



STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
**ENERGY EFFICIENCY &  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT COUNCIL**

## **EERMC LEARNING, EDUCATION, AND ADVANCEMENT DISCUSSION DRAFT MEETING MINUTES**

**Monday, November 28, 2022**

**Council Meeting | 1:00 - 4:00 PM**

President's Dining Room, Donovan Dining Center, Rhode Island College, 600 Mt. Pleasant Ave., Providence, RI 02908 with additional audio/video participation available through Zoom.

**Members in Attendance:** Harry Oakley, Peter Gill Case, Sue AnderBois, Dave Caldwell, Joe Garlick, Kurt Teichert, Bob Izzo, Brett Feldman

**Others in Attendance:** Rachel Sholly, Adrian Caesar, Sam Ross, Craig Johnson, Margie Lynch, Steven Chybowski, William Owen, Claire Kokoska, Toby Ast, Josh Kessler

### **1. Arrival, Refreshments, and Welcome**

Ms. Sholly opened the meeting at 1:02 p.m. with an introduction of the agenda, noting a specific focus on equity across the agenda topics and within deliberations on the Three-Year Energy Efficiency Plan in 2023.

### **2. Introductions and Icebreaker**

Ms. Sholly led the room in introductions among Council Members, Consultant Team staff, OER staff, and public attendees.

### **3. 2024-2026 Three-Year Plan – Overview & Market Potential Study**

Mr. Ross of the Council's Consultant Team presented on the Three-Year Plan and the Market Potential Study (MPS) as an introduction to the development of the Three-Year Plan, timing of the plan, and details of the MPS refresh. The Council discussed the use of the MPS for expectations and agenda setting in developing the Three-Year Plan, with a focus on achievability and how the Council will choose targets during deliberations on the Plan.

The Consultant Team presented a comparison of the planned targets versus the achieved results, with a discussion on demand response (DR) topics within the refresh, how DR can affect equity, and the potential for a Rhode Island Energy (RIE) presentation on DR. Council Member Feldman presented an overview of updates to the MPS around assumptions in the model and RIE's role in assisting in the study refresh. Chair Oakley commented on the benefit-cost ratios as useful targets, and the Council discussed BCRs both for technology types and program models, and how to reconcile BCRs against social costs and ratepayer

concerns, as well as how involvement in the refresh process would include stakeholder participation. The Council intends to include equity metrics in the Three-Year Plan.

#### **4. MA Energy Efficiency Equity Targets, Metrics, & Reporting**

Ms. Lynch gave a presentation on the Massachusetts approach and implementation of equity in energy efficiency, including a review of the MassSave program, the timeline for equity development, studies of non-participant populations and implications for both residential and business participation, and comparisons for MA and RI. She also covered the creation and composition of the Equity Working Group, how Environmental Justice communities were defined, and the setting of an equity target with the performance incentives. The presentation highlighted the 71 equity recommendations in Massachusetts and the assessment of budget costs spent on equity efforts. Ms. Lynch presented on target categories including renter populations, English-isolated populations, how targets were assessed, and the assignment of tasks to gather more effective data and gain confidence in the ability to achieve program targets. She mentioned that workforce development targets received program administrator pushback due to risk concerns and resulted in more task assignments on expanding workforce development growth.

#### **5. RI & MA Energy Efficiency Equity Targets, Metrics, & Reporting**

Council Member Teichert raised the question of the oversight body's role/allowance of equity targets in EE plans. Ms. Lynch noted MA DPU did not allow equity incentives in prior version of MA plan, but public feedback and refinement of program plus a change in the overall conversation around equity resulted in the idea being adopted, and Mr. Ross noted that there are mechanics such as the Service Quality Adjustment which could potentially include equity as a metric as the structure exists within the scheme.

Vice Chair Gill Case asked whether 3<sup>rd</sup>-party implementation of these equity factors was part of the conversation, to utilize the effort of existing community groups. Ms. Lynch responded it was not common due sensitivity around the issue, but there is some, and the effort to enhance heat pump adoption is growing the community-based role. Workforce development was shifted from the Program Administrators to the MA Clean Energy Center.

Council Member Caldwell noted that this is an area where RI can surpass MA and set a model for other areas to support workforce development for small contractor/BIPOC entities in order to further the goal of reaching EE targets through greater adoption in communities that those businesses would represent. The conversation touched on the possibility to partner with established organizations to generate greater BIPOC workforce participation and the barriers these contractors face. There is significant federal funding that will be available soon which could help this effort.

#### **6. 2024-2026 Three-Year Plan – EERMC Priorities and Strategy**

The Council discussed their priorities for the next Three-Year Plan and highlighted workforce development for inclusion, noting opportunities to utilize funding and targets that can provide signals to the business community. There was discussion of also including targets for climate, electrification, equity, and more broadly, how energy efficiency fits into the goals for the 2021 Act on Climate.

Vice Chair Gill Case raised the topic of narrative priority, and the ability to leverage public concern for plan details through stronger messaging to raise awareness, and the need to utilize the rebranding moment to enhance the wider goals. Ms. Lynch noted that the MA

group included activists on the Council, who had ties back to communities who could raise support and/or opposition to program proposals.

The Council summarized initial priorities for the Three-Year Plan around equity, workforce development, climate goals, billing and costs, and engagement with 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to enhance or accelerate the work. There was discussion around pilot programs for target communities and raising awareness through press events, and the need to support MBE small contractors to emphasize the equity targets.

Mr. Ross briefed the Council on the PUC session regarding the EERMC budget and the corrections made to it, and noted that the meeting provided a framework for updating the Council's budget proposal after the initial submission. Mr. Chybowski noted for the group that we are still seeking recommendations to fill the three vacant seats on the Council.

**7. Public Comment**

None.

**8. Adjournment**

Councilmember Oakley adjourned the session at 4:01PM.