

STATE OF VERMONT  
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Case No. 20-0203-INV

Investigation into the establishment of reduced rates for low-income residential ratepayers of Vermont electric utilities	
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Order entered: 03/09/2021

**PROCEDURAL ORDER LIFTING STAY AND SCHEDULING WORKSHOP**

This proceeding concerns an investigation opened by the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) into the establishment of reduced rates for low-income residential ratepayers of Vermont electric utilities. In today’s Order, we lift the stay of this proceeding and establish a date for a workshop.

The main purpose of the workshop is for Green Mountain Power Corporation (“GMP”), the Vermont Department of Public Service (“Department”), and GDS Associates, Inc. (“GDS”) to provide a presentation on GMP’s low-income Energy Assistance Program (“EAP”), so that the State’s other electric distribution utilities may learn from GMP’s experience. We are particularly interested in which best practices GMP has implemented or plans to implement to maximize enrollment in the EAP.

**I. Background**

In the spring of 2009, following the passage of 30 V.S.A. § 218(e) and in response to a petition from AARP, the Commission opened a proceeding to determine whether it was appropriate for Vermont electric utilities, including GMP, to design and implement low-income rates in their respective service territories.

On September 6, 2012, after significant process, including several rounds of comments and workshops, the Commission directed GMP to implement a low-income program for its service territory to be known as the EAP.

Since its inception, the EAP has undergone several modifications designed to align program benefits with program revenue, to improve ratepayer participation, and to fine-tune certain program details and benefits.

On January 24, 2020, the Commission opened an investigation, pursuant to 30 V.S.A. § 218(e), into the potential statewide implementation of best practices for providing discounted rates to low-income residential ratepayers.

On April 1, 2020, the Commission issued an order requesting information with replies due June 1, 2020, and responses to those replies due June 29, 2020.

On August 13, 2020, the Commission stayed this proceeding due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Today, we lift the stay on this proceeding and establish a date for a workshop. The main purpose of the workshop is to provide the State's other electric distribution utilities with information about GMP's EAP so that the utilities may consider and potentially implement low-income assistance rate programs in their own service territories.

## **II. Discussion and Order**

We think it is appropriate to lift the stay on this proceeding and to begin by scheduling a virtual workshop. At this workshop, we ask GMP, the Department, and GDS (the "Presenters") to make a presentation on GMP's EAP, with a particular focus on:

- The EAP's structure, operations, costs, and benefits;
- The EAP's successes and challenges;
- The nine Key Findings listed on pages 2-9 of the GDS Report, which focus on helping customers access the assistance program; and
- What best practices to maximize enrollment GMP has implemented and plans to implement in follow-up to the GDS Report's findings.

We defer to the Presenters to determine who from each entity is most appropriate to present on each of these topics. Because this workshop will address what lessons the other electric distribution utilities might learn from GMP's experience, the State's other electric distribution utilities should attend this workshop.

Therefore, we:


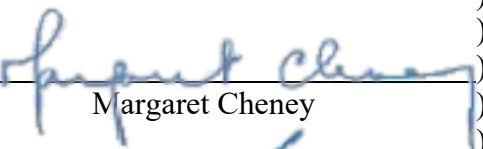
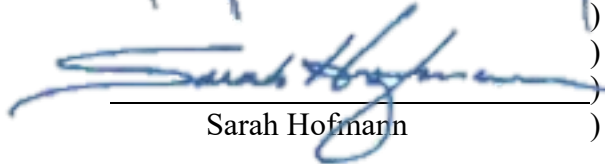
- Schedule a virtual workshop in this proceeding for March 25, 2021, from 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM;<sup>1</sup>
- Ask GMP, the Department, and GDS to prepare a presentation on GMP's EAP with a particular focus on the items listed earlier in this Order;
- Ask the Presenters to be prepared to answer questions from other workshop participants on the essential features of the EAP and the findings of the GDS Report; and
- Ask the Presenters to file any slides or presentation materials with the Commission by March 22, 2021.

**SO ORDERED.**

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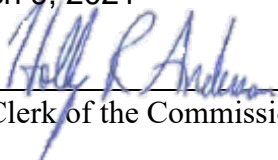
<sup>1</sup> Details for how to participate in this workshop will be issued later.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 9th day of March, 2021.

 _____ )	) PUBLIC UTILITY
Anthony Z. Roisman )	
_____ )	
 _____ )	) COMMISSION
Margaret Cheney )	
_____ )	
 _____ )	) OF VERMONT
Sarah Hofmann )	

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: March 9, 2021

Attest:   
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](mailto:puc.clerk@vermont.gov))*

*Appeal of this decision to the Supreme Court of Vermont must be filed with the Clerk of the Commission within 30 days. Appeal will not stay the effect of this Order, absent further order by this Commission or appropriate action by the Supreme Court of Vermont. Motions for reconsideration or stay, if any, must be filed with the Clerk of the Commission within 28 days of the date of this decision and Order.*

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