

To: Efficiency First Massachusetts members
Re: Follow up to meeting with Lyn Huckabee, Dec. 8
Dec. 15, 2009

Efficiency First members Lori (of Byggmeister, Newton) and Adin (of Cozy Home Performance, Northampton), met with Lyn Huckabee, Residential Energy Efficiency Program Coordinator at DOER to discuss the changes to the RCS utility 2010-2012 conservation programs (MassSAVE).

[the EEAC has approved 2010-2012 programs. The plans are awaiting DPU approval, which is likely after some key issues addressing benefit/cost balance are worked out, according to Lyn]

The goal of the meeting:

To determine how the Home Performance industry in MA can prepare to serve the MassSAVE program and what will happen during the transition from the existing MassSAVE program to the 2010 programs.

We discussed how the 2010 MassSAVE program will roll out with loose expected timelines in context of features of the program that will benefit Home Performance Contractors (HPC) wanting to be involved.

Some highlights of the new program design:

(complete plans can be downloaded here: <http://www.ma-eeac.org/plan09oct.htm>)

The 2 audit, 3 visit model.

homeowner contacts MassSAVE

*Step 1: Initial 'screening visit' by Vendor

*Step 2: Diagnostics (IR, BlowerDoor on every possible house), prescriptive ECM, 'free' air sealing, and determine measures and scope of retrofit (by Vendor and approved Energy Services Company)

homeowner signs contract for work

*Step 3: ECM's installed, retrofit (by Contractor)

(The *New Path* referenced below will vary slightly- details not clear yet)

2 Paths for Homeowner Participation

**Typical Path*: Vendor/ 'Energy Service Provider' does Steps 1, 2 and contracts directly with customer for step 3.

**New Path*: Vendor does 1, 2 (partially), and customer contracts with contractor of choice for retrofit.

New Path marketing: **A Contractor can direct a client into MassSAVE and then meet them on the other side to install their measures with incentive money leveraged (assumed leveraged HEAT Loan too).

Standards, Certifications, Trainings:

Utility Program Administrators (PA) are interested in involving a greater number of qualified HPC who implement principals and techniques based on building science, house-as-a-system loading order. It is understood that HPC have varying business structures as well as opinions about what the industry is or should be in MA.

Through the Utility RCS design process with EEAC oversight, there have been many references to the quality and certification requirements of program partnered contractors. “BPI standards or equivalent” is mentioned in the final plans. The training programs that are going to be program funded and subsidized for contractor’s, appear to emphasize house-as-a-system, building performance approaches and techniques for both auditors and installers.

As efforts to recruit partnered HPC will be focused on qualified, program-certified contractors, there is also a clear intention not to exclude any current contractors but to get them prepared for deeper installs up with subsidized trainings.

More Vendors.

There will be a competitive bid process for new Vendors to join the program, which may mean more variety and depth in program audits. These details are unknown at this time.

Recap and Opinions of (one) HPC perspective:

The good news is that the MassSAVE program is opening up! Homeowners will have an opportunity to achieve deeper energy savings by working with companies that they chose and that can specifically address their needs. There will be many bumps, and many contractors looking to nearby states will be continue to be frustrated by the lack of emphasis on ‘free-market’ approach.

There will be healthy levels of oversight and perhaps mis-steps as the PAs work out the details to ensure their goals are met first and foremost. Yet as a positive, these initial growing pains will result in higher quality contractors serving the programs, greater long-term collaboration with open communication between the Industry and PAs, more sustainable growth opportunity, and likely greater customer satisfaction in the long run.

The difficult news is that there is still so much unknown. Currently many target dates for program roll out have been pushed back. For news of what will happen in the transition, it was recommended to contact Utility PAs directly.

The utilities are continuing to utilize a very similar vendor model as the current program, requiring vendor energy audits for any incentive money to be allocated. This may be a blow to fully integrated HPC companies; companies that provide both energy audits and remediation measures to clients. This structure may change in the future, but for now the focus is on how to involve more contractors on the Install/Retrofit process, as well as aligning program marketing/outreach with contractor private marketing of the programs.

As other successful programs nation-wide show, a diverse contractor network that is strongly committed to the program is a requirement for success. With a strong voice our collective and individual needs will be regarded as the program unrolls in earnest.

Next Steps

In January there will be an effort to engage contractors to be part of the dialogue with PAs in working out the details of these programs. It is clear that the stronger the Home Performance Contractor industry unites, the stronger our voice will be. Already a handful of companies have weighed in on the process.

Please make an effort to network with Contractors that are already working with the MassSAVE programs, or may benefit from working with the programs. **The more united our message is the stronger it will be, the better the results.** Everyone receiving this email is an Efficiency First member...please encourage other Contractors and supporters to join (share this email with others).

Please contact me with any questions, concerns, visions for next steps.

Thank you,

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