

Monday, October 28, 2024 | 1:00 PM– 4:00 PM

## Contractor Technical Advisory Committee (CTAC) Meeting Minutes

[Meeting Recording](#). Passcode: &ZpoRJmE

### Discussion

#### 1. DEEP Introduction

DEEP reviewed the meeting agenda and provided updates, including processes and timelines for publicly considering utility-proposed Home Energy Solutions (HES) and Home Energy Solutions-Income Eligible (HES-IE) program changes and the Optimization Plan Part A.

- HES and HES-IE proposed changes were not on the agenda. On October 10<sup>th</sup>, DEEP issued a letter to the Companies asking them to pause their Request for Information (RFI) and Request for Proposal (RFP) processes related to the proposed HES and HES-IE changes.
- 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.
- DEEP will be utilizing an online platform to solicit stakeholder feedback on each topic for HES and HES-IE proposed changes, as well as accepting formal written comments.
- The CTAC Tracker is up on the CTAC website, which will be updated following the 10/28 meeting. DEEP aims to have responses to questions in the tracker posted prior to the next regularly scheduled CTAC meeting.

#### 2. Public Comment 00:15:00

Public comment from Leticia Colon de Mejias (00:15:12).

#### 3. Facilitated Discussion

##### a. Connecticut Contractors Coalition Presentation—comments submitted to the Energy Efficiency Board on the Three-Year Plan Draft #3 00:018:18

- The Contractors Coalition discussed historical, Conservation & Load Management (C&LM) actual and proposed budgets and the issue of inflation.
- The Coalition also noted that it is optimal to complete weatherization prior to heat pump installation.
- The Coalition recommend that a HES/HES-IE visit be required to be eligible for a heat pump rebate. The Coalition believes that this recommendation fits in the 2025-2027 C&LM Plan Priorities and will aid in optimizing the budget.

##### i. Discussion

Discussion occurred between DEEP and the Utilities regarding data for heat pumps installed with and without weatherization for both HES and HES-IE. While data exists for HES-IE, HES numbers may require extra research by the Companies. The Companies were directed to provide this data to DEEP as a follow-up to this meeting.

DEEP requested that contractors weigh-in if HES homes are or are not receiving weatherization services prior to heat pumps. Contractors noted that some customers receive heat pumps without weatherization.

There was also discussion about contractors' qualifications to assess if a heat pump should be recommended for a home. There was consensus that contractors do have the training and qualifications to assess a heat pump recommendation, but not all have received training that would allow them to size a heat pump.

Questions were also raised about the level of weatherization needed to ready a home for heat pumps, as well as comparisons to neighboring states on weatherization and heat pump programs.

**b. DEEP Discussion with Contractors & Utilities –Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) rebate programs and Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) heat pump federal funding**  
**00:47:46**

- DEEP provided an update regarding the Home Electrification and Appliance Rebate program (HEAR) and the Home Efficiency Rebate Program (HER) initial applications, which have been submitted to the Department of Energy (DOE). Rebate funding must be utilized by September 30, 2031, and will be authorized in tranches; DEEP is aiming for a smooth deployment of the funds to avoid boom-bust cycles.
  - For HEAR, DEEP plans to target low-income households in both single and multifamily buildings, and rebates will be available for all DOE-allowable upgrades.
  - For HER, DEEP plans to target low-income multifamily buildings and will provide rebates based on modeled energy savings predicted from a home energy upgrade.
  - Both will run through existing Conservation & Load Management (C&LM) programs
  - Implementation blueprints, which are the next phase of the application process, are still being developed.
- DEEP also provided an update on the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Heat Pump Accelerator, the award for which is still being finalized with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). To oversee the implementation of this regional program, an Advisory Committee will be created; the award will be for \$450 million, and the goal is to launch the Accelerator program in mid-2025. The program will consist of three hubs: Market, Innovation, and Resource. During the discussion, DEEP requested contractor feedback on: 1. best practices for midstream incentives; and 2. If contractors or distributors would expect to retain a portion of a midstream incentive, or pass is all on to customers.

- During the discussion some contractors indicated that they believe incentives at the consumer-level may be the most effective. Contractors also encouraged clear direction and requirements regarding passing incentives on to customers. Questions were raised about if this program could provide incentives to small businesses or the commercial and industrial sector. The program is focused on residential.

#### 4. Process Discussion

##### a. Utilities Presentation – Communication process between contractors and the utilities & program modification processes 01:07:58

- The Companies presented on the role of different stakeholders and the communication escalation processes currently in place.

##### i. Discussion

Discussion occurred between DEEP, the Companies, and Contractors. It was agreed that different types of communication are needed in different settings, and that different issues may need different escalation processes. Historically communications have been confusing and frustrating. Contractors expressed that enhanced, clear, consistent, and concise communication would be helpful to their work. Communication regarding evaluations also needs to be improved.

##### b. Utilities Presentation – HES & HES-IE project completion challenges with proposed solutions – Discussion/Feedback from Contractors to be solicited after each topic that follows 01:56:35:

##### i. 3-hole drilling

The Companies discussed methods to verify insulation in walls, as homes built prior to 1980 need verification that they should have insulation work completed. Discussion occurred between the Companies and Contractors regarding 3-hole drilling and potential concerns. Discussion of other methods to verify insulation and R value also occurred.

##### ii. Blower door test prevented by lack of attic/knee wall access

The Companies presented that contractors must be able to confirm the absence of health and safety barriers and conform with BPI Protocols. Discussion occurred amongst stakeholders, which included scenarios when it may not be possible to run blower doors and potential solutions. Contractors noted that the number of blower door tests they are able to complete are decreasing due to recent changes.

##### iii. R4 wall assembly rule

The Companies presented that some Contractors were utilizing the DOE Home Energy Score Assessor Calculator default values. The Companies want to ensure the Program Savings Document requirements are followed to ensure cost effectiveness. Stakeholders discussed the R value requirements and potential comparisons to neighboring states.

**iv. 2-4 unit buildings – program participation rules if not all units permit access for contractors**

The Companies presented that it's recommended for all units to participate during an initial assessment, and that landlords may complete an authorization form for one or more units. The Companies noted that landlord-renter relationships are difficult to navigate. Discussion occurred amongst stakeholders, which included the topics of communication among utilities and inspectors, as well as how to handle condos with baseboard heating.

**v. Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC) photo requirements**

The Companies noted that they would like to implement programs and updates in a strategic fashion. Contractors noted that they would like straightforward requirements for QA/QC.

**5. Public Comment (03:00:13)**

No one provided public comment at this time.

**Agenda Items that Will be Carried to Next Meeting:**

**c. Utilities Presentation – Reaction to contractor recommendations**

- i. Add more comprehensive benefits information to project proposals
- ii. Encourage weatherization prior to heat pump installations
- iii. Discussion/Feedback from Contractors

**d. Utilities Presentation – HES & HES-IE QA/QC standards, protocols, common errors & remediation action plans**

- i. Discussion

## **Announcements**

1. On October 10<sup>th</sup>, 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. DEEP will be utilizing an online platform to solicit stakeholder feedback on each topic for HES and HES-IE proposed changes, as well as accepting formal written comments.
4. The CTAC Tracker is up on the CTAC website, which will be updated following the 10/28 meeting.
5. The next CTAC meeting is scheduled for December 18, 2024, at 1:00pm.