

Offered by Councilor Kim Janey, Mejia, Flynn, Essaibi-George, Wu, Campbell, Arroyo, Breadon, Bok, Flaherty, O'Malley and Edwards



CITY OF BOSTON IN CITY COUNCIL

ORDER FOR A HEARING REGARDING PREDATORY AND DECEPTIVE PRACTICES BY COMPETITIVE ENERGY SUPPLIERS

WHEREAS: The economic pressures created and exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic have most severely impacted low-income communities, immigrant communities, and communities of color across Boston, which were already struggling to make rent and utility payments; and,

WHEREAS: Research by the Attorney General of Massachusetts has found that these very communities have been targeted for years by competitive (or “third-party”) energy suppliers, which, using deceptive and predatory tactics such as “slamming”, caller ID spoofing, or trespassing, will go door to door, call, or send mailers to residents promising to lower electricity bills if the household switches their supplier; and

WHEREAS: There is little to no benefit gained from participating in the competitive supplier market for these residents. The Attorney General concluded that residents who switch suppliers pay more, on average than if they stayed with their electricity utility.

WHEREAS: According to data gathered by the Attorney General, while only 19% of all accounts in Massachusetts use competitive suppliers, 42% of all Dorchester accounts and 53% of all low-income Dorchester accounts, 39% of all Mattapan accounts and 48% of all low-income Mattapan accounts, and 36% of all Roxbury accounts and 49% of all low-income Roxbury accounts use competitive suppliers; and,

WHEREAS: The City of Boston does have programs such as the Community Choice Electricity program that educating residents about issues with competitive electric suppliers;

however, more must be done to protect low-income communities, immigrant communities, and communities of color from predatory and deceptive conduct by these companies. **THEREFORE BE IT**

ORDERED: That the appropriate committee of the Boston City Council hold a hearing to examine the scope and impact of predatory and deceptive practices employed by competitive energy suppliers in the City of Boston. Representatives from Alternatives for Community and Environment (ACE), Lawyers for Civil Rights, Greenroots, Inc., Green Energy Consumers Alliance, the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office, and other interested parties shall be invited to attend.

Filed in Council: July 29th, 2020