for ongoing
3 implementation means involve general fund
4 appropriation for the state offices working on this
5 and maintaining it, but it may involve other sources
6 as well to continue ongoing funding.

7 So we put those forward more as
8 potentials for discussion. But at this time we don't
9 have a recommendation because, as we have already
10 described, we don't yet know the scope of the need.
11 Until that program process is laid out, you know, we
12 leave these as options for discussion.

13 MR. KNAUER: All right. And I wanted
14 to focus on the Vermont Gas comment recommended that
15 we look at costs and benefits of various options put
16 forth. It sounds like you don't have, you know, the
17 cost or benefit analysis on those -- on your notebook
18 in front of you right now. But wondering if you or
19 Vermont Gas have suggestions on additional process
20 for the commission to undertake, to identify those
21 costs and benefits that you recommend that we
22 analyze.

23 MR. GIAMBATISTA: Yes. Thank you for
24 the question. Dylan Giambatista at VGS. I would say
25 that our understanding of this Act and its intent is

1 to create a process to cost effectively reduce
2 greenhouse gas emissions, something that we are
3 committed to doing as an obligated party and a
4 thermal energy services provider.

5 In terms of a process for identifying
6 them, certainly the potential study will be an
7 important piece of the body of work that informs
8 what's possible. I know that process will take time.
9 So at the risk of punting on that, I also would say
10 that certainly the Technical Advisory Group has very
11 important statutory roles that have been defined that
12 outline some of their roles in examining measures,
13 understanding what their costs and benefits are both
14 in terms of greenhouse gas reductions and
15 effectiveness to do so, but also the cost.

16 And then, of course, we have an Equity
17 Advisory Group which also has an important role in
18 weighing in on some of that. So we have already
19 heard today comments from members of different groups
20 working on this. And I think that their perspective
21 should be weighed closely as we consider what
22 constitutes an equitable solution, what is cost
23 effective, what is regressive, some of the words that
24 have been thrown around today.

25 So we would certainly look forward to

1 participating in those processes as is appropriate,
2 as those groups get started, adopt procedures and
3 work through that process. So we will look forward
4 to tuning in then. And certainly happy to provide
5 written comment as this process continues. Thank
6 you.

7 MR. KNAUER: All right. Any other
8 folks have any other questions or discussion
9 regarding Vermont Gas's written filing?

10 (No response)

11 MR. KNAUER: All right. I'm going to
12 move along to questions that I came up with after
13 reviewing the filing of Efficiency Vermont.

14 As part of the filing, Efficiency
15 Vermont suggested that the market transformation
16 activities should include education and training,
17 including energy code training and assistance,
18 technology demonstrations, work force development,
19 which could include trainings and mentorship models
20 for contractors and equipment suppliers, and
21 financing, education and analysis.

22 So this is kind of a question to the
23 group, anyone who would like to weigh in. Do
24 workshop -- do workshop participants believe that
25 this list is comprehensive of the types of market

1 transformation activities contemplated in Act 18?

2 I guess go ahead, David Hillman.

3 MR. HILLMAN: Yes. I guess when I read
4 through that one thing that I didn't see -- I didn't
5 know if this was part of it, but it needs to be
6 addressed somewhere is what is going to be the cost
7 associated and scope for any kind of changes to
8 infrastructure to support this transition.

9 MR. KNAUER: Mr. Hillman, do you view
10 that as part of market transformation work or falling
11 in some other category of cost?

12 MR. HILLMAN: Well I do, because as you
13 change market you're going to need to have a
14 different -- a much different kind of infrastructure
15 to support it. And I think that's going to be
16 something that contributes cost as well as impact on
17 schedule and ability to, you know, meet the deadlines
18 we have got in the statute.

19 MR. KNAUER: Anyone else have a take on
20 whether the list of market transformation activities
21 from the Efficiency Vermont filing is comprehensive,
22 or whether there are additional activities that
23 should go there. Dave Westman, please go ahead.

24 MR. WESTMAN: Thank you, Tom. Dave
25 Westman for Efficiency Vermont. I'm glad that you

1 had the opportunity to review our comments and are
2 asking this line of questioning. I think it's really
3 important for context of the participants at the
4 workshop today.

5 I think it's just worth explaining that
6 we tried to put the full list of current market
7 development work that Efficiency Vermont does in the
8 thermal efficiency sector into our filing as a point
9 of record because those are all things that
10 Efficiency Vermont is funded to do today largely out
11 of our development and support service budget. Just
12 as a part of the budget that doesn't actually include
13 direct incentives to customers, and so as a result,
14 it often gets undervalued in terms of discussions
15 around how to pay for it essentially. And yet, we
16 find that that work is absolutely critical for
17 building the type of -- to Mr. Hillman's point,
18 infrastructure. You can call it soft infrastructure
19 if you would like. Things like the Efficiency
20 Excellence Network which is a group of over 400
21 contractors across the state who are all trained in
22 how to do efficiency projects that are repeatedly,
23 you know, given opportunities to participate in
24 Efficiency Vermont hosted training programs as well
25 as the FTA training programs, resource training

1 programs, a host of sort of our partner
2 organizations.

3 All of those get funded either out of
4 grants or this development and support service. It's
5 not funded directly out of the resource acquisition
6 or incentive or technical services funds. So we
7 think it's critically important.

8 Lastly, I'll say, you know, I think
9 that our comments are reflective specifically for
10 infrastructure related to homes and businesses, and
11 the type of market development that's needed there.
12 So disclaimer, I guess, on our point is making no
13 representation of the type of either work force
14 development or market development that would be
15 needed for the other side of the Clean Heat Standard
16 which is what we talked about on Friday, which is the
17 clean fuels. You know, we have done some of that
18 with biofuels, especially around modern wood heat and
19 clean wood heat.

