



COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER

A Not-for-Profit Professional Organization

DATE: April 11, 2008

TO: Hon. Rudy Stegemoeller
Hon. Eleanor Stein
Administrative Law Judges
NYS Public Service Commission
Empire State Plaza
Agency Building 3
Albany, New York 12223-1350

FROM: Community Environmental Center

RE: Case 07-M-0548 – Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard Proceeding

Dear Honorable Judges Stegemoeller and Stein:

Community Environmental Center (CEC) respectfully submits the enclosed comments in regards to the EEPS Proceedings. These comments are in response to the Staff Revised Proposal of March 24, 2008 and in regards to the four Portfolio issues enumerated in the Commission's March 20, 2008 Ruling. We strongly support EEPS Staff's proposals and urge immediate implementation of Fast Track programs that address the climate change crisis.

Program Administration

- We support Staff's emphasis on practical and effective administration of programs, including considerations of access to resources, marketplace experience, customer relationships, and timeliness of program implementation. We believe NYSERDA's expertise in implementation and management of its existing programs makes it the most sensible administrator of those Portfolio programs intended to "bridge" current energy efficiency standards to the necessary standards of the future. We thus endorse Staff's advocacy of a "market-centric" approach to building a program portfolio, believing NYSERDA the provider of best practice administration of most Fast Track programs. It seems illogical to decentralize program implementation, which would require each utility to build its own staff capability, wasting money in unnecessary retraining efforts and running the risk of service duplication as well.
- Per Staff's suggestion, CEC believes that NYSERDA should collaborate with utilities to access customers and maximize outreach. Utilities have established relationships with customers that are invaluable to effective program outreach. We support Staff's calculation of collaborative efforts as listed on page 7 of the report, as well as its belief that a greater number of utilities need provide information on the costs and energy savings of their existing programs in order to demonstrate that they can manage programs effectively.
- In addition, CEC believes that municipal governments can play an important role in Portfolio program outreach and in an advisory capacity, promoting greater communication between utility providers and Fast Track administrators as well as bringing to bear substantial municipal resources that can greatly boost program efficacy. We encourage the establishment of a formal organizational structure that will assure greater municipal participation in Portfolio programs operating in those municipalities' areas of governance.

Fast Track Proposals

Regarding General Funding:

- The report's division of funding into separate categories for electric and gas prompts us to emphasize fuel oil's substantial contribution to greenhouse gas emission. More so than elsewhere in the state, oil is widely used as fuel in New York City homes. It is also free of state/city regulation. Given that lack of regulation, we urge that Portfolio funding be used to promote conservation of oil as well as of electricity and gas.
- Additionally, the significant reduction of the city's greenhouse gas emissions should be considered as high of a priority as is the promotion of energy efficiency. Portfolio funds should be used more extensively to support heating oil conservation and a whole building approach to projects. Integration of emission and efficiency concerns is essential to meet the 15 X 15 goals and affect true results.

Regarding Marketing Efforts:

- CEC supports Staff's inclusion of marketing and development money, as well as its opinions, as stated on page 5 of the report, regarding effective design and implementation of marketing efforts. In addition, we feel strongly that any strategy to promote public awareness of Fast Track proposals should include more than simple advertising. Consumers are inundated with advertisements at every turn, from the television to the supplements included in their utility bills. An educational component is necessary to raise awareness of Fast Track programs and ensure that marketing efforts are not lost in the daily stream of media that demands consumers' attention.
- We encourage the Commission to designate funding for educational outreach that alerts the public to Portfolio opportunities as well as the critical need for immediate action. Climate change is an overwhelming issue for many people. Even as awareness of the crisis increases, individuals and families are too often uninformed of practical, day-to-day steps they can take in response. Outreach of the sort CEC provides through our Solar One Arts and Education Center (<http://solar1.org>) can make a practical effect on the public's understanding of energy efficiency and Portfolio efforts.

Regarding Home Performance:

- We support the EEPS Staff's inclusion of the Home Performance/ENERGY STAR program in its March 25th report. The program, in particular its subset Assisted Home Performance program, plays an important role in the energy use and utility costs of low-income homeowners. For the Energy Efficiency Portfolio Standard to be truly effective, it must address the needs of those least able to afford home efficiency upgrades.
- We recommend an increase in the percentage of total Assisted Home Performance project costs that an individual grant may cover. This will make the program more attractive to low-income homeowners, substantially increasing the program's effectiveness by encouraging participation by those least-likely to participate otherwise.

Allocation of Funding

Regarding Weatherization Assistance Program:

- We strongly support Staff's emphasis on reducing the waiting list of DHCR's Weatherization Assistance Program. We also feel that the growing coordination between the agency and NYSERDA should continue to be encouraged. As noted in our previously submitted comments, we have a strong history of working in concert with both organizations, combining the WAP efforts with NYSERDA's Multifamily Performance Program efforts. Given our success with this collaboration, as well as other parties' concerns regarding control of DHCR Portfolio funds, we suggest channeling DHCR's SBC funds through NYSERDA, rather than the New York State Housing Trust Fund Corporation. This might facilitate the development of even greater coordination between the two agencies.
- The per-unit restrictions on current WAP funding does not allow projects to install big-ticket items like high efficiency condensing boilers or devices that promote cogeneration or renewable energy. Portfolio funds should be used to allow higher per-unit costs so such measures can be installed on WAP multifamily low-income buildings where feasible. Coordination by NYSERDA and DHCR would facilitate such work.

In conclusion, we are encouraged by the level of cooperation evident in these proceedings, and wish to express our willingness to participate in any future panels or advisory groups that work to determine further funding allocation.

Sincerely,



Richard Cherry
President and CEO