

Wednesday, December 18, 2024 | 1:00 PM– 3:00 PM

Contractor Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC) Meeting Minutes

[Meeting Recording.](#)

Discussion

1. Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Introduction

DEEP reviewed the meeting agenda, which was focused on utility presentations. DEEP noted that there have been a number of outstanding issues that have come up over the last year, which are the focus of this meeting. Additionally, more time will be spent on Commercial and Industrial (C&I) agenda items in upcoming meetings, as much of the recent focus has been on residential.

- HES and HES-IE proposed changes were not on the agenda. On December 13, 2024, the technical consultants held a meeting with utility staff and contractors to discuss and get feedback on redesigning the Home Energy Solutions (HES) and Home Energy Solutions-Income Eligible (HES-IE) programs. DEEP reminded participants that consensus may not be achieved, but that the best solution for ratepayers needs to be identified.
- The CTAC Tracker is up on the CTAC website, which will be updated following the December 18, 2024, meeting. DEEP aims to have responses to questions in the tracker posted prior to the next regularly scheduled CTAC meeting.

2. Public Comment 00:04:25

No public comment at this time.

3. DEEP Updates 00:04:45

i. Federal Funding

DEEP provided an update on the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) rebate programs: Final approval for the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate program (HEAR) was received on December 17, 2024. DEEP expects to hear back on the Home Efficiency Rebate Program (HER) program shortly. DEEP noted that these programs will be run through existing Conservation and Load Management (C&LM) programs and DEEP intends to reach out to stakeholders as needed for input.

DEEP provided an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Heat Pump Accelerator, which is a \$450 million grant for the region from the Environmental Protection Agency. Connecticut DEEP met with participating states on December 17, 2024, for a kickoff meeting and DEEP is looking to start a community outreach group. DEEP expects to launch a

Request for Proposal (RFP) to bring on an implementer for the program, and DEEP recognized that there will be additional opportunity for comments and questions.

ii. 2025-2027 Conservation and Load Management (C&LM) Plan Determination

DEEP provided a review of the timeline for the C&LM Plan and next steps. DEEP intends to issue a Request for Information (RFI) by December 20, 2024. DEEP noted that people may provide any comment they would like, and do not need to answer all questions in response to the RFI. DEEP will also be issuing a budget determination.

For the topic of HES and HES-IE Redesign, DEEP appreciated all of the comments received so far, which can be found on DEEP's Energy Filings website. DEEP received a draft summary from consultants on the meeting held December 13, 2024, to discuss program redesign. DEEP noted that consensus is not expected. It's important to determine what is cost effective for ratepayers while also mitigating impacts to contractors. DEEP noted that they expect to give further direction by the end of the year.

iii. Questions and Discussion

Bernie Pelletier asked a clarifying question on HER, HEAR, and CPRG funding availability for all 8 municipal utilities. Becca Trietch (DEEP) clarified that there will be a public process for HER and HEAR; the CPRG funds will be midstream incentives but will be available to all 8 municipal utilities.

4. Utility Updates and Discussion 00:12:40

i. Heat pump & weatherization data

Ghani Ramdani of Eversource and Jillian Winterkorn of United Illuminating (UI) reviewed heat pump installation and weatherization data for HES-IE single family homes. In 2023 and 2024, 98% of Eversource's HES-IE single family homes that had heat pumps installed received weatherization. In UI territory, out of the HES-IE single family homes that installed heat pumps, 89% received full weatherization. The Companies also reviewed HES-IE incentive budgets and actual values for air sealing/insulation, duct sealing, windows, and heat pumps. The Companies also reviewed percentages of HES home assessments that resulted in heat pump installation and data for the 2023 heat pump weatherization bonus.

a. DEEP facilitated discussion 00:19:40

Discussion occurred between stakeholders, which clarified that this data was for heat pumps only and did not include heat pump hot water heaters. Conversation covered budget clarification as well as areas to consider for improvement, including HES. The Companies noted that they would like to increase weatherization where heat pumps are installed but also need to account for newer homes that are already weatherized or homes that do not need weatherization. Conversation also covered customer cost of heat pumps as well as clarification on fuel type price projections. Dr. Trietch reiterated a comment from stakeholders that efforts to clean the grid in order for electrification to provide air quality and greenhouse gas reduction benefits is an important parallel effort.

ii. Proposal to address attic and knee wall access 00:35:04

The Companies reviewed current wall prequalification for Connecticut, Massachusetts, and New York. For prequalification of wall insulation, a Connecticut Installation Installer Network (CTIIN) survey found that 33 out of 39 vendors surveyed need at least 2 inches of space to dense pack insulation. The Companies explained that lower pre-existing R-values result in greater MMBtu savings for wall insulation.

iii. Prequalification for attic and wall insulation

The Companies reviewed existing attic prequalification. Connecticut has a prequalification of R19 or less, Massachusetts is any existing insulation less than recommended value, and New York has no minimum requirement. The Companies also reviewed attic savings with different pre-existing R-values as well as a draft recommendation for homes with inaccessible attics and/or kneewalls.

The Companies propose that homes that have inaccessible kneewalls and/or attics and no other barriers to running a blower door test perform a pressurized blower door test with customer advisement and approval. Secondly, they should limit the risk of any unknown contaminants being pulled through the home. Finally, they should conduct only pressurized duct leakage to the outside testing. The Companies noted that they intend to send this recommendation to contractors for feedback, where they will provide 30 days for feedback and 60 days for implementation.

iv. Update on 3-hole drilling, R4 wall insulation, photo requirements, and serving 2-4 unit dwellings 00:43:40

The Companies described that for 3-hole drilling, there are multiple exterior wall photo documentation options, including borescope, obtaining a sample, first (original) layer of attic insulation (if applicable), exterior wall cavity photo, infrared scan, and balloon frame accessibility. For blower door testing, they must be able to confirm the absence of health and safety barriers (asbestos, vermiculite, mold).