20 You know, so certainly there is a
21 little bit of that, but I think that would only be
22 scratching the surface of what's probably needed for
23 clean fuels delivery. Thank you.

24 MR. KNAUER: Following up another
25 question on the Efficiency Vermont filing. You

1 suggest that market transformation costs could
2 feature more prominently in the January 2025 reports
3 because more information will be known at that time.
4 And I'm going to ask you, but I think this question
5 probably pertains to multiple people who have
6 recommended, you know, kind of delaying a
7 recommendation until '25.

8 When Efficiency Vermont mentions that
9 these costs could feature more prominently, are you
10 talking about the magnitude of the costs or the
11 funding mechanism for the costs? To me those are
12 possibly two different questions.

13 MR. WESTMAN: I think those are two
14 different questions, Tom. Sorry. Dave Westman for
15 Efficiency Vermont again.

16 Yeah. I think they are two different
17 questions, but I think the recommendation to move
18 those into January is on the basis of a lot more of
19 this hearing and the DDA proceeding playing out so
20 that we have a better sense of what's needed in the
21 state to implement the Clean Heat Standard.

22 In a sense, I think I was hearing what
23 Mr. Mauck was saying of the department's plan to have
24 the potential study completed in the second half of
25 2024. And similar in the parallel proceeding for an

1 appointment of the DDA, I would anticipate that the
2 DDA costs would have to include some amount of market
3 development work in order to achieve the scope of
4 work that gets assigned to it.

5 And so if that DDA responsibility
6 includes market development, that would be a cost
7 that's known in time for that January report to the
8 legislature. So to the extent that that is helpful
9 for the commission to think about in the context of
10 how much would it be and where would it come from, I
11 think that DDA responsibility would probably be
12 pretty important to understand.

13 Now where it comes from, could be, I
14 mean, in the short term, you know, the Clean Heat
15 Standard is not paying for any market development
16 work. And so I don't really understand or sort of
17 find value in the legislature being informed on where
18 the funding should come from because there is no
19 market development work occurring under the Clean
20 Heat Standard right now. And if there is, it might
21 be through a private entity raising projects and
22 business support of their own, in which case that may
23 not need to have external interventions.

24 MR. KNAUER: Is it fair to say, Dave,
25 you're recommending that the commission not suggest a

1 where to the legislature until it knows the answer to
2 how much. Is that a fair characterization of what
3 you've said?

4 MR. WESTMAN: I think that's a fair
5 characterization on this issue of market development.
6 Yes.

7 MR. KNAUER: Okay. And so my read of
8 the legislation is we have to provide recommendations
9 on how to fund the commission and the department.
10 That's, you know, one budget that we need to fund.
11 The other would be the market transformation
12 activities. So you just said it's appropriate for
13 the market transformation part. How about for the
14 commission and department part?

15 MR. WESTMAN: Candidly, Efficiency
16 Vermont does not have a perspective on that point of
17 view. It's an administrative matter between state
18 agencies.

19 MR. KNAUER: Okay. That's fair. Dylan
20 Giambatista. You're up next, and then Chair Roisman.

21 MR. GIAMBATISTA: Sure. Thank you.
22 Dylan Giambatista from VGS. Just one thing that I
23 was hoping for some clarity on is with regard to this
24 position, that market development and market uplift,
25 that were to generate credits, they will be due to

1 the DDA. One thing that I've not been clear on in
2 the written comments that have been received to date
3 is whether or not market uplift performed by say
4 other obligated parties or other businesses would be
5 something that would be creditable. And if those
6 credit values could be realized for obligated parties
7 or other entities. Because, you know, that's an
8 important piece potentially of this credit market.
9 And I'm just not clear at this stage based upon the
10 comments I've heard. So that's just an open-ended
11 question.

12 MR. KNAUER: I certainly don't have the
13 answer to that. It's a great point, great question,
14 that I think we will need to clarify in the next 12
15 months. I don't know whether that's within the scope
16 of today's workshop or whether it goes more to the
17 credit ownership or allocation question or, you know,
18 credit values.

19 You know, there are multiple places
20 where we could discuss that, but it was raised in
21 today's workshop. So if anyone who is here would
22 like to respond to that question, please go ahead.

23 (No response)

24 MR. KNAUER: No one's jumping. So I
25 guess, Chair Roisman, you were -- Dave, please go

1 ahead.

2 MR. WESTMAN: I don't want to interrupt
3 the Chair. In response to that very quick point I'll
4 just say I think market development wouldn't -- in
5 the scope of activities that would be eligible for
6 credit formation, would really have to be well
7 defined. I think putting a television ad on the
8 screen may not rise to that level. But having a, you
9 know, multi-prong training program might. But I
10 really couldn't say more on that. I haven't really
11 thought about it, but I think it's a good question
12 that Dylan's raised, for sure.

13 MR. KNAUER: Chair Roisman. Are you
14 able to join?

15 CHAIR ROISMAN: Let's see. Can you
16 hear me?

17 MR. KNAUER: Yes.

18 CHAIR ROISMAN: Miracle of IT. I had a
19 question. I guess it goes to Dave. This concept of
20 market development, the terms in the statute is
21 revenue streams that may be used or created to
22 support market transformation such as work force
23 development, market uplift, and training that may be
24 administered by a third party.

25 I didn't hear you speak much about the

1 work force development issue. And my question is,
2 what's the scope of what you or any of the
3 participants think that terminology means? Let me
4 give you an example. Let's assume that a study shows
5 that if you want to get more people to do
6 weatherization work, the installation of
7 weatherization, you need to get the hourly rate up to
8 \$45 an hour, and the current going rate is
9 hypothetically \$25 an hour.

