

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC UTILITIES

MEMORANDUM

TO: D.P.U. 24-15 Electronic Distribution List

FROM: Laurie Ellen Weisman, Hearing Officer

RE: D.P.U. 24-15 Workshop Agenda and Guidelines

DATE: June 4, 2024

CC: Mark D. Marini, Department Secretary

I. INTRODUCTION

On January 4, 2024, the Department of Public Utilities ("Department") opened Inquiry into Energy Burden with a Focus on Energy Affordability for Residential Ratepayers, D.P.U. 2415, to examine measures to address the high cost of energy bills experienced by many Massachusetts residents. This inquiry will allow the Department to consider improvements to current energy affordability programs--including the availability and design of rate discounts--to reduce the energy burden that may adversely affect utility customers.

In the Order opening this inquiry, the Department solicited input from interested persons on how the Department can reduce the energy burden and address affordability issues, and stated that it would determine the appropriate next steps for this proceeding after reviewing the initial comments. The Department has received and reviewed those comments and has determined that the appropriate next step is to hold a stakeholder workshop via Zoom to gather further input. The workshop which will take place on **Monday, June 24, 2024, from 10:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.** This memorandum includes the tentative agenda, access details, and participation guidelines for the workshop.

II. AGENDA


- Welcoming Remarks and Guidelines for Participation
- Energy Affordability Overview
- Environmental Justice Roundtable

- Percentage-of-Income Payment Plans (“PIPPs”)
- Tiered Discount Rates
- Enrollment and Engagement Issues
- Next Steps

III. GUIDELINES FOR VIRTUAL WORKSHOP

A. Videoconferencing Platform and Public Access

The Department will conduct the workshop via the Zoom videoconferencing platform. Any person may participate in the livestream of the workshop by entering the link <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89051005277> from a computer, smartphone, or tablet. No prior software download is required. For audio only participation in the workshop, dial (646) 558-8656 (not toll free) and then enter the Meeting ID# 890 5100 5277.

This workshop will be available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese Mandarin and Cantonese, Haitian Creole, and Vietnamese. To access interpretation services during the roundtable, click on the “Interpretation” button (the globe icon ) on the menu at the bottom of the Zoom screen and select the appropriate language. To request additional language services, contact Hearing Officer Laurie Ellen Weisman at laurie.e.weisman@mass.gov **no later than 5:00 P.M. on June 18, 2024**. To request materials in accessible formats for people with disabilities (Braille, large print, electronic files, audio format), contact the Department’s ADA coordinator, Jenyka Spitz-Gassnola, at Jenyka.Spitz-Gassnola2@mass.gov.

All attendees must identify themselves on Zoom by their full name and organization affiliation.

B. Workshop Format

The Department will lead the workshop. Agenda topics will commence with presentations by Department-designated stakeholder panelists, after which the Department will provide an opportunity for non-panelist attendees to ask questions or provide comments on that topic. The presentations (and all materials related to this proceeding) will be posted on the Department’s website at <https://eeaonline.eea.state.ma.us/DPU/Fileroom/dockets/bynumber/24-15> at least two days prior to the workshop.

Non-panelist attendees wishing to provide comments or ask questions should use the Raise Hand function or dial *9 when prompted by the Hearing Officer. The Hearing Officer will call on attendees in the order that they appear on the Hearing Officer’s screen. The hearing monitor will then move the attendee to the panelist level to participate in the general discussion on that topic. To accommodate as many comments and questions as possible, please limit your comments or questions to approximately three minutes and to the topic at issue. Please do not repeat your previously filed written comments.

The workshop will take place on Monday, June 24, 2024, from 10:00 A.M. to approximately 5:00 P.M., unless otherwise directed by the Hearing Officer. There will be a 45-minute lunch break around 1:00 P.M. The Hearing Officer may schedule additional breaks as necessary.

To ensure the efficient and orderly conduct of the workshop, only Department staff, panelists, and attendees moved to the panelist level to participate in the discussion will appear on video and be able to unmute themselves for discussion.

C. Video

The Zoom videoconferencing platform will livestream the workshop; the livestream will not be recorded and will not be part of the official record for this proceeding. The chat and record features of the Zoom videoconferencing platform will be disabled during the workshop.

All panelists (including attendees moved to the panelist level to participate in the discussion) are expected to make their appearances by video. If a panelist is unable to appear by video because of technical difficulties, the Hearing Officer will afford the panelist a reasonable amount of time to resolve the technical difficulties. If the technical difficulties cannot be resolved after reasonable efforts are expended, the Hearing Officer may direct the panelist to appear by phone.

D. Audio

All panelists should speak slowly and clearly for the benefit of the interpreters and other participants. While the Hearing Officer will try to limit disruptions, the Hearing Officer may interrupt and ask speakers to repeat themselves or slow down.

To reduce ambient noise and other disturbances, all panelists must mute themselves unless they are speaking. The Hearing Officer will use Zoom audio controls to mute or unmute panelists as necessary.

E. Hearing Monitor and Technical Assistance

The hearing monitor for the workshop will be Shirley Barosy, the Legal Manager for the Department's Legal Division. The hearing monitor will be granted host privileges. Please report any technical difficulties during the workshop to Ms. Barosy at shirley.barosy@mass.gov. For technical assistance questions prior to the roundtable, please contact Hearing Officer Laurie Ellen Weisman at laurie.e.weisman@mass.gov.

F. Questions

For further information regarding this memorandum or to request addition to or removal from the electronic distribution list, please contact Hearing Officer Laurie Ellen Weisman

at laurie.e.weisman@mass.gov. You may also leave a voice message with your name and phone number at (617) 305-3690.