Regarding the exterior wall R-value, the Companies issued a memo on June 10, 2024, regarding exterior wall R-value assessment after learning some contractors were using the Department of Energy (DOE) Home Energy Score Assessor Calculator default values. Alignment ensures contractors follow Program Savings Document (PSD) requirements for incentive qualification to ensure cost effectiveness of the measure. Enclosed cavities require approximately 3 inches of available cavity space to properly dense pack.

For 2–4-unit buildings, homes energy assessments require access to attics, basements, exterior walls and mechanicals. It is recommended that all units participate during the initial assessment, as landlords may complete an authorization form for one or more units. Individual unit owners may participate individually, although a full building assessment is recommended. The Companies noted that a full building assessment is allowed even if a unit has participated within 6 years, however, duplicative services cannot be provided. The Companies proposed a draft recommendation for 2–4-unit buildings, which stated that multi-unit buildings that have inaccessible units and no other barriers to running a blower door test should perform prescriptive air sealing for any applicable attic, basement, and in-unit

envelope opportunities. Secondly, they should conduct only pressurized duct leakage testing to the outside. The Companies noted that they intend to send this recommendation to contractors for feedback, where they will provide 30 days for feedback and 60 days for implementation.

v. QA/QC protocol and common error review 00:50:51

In July 2024, the Companies described that they issued photo documentation guidelines in a timeline format. The guidelines provided a listing of photos needed to support work completed or recommendations.

For HES and HES-IE Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC), the Companies described the associated standards and protocols, as well as common errors such as missed air sealing/insulation opportunity and missing documentation.

a. DEEP facilitated discussion for agenda items 4ii.-4v. 00:54:20

Becca Trietch (DEEP) asked clarifying questions on the bar charts and different R-values for insulation. The CT cost effectiveness test (CTET) was used. Richard Faesy, a technical consultant for the Energy Efficiency Board, noted that there should be caution when it comes to creating different qualification thresholds for different fuel types, especially when it comes to fuel switching and minimizing customer confusion. The importance of addressing the home as a whole system when it comes to calculating savings and the benefits of both reduced air leakage and decreased thermal conductivity properties of dense packing exterior walls, was also noted. There was some discussion amongst stakeholders on the number of inches needed to dense pack a wall.

vi. Additional comprehensive benefit information 01:13:34

Contractor recommendations included updating project proposals and comprehensive benefits, as well as encouraging weatherization prior to heat pump installation.

In review of the customer report, the Companies agree that Customer Reports need improvement and intend to include updates as part of the program redesign effort and will gather stakeholder input. The Companies also covered future enhancements for the customer report, which includes working with an external firm to facilitate a customer report redesign. The Companies noted that this process will include engagement of all stakeholders.

vii. Review of communications protocol 01:15:45

The Companies reviewed the order of escalation with contact information for bringing up issues.

a. DEEP facilitated discussion for agenda items 4vi.-4vii. 01:19:34

Becca Trietch (DEEP) reiterated that DEEP will be encouraging the use of the communications protocol and having contractors raise feedback through the utilities.

Discussion followed on the Department of Energy (DOE) home energy score reports and customer report redesign. The Companies noted that they will be working on engagement in Quarter 2.

Discussion occurred amongst stakeholders regarding data collection and the importance of having information available to inform decisions. The Companies are still determining methods and protocols for customers wishing to opt-out of the DOE home energy score and discussed the potential of gathering data for analytical purposes, not for publishing. Additionally, stakeholders noted that costs are high, and ratepayers need help.

5. Public Comment 01:55:23

Melissa Kops raised a question about incentive levels for walls that have existing insulation in them. Ms. Kops also asked for clarification on air pollution and Environmental Justice Communities. Ms. Kops noted that it would be helpful if there were a study to help provide information on air pollution generated from electrification. Ms. Kops also noted that while a cleaner grid is the goal, we also have to work with what we have. Ms. Kops asked about additional measure installations including insulation and windows. Diane Del Rosso (Eversource) responded that Contractors have been conducting a pre and post blower door test in HES-IE homes after insulation is installed to ensure that the home envelope is at a good level. No additional savings are claimed, as this is strictly a health and safety measure. Stakeholders further discussed code requirements.

Edgardo Mejias, Efficiency for All, noted that from a technical perspective he typically would separate savings and benefits for dense packing between air sealing benefits and thermal conductivity benefits. This could potentially aid in analyses, especially since this may determine if it is more beneficial to dense pack even at higher existing R values.

Announcements

1. On October 10th, DEEP issued a letter to the Companies asking them to pause their RFI and RFP processes related to the proposed HES and HES-IE changes.
2. DEEP proposed hosting a series of technical meetings to address sub-topics related to the utilities' proposal, which DEEP estimates will take place over a 5–6-month period.
3. On December 13, 2024, the technical consultants held a meeting with utility staff and contractors to discuss redesigning the Home Energy Solutions (HES) and Home Energy Solutions-Income Eligible (HES-IE) programs.
4. DEEP expects to issue a notice on next steps for the HES and HES-IE redesign process by the end of 2024.
5. The [CTAC Tracker](#) is up on the CTAC website, which will be updated following the 12/18/24 meeting.