10 Do you think that the funding to get
11 those rates paid, assuming the market isn't prepared
12 to do it on its own, falls into the scope of what
13 this funding proposal with the legislature wants on
14 the 15th of 2024 is covered?

15 MR. WESTMAN: I'll respond directly to
16 that. Thank you, Chair for your question. It's a
17 really good point. And candidly, as Efficiency
18 Vermont has been implementing many weatherization
19 projects since ARPA funds have become available, you
20 know, what we are finding is that it's really hard to
21 give grant funding to contractors directly and --
22 especially federal grants in particular because of
23 rules associated with that for both income
24 eligibility and the like.

25 Incentives are largely directed at

1 customers directly, homeowners directly, landlords
2 given incentives directly if their tenants meet
3 certain income eligibility. So the only way to
4 create a signal under that environment is to have an
5 exceptionally strong demand to demonstrate to
6 contractors, to pay more, retain more work force, you
7 know, these are the issues that, you know, I know the
8 commission is very familiar with because we have been
9 addressing them and dealing with them for a long
10 time.

11 I will say that, you know, there is
12 something unique about the Clean Heat Standard and
13 this allocation, you know, this formation of a
14 market-based approach. Because there wouldn't be
15 those types of restrictions on, you know, who can you
16 incentivize in order to, you know, effectively do
17 more work.

18 You know, you can easily see the
19 situation where not only is a DDA paying, you know, a
20 very high percentage of the total cost of a
21 weatherization project in order to move that project
22 forward, but you could also see, you know, very
23 comprehensive incentives going to the work force to
24 speak to exactly what you're addressing, Chairman,
25 which is essentially how do you get a contractor to

1 pay attention to what is, you know, effectively a
2 policy need that is also being driven by market
3 support.

4 So I think all of that could fall under
5 market development, but only if the cost of the
6 credits themselves don't end up being valuable enough
7 that you can use them for that purpose.

8 And so for that reason, you know, I
9 mentioned this on Friday, but I think a lot of roads
10 and a lot of the discussions that we are having here
11 are in great need of further information about what
12 the market for credits looks like and what this
13 particular rule would establish as far as what that,
14 you know, multilateral and bilateral market are.
15 Because if there is no value to that market and the
16 purchase and sale of credits, then you're just
17 dealing with a totally different system.

18 But the point of the Clean Heat
19 Standard is, as I read it, was that the market
20 formation is meant to drive a lot of the incremental
21 growth in this sector. And so to that point, you
22 know, we ought to be talking about how's the market
23 structured, how are credits bought and sold, under
24 what platform are they bought and sold. And then
25 obviously the -- what Dylan was speaking of, the hard

1 work that's ahead at the TAG to identify how many
2 credits are formed in a project, and then what does
3 credit ownership look like.

4 So, you know, these -- this is a very
5 complicated web. But yeah, so I'll finish by just
6 saying, you know, and reiterating that if that market
7 doesn't create a value in the credits, then that type
8 of market support like what you were referring to,
9 contractor incentives, in effect, would have to be
10 paid for elsewhere because they are rarely sort of
11 considered part of the incentive package.

12 CHAIR ROISMAN: Well I appreciate all
13 of that, Mr. Westman. But frankly, I'm not sure
14 you've answered my question. My question was
15 significantly simpler than that.

16 We have this mandate by the 15th of
17 February to report on the funding sources and
18 streams, not the amount, not even which stream should
19 be contributing more to it, but which funding sources
20 should we be looking to. So the question of which
21 funding source we should be looking to depends upon
22 what it is we are trying to fund.

23 So if we don't have enough workers to
24 do all the implementation of the Clean Heat measures,
25 whether it's weatherization or heat pumps or pellet

1 stoves or whatever, then we don't get to the goal
2 that we want.

3 So my question was only is it part of
4 what the legislature expects to see a description of
5 the funding streams that we think should be used to
6 meet the work force development which would include
7 not only wages but maybe education, how many new
8 courses need to be offered at the Vermont University
9 or how many new special training programs at the high
10 school level should exist. Are those part of what we
11 should be addressing for funding to apply to, without
12 deciding in the report, which funding source is the
13 right one?

14 I'm just trying to get a picture of
15 what you perceive and others perceive as the scope.
16 Does the scope include all of that? Is that part of
17 what the legislature wants to hear from us as you
18 read it?

19 MR. WESTMAN: I think the scope would
20 be inclusive of all of those, yes. I think all of
21 the -- the intent of the Clean Heat Standard is to
22 grow the total market. And so Efficiency Vermont's
23 perspective on market development is that it's not --
24 it's not a one single thing that you can do to do it.
25 It's an all-of-the-above approach. Yes, to training

1 academies, yes to work force, yes to apprenticeship
2 programs, yes to technical and Community College,
3 professorships, sponsored, you know, specifically
4 around, you know, the thermal sector. Yes to all of
5 those things.

6 CHAIR ROISMAN: All right. So just to
7 follow on. Assuming that what Mr. Westman has just
8 said, is, in fact, the scope, and I think -- do we
9 have anybody in the session today who is
10 representative of educational institutions, training
11 programs, apprenticeship programs, contractors, who
12 could speak to the question of what they think is
13 needed and what kind of funding they think should be
14 obtained? Not dollar amount, but sources, to build
15 that work force and make it available once we have
16 the demand for the hardware?

17 MR. WESTMAN: I see Matt's camera lit
18 up, and I would invite Matt to jump in. He is a
19 partner that Efficiency Vermont works with on
20 training. Certainly first to come to mind for this
21 one.

