

STATE OF VERMONT
PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION

Case No. 20-0203-INV

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| Investigation into the establishment of reduced rates for low-income residential ratepayers of Vermont electric utilities | |
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Order entered: 02/03/2023

PROCEDURAL ORDER REQUESTING INFORMATION

This proceeding concerns an investigation by the Vermont Public Utility Commission (“Commission”) into the establishment of reduced electric rates for low-income residential ratepayers of Vermont electric utilities.

Most recently in this proceeding, the Commission requested that the utilities provide comment on a model created by the Commission to estimate the average bill impacts for customers of each utility having a low-income rate program similar to Green Mountain Power Corporation’s (“GMP”) Energy Assistance Program. In several responses, utilities mentioned other programs and opportunities for providing bill assistance to low-income customers. The Commission is interested in learning more about these programs and opportunities.

The Commission has particular interest in learning more about what utilities are planning to do with the grant funds that the Vermont Department of Public Service (“Department”) awarded through the Affordable Community Renewable Energy (“ACRE”) Program.¹ For example, GMP just filed a new innovative pilot (Case No. 23A-0109) through which it will use its ACRE grant. For those utilities that have been awarded grants through the ACRE Program, the Commission would like to understand:

- how many low-income customers each utility aims to enroll in its ACRE Program;
- the amount of bill assistance each participating low-income customer will likely receive;

¹ The State appropriated \$10 million to the Department from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds as part of the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to be used to support the creation of renewable energy projects for low-income Vermonters. Public Act No. 74, § G.600(a)(5) (2021 Vt., Bien Sess.). In turn, the Department sought proposals from the utilities for programs to use the funds, and then the Department made grant awards.

- the length of time each utility anticipates they will be able to provide this bill assistance before the funds run out; and
- how each utility plans to make low-income customers aware of its ACRE Program and then enroll eligible customers.

The Commission is also interested in learning what, if anything, utilities are planning to do to take advantage of provisions in the federal Inflation Reduction Act that may be used to benefit low-income customers. For example, GMP has just filed a new tariff for its “Shared Solar Program” (Case No. 23-0071-TF) to provide bill assistance for low-income customers by taking advantage of 2023 and 2024 tax incentives for renewable energy projects specifically available under the Inflation Reduction Act.² If a utility plans to use opportunities under the Inflation Reduction Act to create a program to provide bill assistance to low-income customers, the Commission requests that the utility provide a summary of its plans.

Additionally, if any utility has plans to create a program to provide low-income customers with bill assistance that is outside the ACRE Program or Inflation Reduction Act, the Commission requests that the utility provide a summary of its plans.

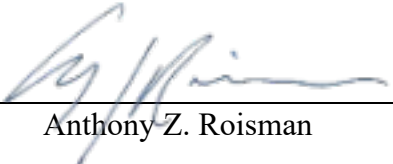

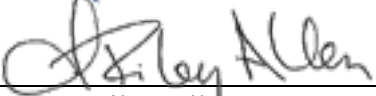
The Commission requests that the utilities respond to this information request by March 3, 2023.³

SO ORDERED.

² 26 U.S.C. 48(e).

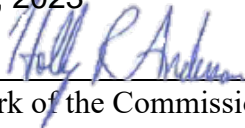
³ Because the Commission is aware of GMP’s plans under the ACRE Program and Inflation Reduction Act, GMP need not respond to this request for information unless it has additional plans to provide low-income customers with bill assistance beyond what it has already filed.

Dated at Montpelier, Vermont, this 3rd day of February, 2023.

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|  _____) |) PUBLIC UTILITY |
| Anthony Z. Roisman) | |
|) _____) | |
|  _____) |) COMMISSION |
| Margaret Cheney) | |
|) _____) | |
|  _____) |) OF VERMONT |
| J. Riley Allen) | |

OFFICE OF THE CLERK

Filed: February 3, 2023

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)

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