22 MR. COTA: Hmm. Thank you, David.
23 Yeah. Heating Cooling Contractors of Vermont,
24 Vermont Fuel Dealers Association trains licensed and
25 certified technicians, heating technicians mostly, on

1 combustion, but also on heat pumps.

2 The problem is not the lack of
3 training, in our opinion. We provide it, and we have
4 plenty of capacity. It's lack of people. And I
5 don't contemplate that the Clean Heat Standard can
6 resolve our demographic challenges. And that's not
7 an issue just with us. It's with many different
8 industries. I don't have a solution.

9 MR. KNAUER: Anyone else have a
10 response to Chair Roisman's question?

11 MR. P. PORTER: Yes, my hand is up
12 because I had a response. And Matt Cota, more
13 articulately than I could, I think expressed my
14 concern. We don't have a work force. So even if we
15 develop a clear work force development plan, we don't
16 have the individuals, we don't have the work force to
17 implement it.

18 I'm a representative of the Equity
19 Advisory Group as a representative of rental property
20 owners. And I've looked at projects through
21 Efficiency Vermont and weatherization, and the
22 waiting list for those programs is two years
23 depending on the income of your tenants. I went
24 ahead and just did weatherization myself because I
25 couldn't wait two years. There is a backlog because

1 there just isn't the work force out there.

2 Speaking -- going back to my original
3 suggestion, my eyes have glazed over on some of this
4 discussion. It doesn't have to be that complicated.
5 We already have a registration fee imposed on
6 automobiles. I think to the tune of \$2 to effect air
7 quality control. We could just add an additional fee
8 on to vehicle registration to generate an income for
9 the Clean Heat Standard.

10 MR. KNAUER: Would anyone like to
11 respond to -- respond to or address Mr. Porter's
12 suggestion regarding the vehicle registration fee?

13 (No response)

14 MR. KNAUER: No. David Hillman has had
15 his hand up for several minutes. So go ahead, Mr.
16 Hillman.

17 MR. HILLMAN: Sure. I guess this is
18 more of a question than a comment. I think I've
19 heard talk about, you know, some -- introducing some
20 delay in the report for the 15th because we won't
21 have enough information for costs. But, you know,
22 after this in section 6(h) as we are addressing right
23 now is paragraph (I) which is a check back reports.
24 And that specifically asks for both on February 15
25 and January 15, 2024, 2025, you know, impacts on

1 customers, on their rates, and fuel bills and
2 spending on the energy sector. And it goes on and
3 on.

4 So, you know, if you're going to want
5 to meet the statute, and I don't think you have an
6 option of not meeting it, this has to be part of the
7 discussion is we have to work towards some costs. I
8 think we all understand, you make sure in your report
9 that it's understood, these are preliminary, they are
10 draft, but you do your best effort to get in front of
11 the legislature what they have asked for. Thank you.

12 MR. KNAUER: Thank you, Mr. Hillman.

13 So my next question goes to the Vermont Fuel Dealers'
14 filing. And I think like an estimate for Vermonters
15 for a Clean Environment, VFDA suggested that
16 surcharges, fees, or other taxes on heating fuels are
17 viewed as being a regressive tax. And VFDA also
18 suggested that policy makers should have an estimated
19 cost for the administration of the Clean Heat
20 Standard before having to identify revenue sources.

21 So my question, and if -- I may have
22 already asked this, but I'm going to ask it again,
23 just because I really want to develop a clear record
24 on this. Why does the magnitude of the cost
25 implicate the source of the revenues?

1 So I'll turn to you, first, Matt, and
2 then open up the floor.

3 MR. COTA: To answer your question,
4 just to preface it with a clarification which is it
5 was my understanding that what was required on the
6 15th of February by the legislature is understanding
7 of what it would take to not build a rule, which is
8 what we are budgeted for to do in the next year, but
9 implement a Clean Heat credit marketplace to stand up
10 the compliance and enforcement mechanism so that this
11 program works for the duration if it is approved by
12 law. That was my understanding. If I'm incorrect,
13 then please clarify that.

14 So the legislature has to make a
15 decision based on the rule that's being created over
16 the next 11 months on whether or not to implement a
17 Clean Heat Standard or whether to file it in a
18 recycling bin and never be spoken of again. In order
19 for them to make that decision, they have to know
20 what those costs are to implement it because we know
21 there is going to be a cost to continue to purchase
22 fossil fuel for heat. That's clear. The consumer
23 will pay more under Clean Heat Standard for heating
24 oil, kerosene, natural gas, and propane. How much
25 more beyond that cost of the credits which will be

1 established in the rule, for enforcement, I think is
2 critical before the legislature to make a decision on
3 whether or not to approve a Clean Heat Standard and
4 implement it into law.

5 So for instance, if the projections
6 that we have received from the Secretary of Agency of
7 Natural Resources that it will cost 70 cents a gallon
8 more for heating oil, for a Clean Heat credit, under
9 Clean Heat credit system, what is the cost on top of
10 that 70 cents a gallon to enforce it? 30 cents? 20
11 cents? 10 cents? We don't know. We don't know
12 because we don't know what the scope of that
13 enforcement mechanism will be. We don't know because
14 I don't think the PUC has a good idea of how many
15 obligated parties are out there or what it would take
16 to encourage them to register, to file, and to ensure
17 that everyone is treated fairly and equitably that is
18 an obligated party. We don't know these answers yet.

19 What I think -- and this is why our
20 lawyer -- my lawyer's on the call, because I'm not
21 used to these proceedings, so I'm just going to say
22 it in plain English. What I think this is, why I
23 think it was put in Act 18 to S5, was so that the PUC
24 would be required to report back to the legislature
25 that the way to fund this program, the way to fund

1 this enforcement of this, is to create a new fee or a
2 tax on fuel suppliers, allowing them to use that as
3 the reason for implementing an increase in the fuel
4 tax or another type of tax in order to pay for the
5 enforcement and compliance of this program.

6 I think that's what we are here for. I
7 think we are here to give them permission in order to
8 do that. I don't think it's right. I don't think we
9 should do that. I don't think the PUC should do
10 that. But that's what we are being set up for here
11 is to give the legislature permission to pass a new
12 tax on heating fuels that they are justifying it as
13 required in order to implement the Clean Heat
14 Standard. What that number is, 2 cents, 3 cents, 10
15 cents a gallon, I think it's important that we know.

16 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. I agree with
17 you that there are lots of unknowns still to be
18 developed. But I want to go back to my initial
19 question.

20 We don't know the magnitude of those
21 enforcement costs, of compliance costs, of the cost
22 of credit. We don't know any of that. But the
23 question is, does the magnitude of the cost of the
24 commission's administration, why do we need to know
25 that magnitude before we talk about streams of

1 funding? Sources of funding?

2 MR. COTA: Well if the magnitude is so
3 large that it would, in fact, negate any positives,
4 if it's going to cost 70 cents a gallon to enforce
5 this program, that's a large number. But if it is,
6 then the legislature will clearly say well that's not
7 going to work. Let's move on to a totally different
8 way to reduce thermal emissions.

9 So until we have -- because we know
10 where the source is going to come from. It's going
11 to come from the obligated parties. That's clear.
12 It's not going to come from -- I like your idea,
13 Pike, but it's not going to come from a fee on
14 transportation. It's not going to come from the
15 electric utility, although it could.

16 The legislature will likely -- it's
17 only the legislature -- it's not the PUC, only the
18 legislature can assess a fee or a tax on heating oil,
19 propane, and kerosene. And they are waiting on your
20 recommendation on what that source should be, and I
21 think you should tell them what it will take, if you
22 want us to implement this program and run a
23 successful Clean Heat Standard in 2026, we need to
24 tell you now or by the very latest before November of
25 2024, what it will cost just to enforce it, never

1 mind what it will cost consumers who continue to use
2 heating oil, propane and kerosene in order to pay for
3 these credits.

4 MR. KNAUER: So to my way of reading
5 the statute, you know, I go back to what David
6 Hillman said a few minutes ago, is we have a
7 different report under section 6(I) that directs the
8 PUC to report on the magnitude. And this is in a
9 different section where they asked to -- us to make
10 recommendations on sources. So I know I keep asking
11 you, Matt, and this is a question to everyone. You
12 know, let's recognize that we have two different
13 reporting requirements. And today's workshop is
14 focused on what are viable funding stream options.
15 That's really what I want to hear back from people
16 on.

17 So I've put that out there. And I know
18 that Pike Porter has been waiting for several minutes
19 to speak.

20 MR. P. PORTER: So Tom, to answer your
21 question, I don't think we need to understand the
22 magnitude. I think we can move forward. I'm not
23 sure quite what our goals here are today, but if it
24 is a goal to have recommendations, maybe we can
25 discuss that one of the recommendations is that there

1 is not a fuel charge or fuel surcharge, as Matt Cota
2 is suggesting, that is inevitable.

3 As a member of the Equity Advisory
4 Group, I think that must be put aside as not a viable
5 option because, as Annette Smith and others have
6 said, it is a regressive tax. I mean the folks who
7 will be paying a fuel surcharge are the folks who
8 cannot afford it. So we have to find another option.
9 And maybe this group here can decide as a group that
10 we are going to recommend that, no, we cannot have a
11 fuel surcharge -- excuse me, a fuel surcharge, as an
12 option for funding on this. Thanks.

13 MR. KNAUER: Thank you, Mr. Porter.

14 Chair Roisman raised his hand.

15 CHAIR ROISMAN: Well I think the point
16 that Mr. Cota is making and Mr. Porter are making is
17 an extremely important one, who is going to bear the
18 cost. But we should not ignore who is going to get
19 the benefit.

20 As an electric vehicle driver, I
21 watched my cost of transportation drop dramatically
22 as I pay 14 cents a kilowatthour that gets me some
23 significant mileage versus what I was paying when I
24 had to go to the gas station and pay three or four
25 dollars a gallon for gasoline. So every person who

1 gets a Clean Heat improvement measure,
2 weatherization, fuel switching, whatever it may be,
3 is likely to see a savings.

4 So we should not look at this as though
5 it's all cost and no benefit. That doesn't mean that
6 we should necessarily say well then we are going to
7 continue to charge the fuel users more money, because
8 that may not be the right answer. I just don't want
9 us to assume that whatever this cost is, and remember
10 the only cost we are talking about here is everything
11 except the hardware, we are not talking about the
12 piece of equipment. We are not talking about its
13 cost of installation. We are not talking about
14 weatherization costs. We are talking about at least
15 under (h), and Tom's point is very valid, (I) is
16 where we take a look at what the total program cost
17 is. (H) is where we look at the implementation cost,
18 and administrative cost, frankly, that is what the
19 commission and the department need to administer the
20 program, is going to be a small fraction.

21 The bigger number in the (h) report is
22 going to be the program to support market
23 transformation that are going to be the more
24 expensive item in (h). Even those are likely to be a
25 small fraction of what the total cost is going to be

1 if you imagine everyone in Vermont no longer using
2 fossil fuel for heat and being able to heat their
3 homes in a non-carbon-producing way.

4 So I just think we have to see it in a
5 broad context and not just as the cost without seeing
6 also the benefit.

7 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. Annette Smith,
8 you're up next followed by Ashley Adams.

9 MS. SMITH: Yes. Thank you for
10 pointing out that there are different reports
11 required for different costs. So this conversation
12 has been helpful, and I think that in the short term
13 and perhaps the long term, that the option that
14 should be given to the legislature is the general
15 fund, which will cause the legislators to have to
16 take some responsibility for what they have created.
17 And since there is a limited pool of money, funding
18 this program will need to probably take money away
19 from some other program, but I think that that's the
20 appropriate place to deal with it.

21 And I do agree with Matt Cota that the
22 setup does appear to be that there is no alternative
23 so we will get it from the people who buy fuels. And
24 I think that by recommending to the legislature that
25 the funding source be the general fund, it puts it

1 squarely back to them to be responsible for this
2 policy that they are proposing to create.

3 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. Ashley Adams.

4 MS. ADAMS: Yeah, hi. Just weighing in
5 and seconding or thirding or perhaps fourthing, the
6 idea that, you know, the last thing we want to do is
7 fund any of this on the backs of poor Vermonters who
8 cannot afford anything but fossil fuel heating
9 sources. Having grown up in rural Vermont, the
10 really -- the level of poverty that exists it's hard
11 to conceive of how folks are going to make the
12 transition. And I wonder if getting that off the
13 table, as one of you recommended, as maybe Mike
14 recommended, as a funding source is a good idea. I
15 certainly would support that.

16 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. Up next we
17 have Luce Hillman.

18 MS. HILLMAN: Hi. Good afternoon. I
19 was a little late joining the meeting, so I apologize
20 if you already talked about this, but I know Thomas
21 Weiss had comments. And he also mentioned two
22 sources; fuel tax or the general fund. It's really
23 the two options that we are talking about, and I
24 would have to agree that the general fund appears to
25 be -- to me to be the right answer. Because as we

1 look at this, even though the person speaking said
2 their gasoline went down and so they are paying less
3 to run their car, at some point I would like to have
4 some testimony from power companies to see what it's
5 going to cost to upgrade the grid and what does that
6 mean to our kilowatthour charge in the next 5 to 10
7 years so we understand what that means. Because I
8 know other states like Connecticut it's gone sky
9 high. So we need to understand, because that will
10 affect everybody right in Vermont.

11 So I would like to know more about that
12 as we investigate this. I'm also -- just want to
13 comment on the training that was said earlier. I
14 feel that should be general funded too. Let's look
15 at Vermont Tech offers some classes to our graduating
16 high school students free, free tuition. But you
17 have to commit to two years working in Vermont. I
18 mean there's some options like that that we should --
19 really should consider. So thank you very much.

20 MR. WEISS: This is Thomas Weiss. I
21 would like to join the queue, if I may.

22 MR. KNAUER: Please go ahead.

23 MR. WEISS: My first comment is
24 response to Chair Roisman's comparison of electricity
25 and fuel prices which I think is inappropriate.

1 Electricity, as you well know, is a heavily regulated
2 commodity with a heavily regulated price.

3 All of the alternative fuels that we
4 are talking about will be merely commodities, and
5 their prices will fluctuate the same way as fossil
6 fuel prices will. So switching my biodiesel -- I
7 gave this example last time. It's priced the same as
8 number 2 heating oil, fluctuates up and down just the
9 same way as heating oil.

10 My second comment in response to the
11 previous commenter whose name I did not catch, is
12 that my suggestion on a fuels tax was for an all-
13 fuels tax; wood, fossil, renewable, whatever the
14 source of the fuel is. It would all be taxed at a
15 commensurate rate. So it wouldn't -- I'm not
16 suggesting fossil fuels only. I was very clear, I
17 thought, in my comments, that it should not be based
18 on fossil fuels alone. Those are my comments.

19 MR. KNAUER: Thank you, Mr. Weiss.
20 Another question, this is not a question for Vermont
21 Fuel Dealers, but it is based on their filing. I did
22 appreciate making a concrete recommendation.

23 One of the recommendations was to use
24 noncompliance payments to pay for market
25 transformation activities. So I want to put that

1 concept out to the group and see if folks have a
2 reaction to it.

3 MR. P. PORTER: I think that can help
4 -- certainly help, but I don't think we can rely on
5 that. Ideally people are going to be in compliance.
6 If we are creating a system where we are relying on
7 noncompliance, that just sets up a system that's
8 bound to fail.

9 MR. KNAUER: Thank you, Mr. Porter.

10 MR. WEISS: This is Thomas Weiss again.

11 MR. KNAUER: Yes. Go ahead.

12 MR. WEISS: It's not clear to me why
13 there should be any noncompliance payment. I would
14 think it would be possible for an obligated party to
15 write into its annual plan that if it fails to meet
16 its annual plan shortly before the end of whatever
17 the annual period ends, would be paid to a default
18 delivery agent before the noncompliance payment is
19 levied.

20 MR. KNAUER: Yeah. I think time will
21 tell as to whether there will or will not be
22 noncompliance payments. My read of the legislation
23 is that there are multiple opportunities for
24 obligated parties to meet their annual requirements,
25 and I think the noncompliance payment is kind of the

1 very last step.

2 Any other thoughts on this suggestion?

3 (No response)

4 MR. KNAUER: Next Dave Westman. Go
5 ahead.

6 MR. WESTMAN: I was just going to --
7 can you hear me?

8 MR. KNAUER: Yes, I can. Go ahead.

9 MR. WESTMAN: Oh, great. I agree with
10 that last sentiment that you expressed, Tom. I think
11 there is multiple paths for compliance. And time
12 will tell what noncompliance looks like.

13 And to the last point that Mr. -- I
14 believe it was Mr. Weiss who commented on it -- our
15 read is that the DDA would have knowledge up front
16 before the year begins what their obligation would
17 be. And it is not a -- it is not a backstop against
18 noncompliance. In effect, an obligated party opts
19 into the -- or I guess is presumed to be in the DDA
20 responsibility, and then they opt out. But it is not
21 something that they can then backfill an obligation
22 with.

23 I don't think the DDA responsibility
24 was set up with that. They would only deliver what's
25 been assigned to them and not much else. That would

1 be what the market is for.

2 MR. KNAUER: All right. Dylan, you're
3 up next.

4 MR. GIAMBATISTA: Yeah. Just a general
5 comment here. Because the topic of noncompliance has
6 come up, to the extent that an obligated party was
7 not compliant, made an alternative compliance payment
8 for that purpose, you know, reading the law we have
9 only -- always interpreted that to mean that those
10 funds would be available first and foremost
11 addressing needs for low and moderate income
12 customers. That has been our assumption through some
13 of the legislative discussions as well.

14 To the extent noncompliance payments
15 are being viewed as one potential revenue source, I
16 think that we ought to keep that front and center in
17 terms of the need that will be there, and how it will
18 help ensure an equitable transition for all
19 Vermonters, including those that are lower and
20 moderate income. Just something to keep in mind.
21 Thank you.

22 MR. KNAUER: Go ahead, Matt.

23 MR. COTA: Yeah. I didn't want to
24 stray too far from the main objective, Tom. But
25 there is noncompliance and there is alternative

1 compliance. So the compliance for an obligated party
2 would be to transform their business in a free market
3 economy so they are delivering a lower carbon fuel
4 and meeting the credit obligations under the Clean
5 Heat Standard if approved by the legislature in 2025.

6 The alternative compliance would be
7 say, yeah, we don't have time for all that. We are
8 just going to pay the DDA to do it for us.
9 Noncompliance would be to fail to make any payments,
10 to failure to register, to failure to document the
11 reduction in greenhouse gas emissions, their credits
12 or any of that -- payments to the DDA. And that's a
13 -- there is a two-time adder to that in the
14 legislation. So there is an obligated party
15 complying by showing their work and reducing
16 greenhouse gas emissions. There is an alternative
17 compliance which is to pay a DDA. And then there is
18 noncompliance which is to do nothing.

19 So just -- sorry. Just wanted to
20 define those terms.

21 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. So I'm looking
22 around the room. I don't see that Donna is here.
23 But I did have a question that I will pose to the
24 group based on her recommendation.

25 She suggested establishing a tax on

1 customers' fossil fuel heating bills that is an
2 equivalent percentage to the amount paid by electric
3 utility customers on their current utility bills. So
4 I'm assuming she is referring to the percentage of a
5 customer's utility bill that covers the efficiency
6 charge.

7 So if we agree on that assumption, I'm
8 wondering if the group has a reaction to that
9 suggestion that an equivalent be put on a customer's
10 fossil fuel heating bill.

11 MR. P. PORTER: I'll just jump in and
12 reiterate I don't think there should be a fuel
13 surcharge.

14 MR. KNAUER: Thank you, Mr. Porter.
15 David Hillman.

16 MR. HILLMAN: As Mr. Weiss said in his
17 comments, the problem with any kind of a tax on fuel,
18 it's a diminishing return, because the goal is to get
19 rid of, you know, burning fossil fuel. And so your
20 income is going to be reducing over time.

21 MR. KNAUER: Annette Smith. Please go
22 ahead.

23 MS. SMITH: So in addition to it being
24 reducing and regressive, there are many people who
25 use propane who don't have any other options. I'm

1 personally in that position. There are also,
2 according to what I've read, only about 30 percent of
3 homes or heating systems are appropriate for heat
4 pumps. So there are all kinds of challenges that
5 people are actually telling me about when I see them
6 when I'm out and about. That they have had somebody
7 come and look and there is just no way that they can
8 convert their system over.

9 And people have made new investments in
10 recent years in new fossil fuel systems. So that
11 brings in all kinds of issues with the choices that
12 people have already made or the choices that they are
13 unable to make and just penalizes everyone who is not
14 able to, for whatever reason, exercise the option of
15 getting off of fossil fuels for heating. So I just
16 -- I think it's a nonstarter.

17 MR. KNAUER: Thank you. Do my
18 colleagues from the commission have any additional
19 questions for the group based on their filings or
20 based on the discussion we have been having so far
21 today?

22 COMMISSIONER CHENEY: Thank you. No
23 questions.

24 MR. KNAUER: All right. Commissioner
25 Cheney, you are -- okay. Chair Roisman, I see your

1 microphone just went on.

2 CHAIR ROISMAN: Yes. We had several
3 people suggested that we should make sure that before
4 we do anything here we get feedback from our advisory
5 groups on this question. And I wonder, first of all,
6 whether everyone agrees that we should do that.

7 And secondly, any suggestions on how we
8 can make sure that we get that input from both the
9 Technical and the Equity Advisory Group before we
10 have to draft a report. Everybody wants to see a
11 draft of the report before we file it, so we are
12 talking about something no later than 30 days from
13 now, and probably less than that, to get that
14 information back.

15 And how would people -- if we get
16 information back from the advisory groups, how would
17 people on this call want to have an opportunity to
18 comment on whatever we hear from those advisory
19 groups in their official capacity? Not just from
20 individual members of those groups.

21 MR. KNAUER: Mr. Porter.

22 MR. P. PORTER: As a member of one of
23 the advisory groups, I would say the first step is to
24 schedule a second meeting, which I had thought was
25 going to be scheduled at the end of the first

1 advisory group. And the second answer would be to
2 make sure that those very questions are on the
3 agenda.

4 The first and only advisory group
5 meeting we have had was -- could really have been
6 accomplished just by submitting documents to everyone
7 on that group. It was kind of a waste of time.

8 MR. KNAUER: Unless the -- in the theme
9 of seeking input from the Equity Advisory Group,
10 commission staff also recognized that several
11 commenters wanted the opportunity to file reply
12 comments. So what we were thinking is set a reply
13 comment deadline. And we were contemplating January
14 8th. Then when those comments had been filed, the
15 next step would be putting it to the Equity Advisory
16 Group, so that the Equity Advisory Group would have
17 benefit of those reply comments to consider and
18 provide feedback to the commission. And that would
19 happen before the commission needs to draft its
20 report.

21 Does anyone have a -- any feedback on
22 that approach? I see Pike Porter has lit up again.

23 MR. P. PORTER: Yeah. Given that we
24 are all on tight deadlines here, I think waiting
25 until January 8, I forget when we first met, I think

1 it was December 4th maybe, and I could be wrong on
2 that date. But anyway, waiting a month given the
3 deadlines doesn't seem reasonable.

4 MR. KNAUER: Does anyone else have any
5 feedback on January 8 as being a reply comment
6 deadline?

7 (No response)

8 MR. KNAUER: Anyone else have any
9 reaction to Mr. Porter's suggestion that it be sooner
10 than January 8th?

11 (No response)

12 MR. KNAUER: All right. Matt Cota. Do
13 you have a response?

14 MR. COTA: January 8th works fine for
15 me.

16 MR. KNAUER: Okay. Thank you. All
17 right. So we will confer internally on that and
18 communicate a course of action to the group as well
19 as to the various advisory groups that we will seek
20 to get input from.

21 Those are all of my prepared questions.
22 Sounds like none of my colleagues have additional
23 questions.

24 Does anyone else on the call today have
25 anything that they would like to say before we

1 adjourn?

2 MR. P. PORTER: I would like to hear
3 how this information, especially since we haven't
4 come to any kind of consensus, will be used. Like
5 how will this inform the report?

6 MR. KNAUER: Well I can tell you in a
7 general sense. I can't tell you what the
8 commissioners will ultimately decide and report to
9 the legislature.

10 But, you know, we thoroughly review all
11 information that is filed. We typically try to
12 summarize the key points, and make policy
13 recommendations in our reporting to legislators
14 pointing out, you know, benefits, costs, pros and
15 cons of various approaches that have suggested by
16 stakeholders. That's about as specific as I can be.

17 Again, we will consider all the
18 information that's provided to us. So sounds like
19 there are no other questions, no other discussion
20 matters. We will communicate to folks a reply
21 comment deadline.

22 I want to thank all participants for
23 their thoughtful written comments as well as for
24 their participation and input provided in today's
25 discussion. I think it's been very helpful to help

1 understand the written comments, and we really do
2 look forward to your continued participation,
3 including reply comments in the near future.

4 So with that, thank you again. We are
5 adjourned.

6 (Whereupon, the proceeding was
7 adjourned at 2:38 p.m.)
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C E R T I F I C A T E

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3 I, Kim U. Sears, do hereby certify that I
4 recorded by stenographic means the Workshop re: Case No.
5 23-2220-RULE, via videoconference, on December 19, 2023,
6 beginning at 1 p.m.

7 I further certify that the foregoing
8 testimony was taken by me stenographically and thereafter
9 reduced to typewriting and the foregoing 65 pages are a
10 transcript of the stenograph notes taken by me of the
11 evidence and the proceedings to the best of my ability.

12 I further certify that I am not related to
13 any of the parties thereto or their counsel, and I am in
14 no way interested in the outcome of said cause.

15 Dated at Williston, Vermont, this 21st day
16 of December, 2023.

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<p style="text-align: center;">\$</p> <p>\$2 - 42:6 \$25 - 35:9 \$45 - 35:8</p> <p style="text-align: center;">0</p> <p>05402-0329 - 1:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">1</p> <p>1 [3] 1:7, 1:11, 66:6 10 [4] 6:23, 45:11, 46:14, 53:6 11 - 44:16 12 - 33:14 14 - 49:22 15 [5] 10:4, 17:8, 19:8, 42:24, 42:25 15th [4] 35:14, 38:16, 42:20, 44:6 18 [3] 10:3, 27:1, 45:23 19 [3] 1:6, 1:10, 66:5</p> <p style="text-align: center;">2</p> <p>2 [2] 46:14, 54:8 20 - 45:10 2023 [4] 1:6, 1:11, 66:5, 66:16 2024 [7] 10:4, 20:6, 21:7, 30:25, 35:14, 42:25, 47:25 2025 [5] 17:14, 20:8, 30:2, 42:25, 58:5 2026 - 47:23 21st - 66:15 23-2220-RULE [3] 1:2, 3:3, 66:5 25 [2] 20:9, 30:7 2:38 - 65:7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">3</p> <p>3 [2] 10:12, 46:14 30 [3] 45:10, 60:2, 61:12 329 - 1:22 38 - 15:10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4</p> <p>400 - 28:20 4th - 63:1</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5</p> <p>5 - 53:6</p> <p style="text-align: center;">6</p> <p>6 - 16:4 6(h [2]) 10:3, 42:22 6(I - 48:7 65 - 66:9</p> <p style="text-align: center;">7</p> <p>70 [3] 45:7, 45:10, 47:4</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p> <p>8 [2] 62:25, 63:5 802 - 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